

Ag Forum Focuses On Issues

DOVER, Del. — Agriculturists are invited to spend a day in March learning about important issues facing the agricultural community, exchanging ideas with each other, and meeting with elected officials to discover what they will be doing in the next year to help the agricultural industry.

Ag Forum '92: Opportunities and Challenges will be offered Wednesday, March 4, in the West Building at Delaware Technical and Community College in Georgetown.

Commercial and educational exhibits will open at 10 a.m. and remain open throughout the day.

The educational portion of the program begins at 1 p.m. with the keynote address by Dr. John Nye, dean of the University of Delaware's College of Agricultural Sciences.

At 1:30 p.m., participants can choose between two concurrent sessions — "Trucking Laws Affecting Producers and Suppliers" and "Aquaculture in Delaware: Regulations and Opportunities."

The transportation program will address different aspects of trucking safety and regulation.

Jerome A. Emerson, coordinator of the division of motor vehicles' commercial driver licenses

program, will discuss state laws affecting the agricultural industry. John Gaves of the federal highway administration of motor carriers will review how federal regulations impact agricultural transportation needs.

Master Corporal Francis Letkowski of the Delaware State Police motor carrier safety assistance program will discuss what that program has to offer, and William Dellinger of the Delaware Motor Transport Association will address fleet safety issues.

Lee Derrickson, an instructor with the Delaware Tech Truck Driver Training Program, will discuss what that program can offer agricultural producers and their employees.

Participants in the aquaculture session will learn about state regulatory concerns and financial opportunities, research and extension outreach efforts, and how traditional agricultural industries are expanding into aquaculture.

Dr. Bernard Petrosky, a research assistant professor with the department of agriculture and natural resources at Delaware State College, will provide an update on research projects. Joseph Farrell, marine resource management specialist with the Sea Grant College Marine Advisory Service, will

highlight progress in the University of Delaware's Extension programs.

Ferdinand Wirth, marketing supervisor with the Delaware Department of Agriculture, and William "Skip" Bason, president of the Delaware Aquaculture Association, will talk about pending environmental regulation that will affect the fledgling industry and financial opportunities for those interested in launching aquaculture operations.

Larry Horseman, manager of research operations for the aquaculture group at Townsends Inc. in Millsboro, will discuss his poultry company's experiment with aquaculture and the pros and cons of expanding into this new commercial venture.

The next concurrent seminars, "Implications of Environmental Regulation for Agricultural Producers" and "Agricultural Alternatives," will begin at 3:30 p.m.

Wellhead protection, pesticide regulation, environmental assessments, and underground storage tanks will be the four topics featured in the environmental session. Representatives from the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and Larry Towle, agricultural specialist with the Department of Agriculture's

Pesticide Compliance Section, will be presenters.

The other session will feature an exploration of what the alternative and sustainable agriculture movements mean to producers. Ferdinand Wirth and Dr. Edward Jones, a professor in the department of agriculture and natural resources at Delaware State College, will lead the discussions.

In addition, three recipients of the department of agriculture's alternative agriculture/marketing research grants will discuss problems and successes they had getting their projects off the ground.

Ted Trevorow of Fiber Core Corporation will talk about kenaf production. Joy Evans, a farmer from Millville, will offer advice on growing Shiitake mushrooms. And Tom Ryan of Ryan's Berry Farm in Frankford will discuss the expansion of his pick-your-own operation with the addition of value-added products.

A buffet dinner will be served at 5:15 p.m. following the education-

al sessions. Program participants then will have a last chance to visit the exhibit area before an open forum with elected officials begins at 7 p.m. in the college theater.

The forum will feature a panel of elected officials giving brief remarks about legislation and policies related to the seminar topics and a question and answer period for the audience.

A \$10 registration fee includes the buffet dinner, afternoon beverages, and program materials. The fee will be charged whether participants attend all or part of the day-long program.

