

# Agents Need 'People Skills,' Says Retiring Extension Director

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Lancaster Farming Staff  
HOLLIDAYSBURG (Blair Co.) — On the eve of retirement, Robert M. Hetrick still remembers the drought of 1961-1965. The drought the region faces now still doesn't stand up to those years. "It was tough back then. I don't think I've seen any years as bad as those," said Hetrick.

But meeting face to face with farmers, and trying to help them through both good and bad times during 28 years with the extension, utilized his training as a dairy farmer, experience as a Penn State agent, and, most importantly, abilities as a "people person" — skills essential to successful extension agents, according to Hetrick.

Hetrick will be honored at a special retirement dinner on Sat., July 20, at 7 p.m. at the Memorial Park, Martinsburg. Hetrick will be officially retiring as extension director on August 2. Those wishing to obtain tickets for the dinner should contact the extension at (814) 695-5541, ext. 210.

**Family dairy farm**  
Hetrick was raised in Beaver-



**Robert M. Hetrick**

town, Snyder Co., and operated his father's 140-acre farm with 48 dairy cattle. After earning his B.S. in ag education from Penn State in 1954, Hetrick was drafted into the U.S. army at the end of the Korean War. In 1956, Hetrick took over his family's dairy farm, until 1963 when, in the middle of the worst drought he's seen, he decided to join Penn State Extension in Lehigh Co. as assistant county

agent. In 1965, Hetrick was promoted to associate agent in Lehigh. While at Lehigh Co., he provided educational leadership for the 4-H Club.

In 1971, Hetrick moved to Blair County as an agent and later became extension director.

In 1980, Hetrick was awarded the prestigious Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of County Agricultural Agents in Oklahoma City, Okla. His work in improving milk production in local dairy herds garnered him the recognition. His forage testing and feed programming have been used as educational tools in the county to increase herd production.

Hetrick's expertise, besides dairy, includes agronomic crops and fruit and vegetable production. Through the years, he coordinated a regional educational fruit program and worked with the six-county fruit growers association.

## Toward specialization

He noted the trend toward specialization for county agents. Back then, he said, you had to be "jacks of all trades," and noted that counties today demand more specialization over a multi-county region.

The staff in Blair County includes a family living agent, 4-H coordinator, horticulture agent, and an urban Expanded Food Nutrition Program agent.

The most important element for an agent is "working with people one to one." He recommends that a college graduate who desires to be a county agent should not only be well-grounded in the subject matter, but should strive "to be a people person. Good communication is essential."

Hetrick is retiring because he wants to spend more time with his family. In July, he said he intends to pursue a part-time job and would enjoy doing more volunteer work.

"I depended on volunteers to do so much for extension," he said, "and now I'd like to pay them back."

## ABS Names Shelton President

DE FOREST, WI — American Breeders Service (ABS), a unit of W.R. Grace & Co., has named Jack E. Shelton president and chief executive officer effective July 15.

Mr. Shelton, currently vice president of Grace's Feed Operations with responsibility for Farr Better Feeds and Walnut Grove

Products, succeeds Dr. John J. Sullivan who will serve in the new position of ABS vice chairman.

"Earlier this year, Grace announced plans to sell its Feed Operations as part of the Company's strategy to tighten the focus of its businesses and pay down debt," said Dr. Robert E. Walton, chairman of Grace Ani-

mal Services, which consists of American Breeders Service, ABS Specialty Genetics, Farr Better Feeds and Walnut Grove Products.

"With the sale of the Feed Operations imminent, this management reorganization allows us to retain Jack Shelton's management skills; frees John Sullivan to focus on our increasing number of global business development opportunities; and completes the restructuring of our specialty agriculture businesses."

Mr. Shelton, 42, will continue to oversee the Feed Operations until an agreement to sell the businesses is reached. Prior to his current responsibilities, Mr. Shelton spent 18 years in various positions with Grace's Agricultural Chemicals division.

Dr. Sullivan has served as ABS president since January, 1989, replacing Dr. Walton. Under Dr. Sullivan's direction, ABS intensified its business development in the European Economic Community (EEC), Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Oceania and developing countries, and improved worldwide sales. Dr. Sullivan will continue this effort with specific emphasis on the establishment of a global network of non-U.S. ABS stud sites. Prior to serving as ABS president, Dr. Sullivan was ABS vice president, production.

Founded in 1941 and headquartered in DeForest, Wisconsin, American Breeders Service markets dairy and beef cattle semen, providing the largest line-up of sires and related products throughout the United States and to more than 60 foreign countries. Since ABS began, more than 70 million cows have been inseminated by ABS.

Grace is the world's largest specialty chemicals company with leading positions in other niche businesses. Its 1990 sales exceeded \$6.7 billion.

