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Healthy Holiday Poinsettias Require Good Greenhouse Biosecurity



Jay E. Witmer, president and general manager of Whitmer's Greenhouses, Inc., Lancaster, shows the Celebrate II variety of poinsettias in full bloom and ready for the holi-

days. Witmer was recently honored with the 1990 Pennsylvania Flower Grower of the Year Award from the Pennsylvania Flower Growers Association. Photo by Andy Andrews.

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Greenhouse managers could be losing money — and lots of it — by failing to properly manage the delicate and vital environment in which they grow their crops.

By not carefully cleaning greenhouse equipment, controlling weeds inside and outside the greenhouse, keeping equipment clean, managing what they plant, and practicing good biosecurity stewardship, greenhouse owners and managers could face huge losses from diseases and insects that could be easily managed.

"I was at one greenhouse this year that should have inspected the plants before they came in," said Bruce Hellerick, Lancaster County horticulture extension agent. "They threw away well over 100 hanging baskets — that's \$10 a basket retail. Most of their crop was infected with thrips. They had to spend the extra time with chemical sprays to control the problem."

Hellerick, who spoke recently to about 500 professional growers at the D&L Growers meeting in Lititz, Pa., explained the importance of biosecurity to maintaining greenhouse profitability.

Learn biosecurity

According to Hellerick, the first line of defense is biosecurity. It is important to the large and small growers in the area — Lancaster has approximately 3 million square feet devoted to greenhouse production. Many of them are smaller farms which are using greenhouses as an alternate farming venture. Everyone who works in greenhouses should learn it.

"People let weeds grow up in the greenhouses or outside the greenhouses," said Hellerick. "Of

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Three Equestrians Take State, National Wins

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff

BLAIN (Perry Co.) — It's the classic Cinderella story — the unknown enters a competition and overcomes overwhelming odds to defeat the anticipated winners.

In this case it's the story of three young women in Perry County who not only formed the first Perry County 4-H horse judging team, but not only competed in state trials, but went on to win the Pen-

sylvania crown and place among the best in the nation.

If America has an unabashed fondness for underdogs, they should love these three women who hail from an economically depressed, mostly rural, mid-state

county.

Like all of those Sylvester Stallone "Rocky"-type characters who with extra effort overcome numerous disadvantages to succeed, 19-year-old Amy Zahn, 17-year-old Angela Keller, and 16-year-old

Cinnamon Detra are heroines.

According to team coach Linda Vaughn Bolen, of Blain, the triumphant victories of the young women speak not only of seeking and achieving far-reaching goals,

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Ford New Holland, Fiat Merge

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff

change in our commitment to product quality and dealer and customer service."

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HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — Two major agricultural equipment manufacturers on Thursday announced a merger that should make the resulting company a world giant, pending governmental approval of the venture.

"The Fiat Group and Ford Motor Company have signed definitive agreements to form a new company which will merge Fiat's subsidiary Fiat-Geotech and Ford New Holland, Ford's tractor and farm and industrial equipment subsidiary," according to a Thursday news release from Ford's headquarters in Dearborn, Mich.

According to Mark Branstetter, Ford New Holland public affairs in New Holland, "We do not see any immediate impact on local employment, and no

Milk Study Reaction Muted

KARL BERGER
Special Correspondent
WASHINGTON, D.C. — The latest segment in the ongoing milk safety saga is proving far less damaging to the dairy industry's public image than previous installments.

Lisa Keller, information direc-
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ALL-MD best three females, Savage-Leigh Farm. Other winners on Pages C4-C5.

REJOICE



"...for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy."
— Luke ii, 7-10

SEASONS GREETINGS
To You
From Everyone At
LANCASTER FARMING