

# Agricultural Department Undertakes Farm Show

DOVER, DE — The Delaware Department of Agriculture's Marketing and Product Development staff has plans to attend 10 major food and agriculture trade shows between now and April '89 in its continued effort to increase marketing opportunities for Delaware producers.

Marketing manager Bill Sammons said trade shows are one of the most effective and cost efficient ways to increase Delaware's visibility in national and foreign markets.

"It's an inexpensive way to meet large numbers of buyers face to face," he said, adding that the cost of making three or four sales calls to regional buyers probably would surpass the cost of meeting hundreds of national buyers at one trade show.

As an example of the sheer masses reached, Sammons cited the annual Produce Marketing Association Trade Show. Nearly 4,000 people attended last year--5 to 10 percent of them were buyers. Marketing staffers have a varie-

ty of exhibits they use depending upon the trade show audience, and take with them promotional materials and literature such as trade directories to distribute.

Delaware growers, producers and manufacturers also are encouraged to accompany them whenever possible. In many cases trade show costs such as registration and booth rentals are shared by the department and private companies who directly benefit from attendance.

"We don't have the budget to go to this many shows without the cost-share policy," Sammons said.

What are the payoffs? One year, Delaware's Walter Melon, a mascot for statewide watermelon promotions, made the cover of *The Packer*, a weekly newspaper with national distribution. This year, the Laurel Auction Market drew around 30 additional buyers to "The Block" because of appearances made at trade shows last year. And, most impressively, marketing specialists have returned from shows with product

orders in hand for various Delaware companies.

"It's unusual for a state our size to be that aggressive at these shows. We're right up there with the big guys like the Idaho Potato Commission and the Washington State Apple Growers. But we think it's important to attend a lot of the major shows year after year to maintain our image and a high profile."

Attached is a list of the food and agriculture trade shows the Marketing Section will attend this fiscal year. Also included is information on what product is being marketed, audiences, and whether or not growers or producers can attend. For more information about any of the trade shows, contact Bill Sammons at 736-4811 or 1-800-282-8685.

Feb. 12-14- **United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association**, New Orleans, La. Fresh fruits and vegetables. Audience: national wholesale and terminal market buyers. Growers and brokers will be invited to attend.

Feb. 21-23- **Mid-Atlantic Direct Marketing Trade Show**, Lancaster, Pa. Any commodity directly marketed by the grower. Show includes educational workshops and seminars for direct marketers. Audiences: regional wholesale and retail buyers. Delaware direct marketers will be invited to attend.

March 17-18- **Delaware Ag Week**, Dover Mall, Dover, Del. All commodity groups and agricultural-related organizations are invited to exhibit to celebrate National Ag Week. Sponsored by the Delaware Department of Agriculture and the Dover Mall.

March- **Canadian Trade Show**, dates and other information have not yet been confirmed by organizers.

April 12-16- **Puerto Rico Food and Equipment Show**, San Juan, P.R. This is a joint marketing effort of the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia departments of agriculture. Companies from all three states will be invited to send infor-

mation and sample product to the show.

April 23-25- **Philadelphia Restaurant Food Show**, Philadelphia, Pa. Primarily raw food products. Audience: restaurants looking for suppliers.

May 15-17- **National Association of State Departments of Agriculture Trade Show**, Boston, Mass. A biennial show primarily for food processors looking to export. Audience: international food buyers. The Department has a 14-booth pavilion reserved for Delaware producers. Eleven of the booths already have been booked. Exhibitors will be expected to attend.

## Annual Corn, Soybean Conference Set

COLLEGE PARK, MD — If you're a crop farmer interested in marketing, soil and nutrient management, alternative crops or coping with drought and mycotoxins, the 1989 Delmarva Corn and Soybean Technology Conference promises useful information.

Next year's ninth annual educational meeting and industry display is scheduled February 8 at its usual location -- the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center in Salisbury, on Maryland's lower Eastern Shore.

More than 1,200 persons are expected to attend the day-long event, according to W. James Milliken, planning committee chairman. Milliken is an Extension agricultural agent in Kent County, Md.

The conference is sponsored each year by agribusiness firms serving the Delmarva area and by the Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Delaware, University of Maryland and Virginia Tech.

Activities at the February event will get under way at 8:30 a.m. with free coffee and doughnuts and a chance for farmers to visit more than 50 commercial and educational exhibits. The program itself will run from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., with an hour off for lunch.

Noon lunch tickets must be purchased in advance. They will be available soon at \$3 apiece from county offices of the Cooperative Extension Service throughout the Delmarva area. Only a very limited number will be available at the door on the day of the meeting.

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