To obtain a registration form, contact Debbie Davis, Office of Continuing Education, Delaware Tech, at (302) 856-5400, ext. 227. Or register by phone using a VISA or MasterCard.

For program information, contact the Department of Agriculture Information Office at (302) 739-4811 or (800) 282-8685 (Delaware only).

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Meat Board Will Gather

CHICAGO, IL — Meat Board directors representing state beef, pork and lamb councils along with packers, purveyors and directors from more than 30 meat industry organizations will gather in Chicago, March 22-23, for the National Live Stock and Meat Board annual meeting.

The Meat Board is a coalition of all segments of the meat and lives-

tock industry — from livestock producers to food retailers — that has been working through industry checkoffs to build demand for meat since 1922.

On the agenda for the meeting: chairman-elect Kendall S. Rice of Wilsonville, Neb., will deliver the annual meeting charge; directors will begin the process of program development for fiscal 1993 and

elect new officers for the Meat Board and its operating divisions, the Beef Industry Council, Pork Industry Group and Lamb Committee; and retiring directors will be honored during a special luncheon.

For information, contact the Meat Board, 444 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611, or call 312-467-5520.

Funk Dedicates Lifetime

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"Spring bedding sales are unbelievable," Funk said.

The greenhouse employees are planting now for spring sales. Funks sell 80 to 90 percent of the plants retail. During the holidays, they sold 20,000 poinsettias.

One of the most surprising things he learned in merchandizing is that people object when the prices of food rise, but not to the rising prices on ornamental plants and flowers.

Every March 20, the Funks plant 10 acres of sweet corn under plastic so that it is available by June 17.

"This past year the average price of sweet corn was \$4 in the state, but we can't get that around here," Funk said. "Too many other growers make tough competition."

To stay on the cutting edge, the Funks find that it is necessary to constantly change their program to meet the competition. They found they could make more money raising broccoli than tobacco. They grow asparagus, lima beans, brussel sprouts, cantaloupes, celery, sweet corn, gourds, pumpkins, peaches, and nectarines. For 20 years had black raspberries, rhubarb, strawberries, sugar peas, tomatoes, watermelon.

Amos said that he became aware in the 1960s that farmland was being lost to development. In 1978, he went to the environmental board and requested that they do something about loss of farmland.

He said that the Conestoga Valley Association was formed when a former teacher remarked that he wished we could involve urban people in conservation.

Although Funk is highly praised for his conservation and preservation efforts, not everyone has been grateful for Funk's efforts to preserve farmland.

He said, I've spent heated sessions in the courthouse. Some do not want ag preservation. It takes careful, slow, aggressive pursuit of

disseminating knowledge to help people understand."

Amos is a charter member of the Lancaster County Conservancy and member of the Lancaster County Preservation board.

Amos had opportunity to be on the National Board of Vegetable Growers and the National Board of Conservation, but did not do it because it required too much time away from home.

Of the 35 awards Amos received, he is most pleased with the Teddy Roosevelt Award given by President Bush in 1990. Other cherished awards include the 1984 National Association of Conservation Districts Special Service Award for his more than 30 years of Conservation efforts at the local, state, and national level. In addition, he was awarded the 1985 Pennsylvania Farmer's Award for outstanding achievement and in 1966, the Pennsylvania Master Farmer Award.

Recently, Amos received the George Delp Award for being the most influential in promoting agribusiness within the county.

Although never a member of the Rotary Club or other service club, Amos was honored by the Rotary with a Harris Fellow Award in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relationships between people of the world.

He is active in church work. Although he is no longer able to play all the sports he formerly did, he remains an avid Nittany Lions fan and has season tickets for the Philadelphia Eagles. The Funks have six children and 11 grandchildren.

Amos continues to set goals. He would like to get more farmland preserved and to get a handle on nutrient management without polluting underground water that would allow farmers to make money.

"Of course," Amos added, "I never get over trying to grow better watermelon and cantaloupe."

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