

Pantano: Proud To Head Lancaster Poultry Association

LOU ANN GOOD
Lancaster Farming Staff
LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)
— Thomas Pantano considers himself lucky.

Lucky because his childhood hobby became his career.

As a child growing up in Pittsburgh, Pantano raised chickens, ducks, and turkeys in his backyard.

Today Pantano heads Lancaster County's number one agricultural industry — poultry.

As president of the county Poultry Association and as broiler flock supervisor for Pennfield, Pantano is as excited over chickens as he was the Easter his grandparents gave him two colored chicks.

It was those pink and green chicks that spurred an unquenchable fascination with poultry within Pantano.

Although Pantano's home was within city limits and raising poultry in his backyard was not kosher, Pantano managed to raise an impressive array of poultry without any neighbor complaints.

Pantano has a whole stack of pictures that show turkeys strutting around the yard, the proud stance of Rhode Island Reds, and the

incubators that he built to hatch the peeps.

"I penned them up at nights and left them roam in the yard during the day," he said.

When he was a teen-ager, Pantano purchased a small incubator to hatch quail and pheasant. After that, he built a number of his own incubators.

This scientific bent caused Pantano to seek an associate degree in medical laboratory technology at Penn State. While there he was thrilled to learn that the university offered a degree in poultry technology and management. In 1983, Pantano was one of three graduates of the program.



This is a replica of the 1948 stamp that celebrated the centennial of the American Poultry Industry.

Landing a job in Lancaster County was a poultry lover's dream come true for Pantano. For six years, he worked for Hess Mills of Paradise in servicing pullets, layers, and breeders.

"I came to the county when Avian Influenza first started," Pantano said. His duties included being in charge of clean up and disinfection at several poultry houses.

Within his first year in the county, Pantano married Deb, whom he had met at Penn State and they settled in Strasburg.

Since then, Pantano has immersed himself in learning all he could about the industry. He has taken workshops on egg quality, poultry disease, selling techniques, supervising people and getting things done. He is a licensed poultry technician who can test for salmonella enteritidis and do other blood work.

Pantano has returned several times to Penn State to teach classes on poultry-related subjects. He said, "It's a great feeling to be asked by your former professors to teach and be consulted when they have questions about the industry."



President of the Lancaster County Poultry Association, Tom Pantano, enjoys a few moments with wife Cindy and children.

Pantano joined the Lancaster County Poultry Association and was soon put in charge of committees such as educational, fund raising, nominating, and queen. Last

year, he was elected president and this year he was re-elected.

The 12-member board and its 200-family membership promotes

(Turn to Page A34)

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