



# BACK HOME

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Berks Extension  
Home Economist

### Spring Safety

It's spring, and with it comes hope and renewed life. Unfortunately, in our community, many are suffering from the loss of a 14-year-old killed in an bicycle auto collision.

I've written about bicycle safety in other years, but feel the need to repeat this important message. If you are a parent of a child who rides a bicycle, please read on and please take action! There really are a lot of bicycles on the go.

Consider these facts:

•1. More than 100 million bicycles are in use on American streets and highways.

•2. About 7 out of 10 youngsters, ages 5 to 16 ride a bicycle.

•3. The predominant victims of bicycle accidents are children between ages 5 and 14

•4. Four times each hour of each day during a year a bicycle driver is injured.

•5. One bicycle driver is killed every 11 hours in a traffic crash.

•6. Two out of every three bicycle accidents occur to drivers who have failed to follow the rules of the road!

The arrival of spring is a long awaited occasion for all kids, and especially those who got new bicycles for Christmas. The excitement

builds as they look forward to jumping on the ol' bike and heading down the street toward freedom. Perhaps that crazy and carefree attitude contributes to the number of accidents that occur. And despite the recent bicycle accident and death in our community, I recently was driving home at night only to come upon a bicyclist with no lights, reflective clothing or reflectors other than those on the wheels. I arrived home minutes later with my heart rate slightly elevated and determined to get the message out to parents about increased need for bicycle safety.

These safety thoughts come to my mind as I make plans to enjoy the spring weather on my own bicycle. It certainly is a great way to exercise and soak up the warmer temperatures outside. I spent many days of my youth perched upon a bicycle and I loved it. However, out on the farm there was a lot of wide open space to ride without worry about traffic. Still the big thrill was to be allowed to "ride on the road". This was approved after a good track record as a driver had been established.

Being a good rider, however, is not enough, particularly when faced with the statistics that I reported earlier. Whether in the

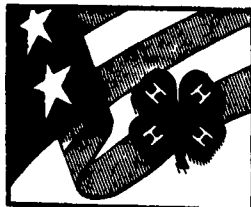
country, suburb, or city it is important to teach kids the basics of being a bicycle driver as well as being a rider.

A bicycle drive is required to follow all Pennsylvania motor vehicle laws just as a car is. Being a rider on the other hand implies that the bicycle is a toy to be played with however the child wishes.

One of the best ways I know of to teach young kids to learn about bicycle safety, while having fun with kids their own age, is through the 4-H Bicycle project. Activities that can be included are learning

the rules of the road, bicycle maintenance, games to play with bicycles, and group activities like trail rides and bicycle parades.

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about being a safe bicycle driver, contact your county extension office. As you give the bicycles a yearly inspection in preparation for the summer months ahead, review bicycle safety tips and laws of the road. Whether you are riding a bicycle or driving a car, remember that spring is a time of renewed life ... let's work to keep it that way!



## 4-H HAPPENINGS

### Lancaster County Swine

The organizational meeting of the Lancaster County 4-H Swine Club will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 13, at the Farm & Home Center.

The county-wide club has consolidated all existing community 4-H swine projects into a program that has improved educational efforts, member recognition, and community support.

The evening's program will include an official sign-up, distribution of project books, explanation of goals, election of officers, and introduction of leaders. Presentations by Greg Harnish and John Hess, Manheim FFA members will be a highlight of the meeting.

The club will hold five meetings each year, as well as a roundup and sale in August and a recognition banquet in October. Members of the club will have the opportunity to participate in livestock and meats judging programs, pork bowl and public speaking competitions, and the Pennsylvania Farm Show junior swine events.

Lancaster County youth between the ages of eight and 19 years are invited to attend the organizational meeting. Feel free to bring your parents and friends, too. For additional information, contact Chet Hughes, Penn State Extension livestock agent, at 394-6851.

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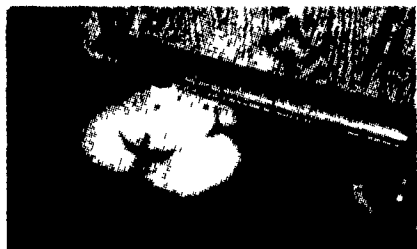
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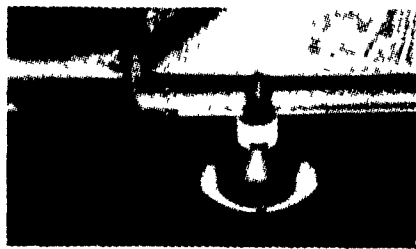
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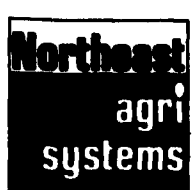
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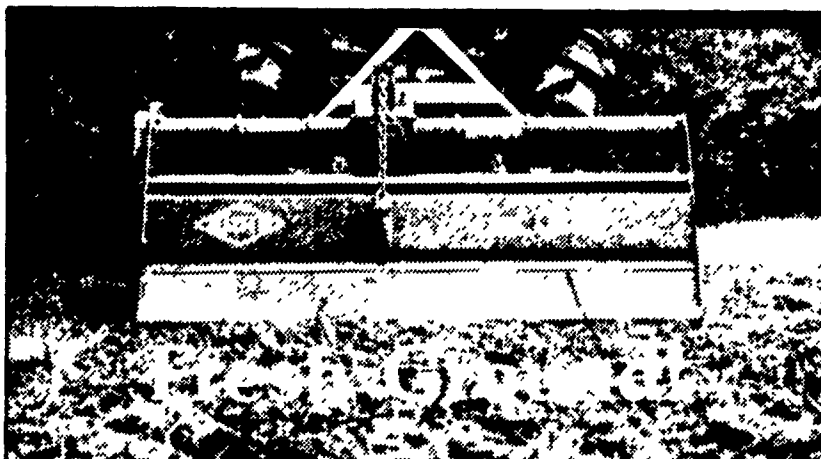


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