

Art Exhibit Promotes Rare Breed Conservation

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — An unusual combination of art and agriculture may help to save some rare farm animals from extinction.

The Art of American Livestock Breeding, organized by Pennsylvania cattleman John Dawes and the American Minor Breeds Conservancy, will be exhibited Feb. 7 through March 29 in Penn State's Palmer Museum of Art at University Park.

This collection of paintings, many by renowned artists of the 19th century, depicts livestock breeds which are in danger of

dying out.

"We are a nation descended from farmers, and we hope these paintings raise awareness of that heritage," said Dawes, who raises Angus beef cattle and Milking Shorthorns on his Huntingdon County farm. "It takes the work of many lifetimes to develop a breed of livestock, and the American Minor Breeds Conservancy is not willing to throw that away."

Created before the widespread use of photography, the paintings in the exhibit are a permanent record of breeds once considered to be of major importance to production agriculture. Many of these

breeds declined as they were replaced by animals that grow or reproduce faster.

"The Conservancy believes there's a need to maintain genetic diversity," Dawes said. "Different breeds have a place in different regions, depending on factors such as soil type and climate."

The need to maintain genetic diversity in livestock is not lost on animal scientists. "In our rapidly changing world, it's difficult to ensure that we have an animal that

will thrive in a particular environment," said Dr. Stanley Curtis, professor and head of Penn State's dairy and animal science department.

"If we can preserve that diversity, then with modern techniques in breeding and genetic engineering, we can sometimes bring back desirable traits of rare breeds," Curtis said. "It would be a mistake to let these breeds wither away."

The traveling exhibit is meant to call attention to the work of the

Conservancy, including support for the registration of rarer breeds. "The registry office for Ayrshires recently closed because there aren't enough animals registered to pay for office staff and computer support," Dawes said. "The Conservancy is gearing up to be a registrar for breeds in that situation."

The exhibit has been on display in the Washington, D.C., area and in Hagerstown, Md. It will move to Pittsburgh after its Penn State engagement.



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N.E. Vegetable Growers To Meet

SCRANTON (Lackawanna Co.) — The Northeast Regional Vegetable Growers meeting will be held on Thursday, February 6 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Milwaukee Methodist Church in Lackawanna County.

Sponsored by cooperative extension of Penn State University and the Lackawanna County Horticultural Association, program topics will include information on vegetable varieties; weed, insect, and disease control; safe use of pesticides; and federal drought relief.

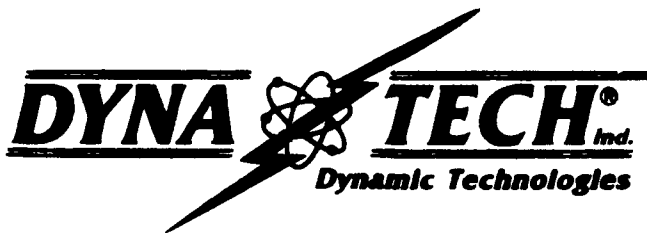
Sneakers from Penn State University include A. MacNab, plant pathologist; Michael Orzolek, vegetable specialist; Shelby Fleischer, entomologist; and county extension agents Don Overdorff and Tom Jurchak. Joseph Colangelo will represent the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and Kent Swartz, USDA. Training credits will be provided for recertification of private applicators of restricted use pesticides.

Reservations are \$6 and can be made by mail or phone with the Lackawanna County Cooperative Extension, 200 Adams Avenue, Scranton, PA 18503, (717) 963-6842.

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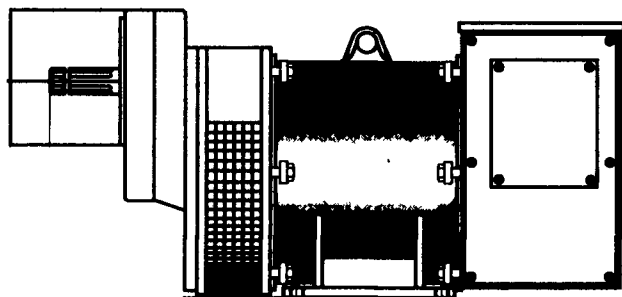
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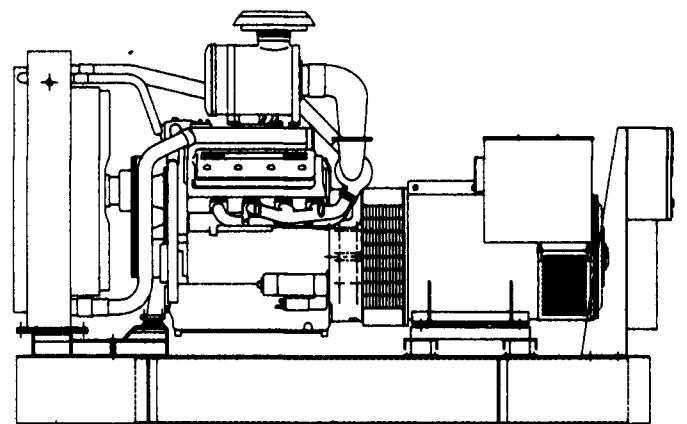
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