

# Extension Housing Agent Plans Multi-County Programs

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre) — Ronald K. Dodds, a multi-county associate extension agent for Penn State Cooperative Extension stationed in Monroe County, has a full agenda of community development and agricultural education programs for the area.

In agriculture, he is working with farmers on crop management, livestock management and, more specifically, risk management. "I plan to help clients learn how to use government programs effectively, develop sound farm management plans and I have a special interest in working with farmers and others on pesticide safety," he says.

Most of Dodd's work in community development concerns growth-related issues. He is now meeting with landowners to establish agricultural preservation areas under Act 43 and plans to work with the Monroe Council of Governments and local townships on the program. He also is developing workshops for local government officials on community planning issues in general, with an emphasis on planning for change.

"The Monroe County 4-H Government Intern program is an excellent program to get students as well as their parents involved in community issues planning," says



Ronald K. Dodds

Dodds. "So many of our residents are new to the area and don't understand their role in making local government work. This is a program I hope to expand next year," he says.

The 4-H intern program is operated through local school districts. High school students are assigned to work with a local government agency on a specific issue and they receive academic credit and a grade for their work. At the moment, the Pleasant Valley High

School in Brodheads ville is the only school in the county participating in the program.

The quality of individual water supplies has been a regional concern for some time. Dodds is planning a workshop on how home owners can improve the quality of private water supplies, including testing options and care and maintenance information. He also is working with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources and the Environmental Protection Agency on a national pesticides survey concerning pesticides and groundwater supplies.

In the area of renewable resource management, he is helping to develop environmentally sound forestry programs as a member of the Pocono-Northeast Resource Conservation and Development Council's forestry committee. He also plans to develop workshops and printed material on soil nutrient management as part of an effort to protect the Delaware Bay.

In addition, he plans to develop indoor air quality workshops focused on radon education and on testing programs and options

home owners may have to reduce radon if necessary. "We will probably wait until next fall to offer this program," he says.

Dodds received a bachelor's degree in agronomy from Penn State in 1982. He has worked in agricultural business management and sales with Agway in the central region of Pennsylvania and was an assistant manager in three locations in Cecil and Kent counties on the Eastern Shore of Maryland with Southern States Cooperative. He is a member of a number of professional associations such as

the Soil Science Society of America, the Crop Science Society of America and the American Society of Agronomy.

A native of Mercer County, Dodds graduated from Commodore Perry High School in Hadley and the Environmental Technology program at the Mercer County Vocational School.

For more information about agricultural and community development programs in Monroe County, contact Dodds at (717) 992-7344.

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