

American Farmland Trust Sponsors Workshop

NORTHAMPTON, Mass.—The American Farmland Trust (AFT), as part of a continuing effort to assist the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture with the Farmland Protection Program, sponsored an all-day workshop for county administrators of the Farmland Protection Program on Thursday, January 10 at the Department of Agriculture.

The workshop was attended by all but 4 of the 29 counties participating in the state program. Ann Orth, AFT Pennsylvania field representative, introduced Boyd Wolff, Pa. secretary of agriculture, to the county administrators.

The workshop featured an update on the state program by Fred Wertz, director of the Bureau of Farmland Protection, and his staff. Also, Ray Pickering, director of the Chester County Farmland Protection Program and Julie Gustanski, director of the Bucks County program, presented a

program on creative program initiatives that counties can use to assist in county efforts to not only protect agriculture but to promote it.

After lunch, Orth and Tom Daniels, director of the Lancaster Ag Preservation Board, talked about land trusts and how they can help with the state/county program.

The workshop ended with a discussion about the tax implications of agricultural conservation easements presented by Sam Goodley from the Lancaster law firm of Blakinger, Byler and Thomas, and assisted by Ed Thompson, AFT general counsel.

After the workshop, the county administrators visited the Farm Show and sampled some of the excellent Pennsylvania grown produce before they returned to their respective counties and their efforts to protect Pennsylvania farmland.

Take Precautions To Prevent Pneumonia

EDWARD J. WOODS
Washington Co. Ag Agent

As temperature and weather conditions vary considerably from day to day and from hour to hour, precautions need to be taken to prevent pneumonia.

Pneumonia-causing organisms are normally present in the respiratory tract, but under periods of stress an animal's resistance can be lowered to the point where it can no longer fight off the infection. It's important to minimize stress on animals.

Keep barns well ventilated, but avoid cold drafts. This may require frequent adjustment of doors and windows, or the proper installation and use of fans. Good ventilation prevents the buildup of stagnant, moist germ-laden air. That's important.

Also, avoid overcrowding. During inclement and rapidly changing weather conditions, one should also minimize stresses associated with transporting animals, weaning, changing feeds, deworming, vaccinating, etc. When necessary, consult your veterinarian for advice on immunization and treatment.

Farm Machinery

This is the time of year to be preparing your farm equipment for spring work. In the first place, this machinery should not be out in the weather. I know the buildings are expensive to construct, so if you are out of building space, cover the equipment with a tarp -- this will reduce weather damage.

Preparing farm machinery for the coming spring and summer is necessary during this slower season. You can make use of the off-season labor supplies. Machinery is a huge investment and should be kept in good condition at all times.

We had a policy on my father's farm to always give a good grease job to all equipment going into storage for the winter -- this kept moisture out of the bearings. Rain and snow will soon develop rust on equipment -- this will shorten the lifespan and is a primary cause of many unnecessary breakdowns.

Properly Feed

First Calf Heifers

Most beef producers in the Northeast follow a spring calving

system. Feed requirements for the cow herd are highest during the pasture season and decrease into late fall and winter when more expensive harvested feeds must be fed. Remember, however, that relative to summer, requirements are increasing for replacement heifers. Not only must the heifer continue to gain body weight for herself, but her developing calf also requires extra nutrition.

It's generally recognized that the last trimester (last 90 days) of gestation is the most critical time for calf growth. June bred heifers would just now be entering this period in their gestation. While it's important to provide adequate feed, it's also important not to overfeed, because fat deposits in the udder will hinder a heifer's milk production potential.

How much, then, should a heifer gain during this period? A realistic goal is probably 100 to 125 pounds, allowing good calf development and reasonable gain of the heifer.

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