

Timber Harvesters Prepare For Future

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Pennsylvania is one of three states participating in a U.S. Department of Agriculture effort to develop extension education programs in ecology and silviculture for loggers.

Along with Tennessee and North Carolina, Pennsylvania received a USDA Cooperative Extension Service grant to develop materials for a national effort called Logger Education to Advance Professionalism, or LEAP.

"The ecology and silviculture training is designed to sensitize loggers to environmental issues, improve their communication with natural resource professionals, and bolster their professional image," said Dr. James Finley, assistant professor of forestry in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, who is helping to

design the materials.

Fifteen loggers from Pennsylvania's northern tier participated in a LEAP pilot workshop held this fall at the USDA Forest Service's Kane Experimental Forest. The workshop featured 16 hours of field training and classroom instruction in ecology, biodiversity and silviculture, the art of managing a forest ecosystem.

"After we evaluate the response of participants, we'll make any necessary changes to the workshop materials," Finley said. "The revised materials will be included in a certification program for Pennsylvania's 3,000 timber harvesters."

The voluntary logger certification program is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Timber Harvesting Council and supported by environmental groups such as the Western Pennsylvania Conservan-

cy and the Nature Conservancy. Participants earned 3.2 logger training units for completing the ecology and silviculture workshop.

"This logger certification program is one of the nation's most intensive, and may be a model for the rest of the country," said Yuriy Bihun, project associate with the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program, who helped organize the pilot workshop.

Future workshops will be held in central and north central Pennsylvania in February and March

1993.

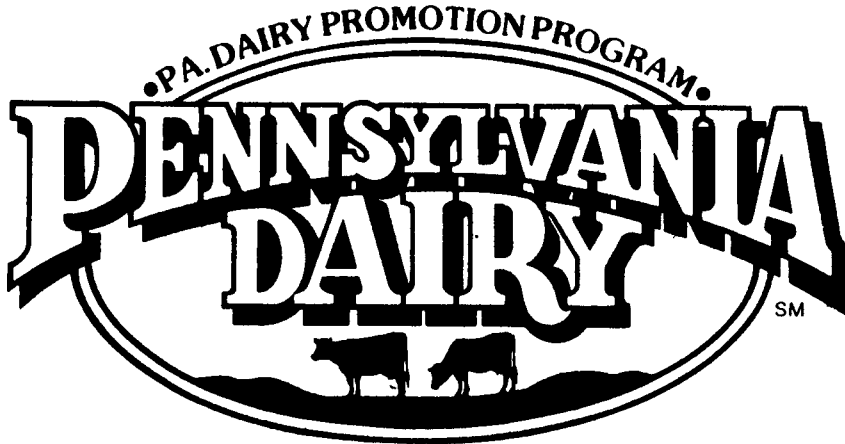
The complete Pennsylvania timber harvester certification also includes 70 hours of training in safety, production, erosion, and sedimentation control, business management, and wetlands protection.

"Loggers who participate in the certification program will benefit professionally from the latest information about forest resources, and they may benefit financially from reduced workers' compensation insurance rates for certified loggers," Bihun said.

"The forests also will benefit as loggers develop a better understanding of how their actions affect the forest system."

The Pennsylvania Timber Harvesting Council is a consortium of interests including Penn State Cooperative Extension, the forest products industry, the state Bureau of Forestry, and the NOR-TIM Corporation, a risk-management insurance company based in Pittsburgh.

For more information, contact the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program at (800) 235-WISE.



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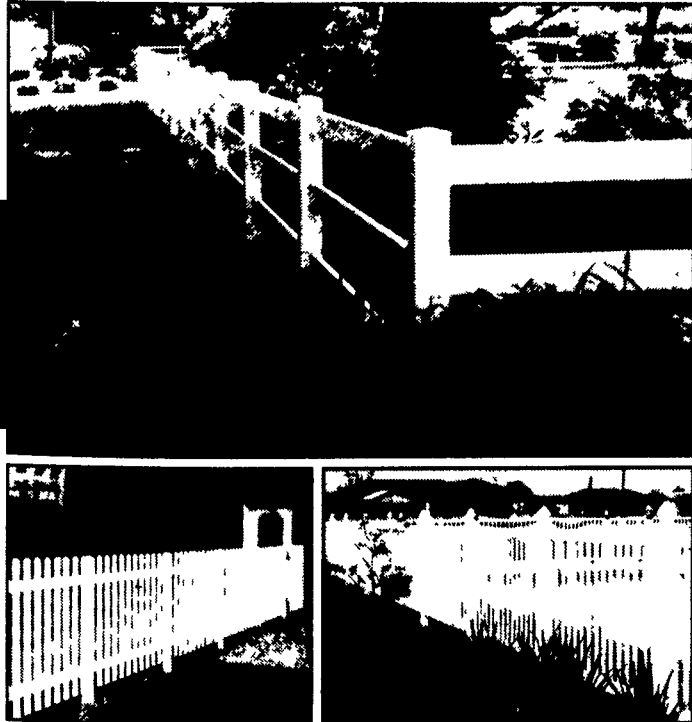
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