

# Many Factors Go Into Forage Establishment

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LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)  
— After looking at a weak stand of

corn, farmers often assume they've got a nutrient problem. But many times the problem is simply compaction.

In many cases, farmers mistake compaction problems for nutrient problems. But unless the problem is handled well, and the farmer takes a good, close look at his soil compaction management, future stands may continue to remain weak, according to Lynn Hoffman, Penn State agronomist, on Tuesday at the Lancaster County Crops and Soils Day.

Hoffman spoke to about 150 farmers and industry representatives at the day-long program, which included a special satellite teleconference featuring Penn State experts on forage crop establishment and management and nutrient and residue management.

A first-ever event at the Farm and Home Center, the conference, coordinated by Penn State, was beamed via an uplink from State College to a satellite (Galaxy 2, Ch. 15, some 25,000 miles up in space). Participants included Cambria, Pike, Somerset, Bedford, Jefferson, Lackawanna, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming, and Tioga counties, and various Penn State locations, including DuBois and Scranton. Also participating were extension offices in Delaware, West Virginia, Virginia, and



Via phone, and transmitted to many locations simultaneously, Dr. Douglas Beegle, left, answers a question in Lancaster from Cambria County. With him is Lynn Hoffman, agronomist, Penn State.

Maryland, coordinated by Milt Nelson, extension representative, Maryland.

Many of the questions at the end of the session were presented by

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## Mickey Plants Apple Trees

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job as he got 15 years ago?"

The last several years have been tough on Franklin County's

family-owned orchards. Mickey said that there are only a few small orchards like his that have no other income.

Starting 20 years ago, his family changed some of their operation to counter the hard economic times. "We went from being primarily processing and wholesale to primarily retail. My goal is to sell absolutely everything through the market."

Ninety percent of what he grows is now sold at the stand. Thirty years ago, it was ten percent.

Mickey also installed a trickle irrigation system on 50 acres of his 90 acre farm. It uses one-fifth of the water that would be used by shooting the water out over the trees.

"It took a lot of money and time, but it guarantees a crop even in a dry year. I want to increase my production of fruit per acre rather than my number of acres."

The farmer isn't getting his fair share of the food dollar for his investment, work and risk, Mickey said. "I'm entitled to as much of the good life as other people. Today's public is too many generations removed from the farm. They need an idea of what goes on out here. When I'm spraying, it's not because I want to but because I have to."



Steve Fales, associate professor, crop management from Penn State, left, appears via satellite uplink from Penn State with Dr. Ray Shipp, Penn State associate professor, agronomy at the Lancaster Crops Day on Tuesday. More satellite conferences are scheduled the next two weeks.

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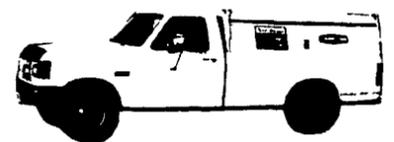
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