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Laptop Computers Come To The Barn

VERNON ACHENBACH, JR.

Lancaster Farming Staff
SCHAEFERSTOWN (Lebanon Co.) — Linda Genth is a milk technician for Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association.

Her schedule is full and irregular, mirroring the milking patterns of the owners of the dairy herds she includes on her list of clientele.

Her job is to gather data. However, it has become much more than that. She also serves as a data processor, printer, interpreter and delivery person.

That's the expanded role of milk technician under the new Pa.DHIA computer program options. The expanded role also calls for additional education. A technician must become computer proficient.

Not that they have to write any complicated computer programs; Pa.DHIA is continuing work on that through Jim Boyer.

Boyer has written and continues to modify the current barn sheet computer program with its wide, customizing flexibility.

The goal is not to razzle-dazzle the dairyman with interesting, but useless lists, charts and graphs, according to state DHIA officials. The goal is to eliminate the need of the dairyman to adapt to the paper-work limitations and constraints of the current barn sheet.

The computerized version will allow a dairyman to determine what information is important for him to keep.

Pa.DHIA also is gearing up for Dairy Comp 305, which is a program designed so that a dairy producer can take all of the information he has stored on the barn sheet for each cow and it can be compared, graphed, charted, or listed in almost everyway.

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Pa.DHIA tester Linda Genth shows John and Laurene Martin and their nephews Gary, left, and Micheal Hursh, the uses of a laptop computer in the barn.

Pork Producers' Livelihood May Depend On Improving Herd Genetics

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff
EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — Packers constantly remind pork producers to get their product leaner or risk being able to make a living.

Producers don't have to panic, however. There are methods they can use to improve their herds genetically and affect their profits — or losses.

For the past 27 years, a top Canadian breeder has tried the latest genetic technology and techniques to reach the standards demanded by packers and consumers. Along the way, the producer claims great inroads to success that

have directly benefitted the profits of many producers from Canada who face tough competition in North American and worldwide markets.

In this region of the country, producers can realize a better return from their product by improving herd genetics. The place to start is with the "four-way cross," according to Richard Stein, owner of Thames Bend Farms Breeding Stock Company in Ontario, Canada. Stein spoke to pork producers at a special swine biotechnology meeting on Tuesday night at the Ephrata High School.

Genetic base

For producers, the most dollar return can be obtained by using a Hampshire/Duroc boar on a York/Landrace female, according to Stein. The reason? "It will give you the most free use of the genetic base," he said, which provides producers "with the heterosis that will give you higher birth weights, higher litter weights, more pigs born alive," and important carcass

characteristics that packers demand.

Stein said that the most dollar return, in Thames Bend experience dealing with breeders in Canada and U.S., comes from using a Hampshire/Duroc boar. Durocs provide the best marbling and best flavor of any pork being produced today worldwide, according to the swine breeder. Hampshires provide the biggest loin eyes com-

pared to other breeds. And the Yorkshire and Landrace breeds are important to increase litter size and survivability.

"In Canada, it's an accepted industry standard to use the York/Landrace female — an F1 female — not a 'mongrelized' animal... that has three and four and five crosses in it. Those animals cost you money," he said.

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Feet Condition Reveals Cattle Health

VERNON ACHENBACH, JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff

PRESCOTT (Lebanon Co.) — The horn of the claw of the foot of cattle is a diary about the care and health of that animal, according to Dr. Paul Greenough, cattle veterinarian with the Western College of Veterinary Medicine with the University of Saskatchewan.

Like rings on a tree, it is possible to tell if an animal has been stressed and generally what kind of stress it was under by examining the horn.

Greenough was the speaker at the Penn State Extension-sponsored dairy day events this week in Lancaster and Lebanon counties. While he wasn't the only speaker, his presentation dominated the event.

For the past few years, extension agents from Lebanon and Lancaster counties has collaborated with their dairy day events, offering almost identical programs.

Lancaster held its event Tuesday at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center, Lebanon on Wednesday at the Prescott Fire Hall, in Prescott.

Greenough was the featured speaker at both events, his presence coming at the request and with the sponsorship of area large animal veterinarians because of

Greenough's acknowledged expertise with cattle feet and legs.

The topic is timely, according to the extension agents, because of an apparently growing incidence in cattle, especially dairy cattle, of feet and leg problems.

Using several trays of graphic slides, Greenough talked about the causes of a number of foot problems.

He explained the structure of the foot, its interior composition and

the functions.

In a paper he distributed, Greenough wrote, "In recent years European veterinarians have come to realize that when lameness becomes a herd problem it is necessary to look further that at accidental causes for an explanation.

"More and more evidence is being accumulated that laminitis is

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Berks 4-H Slates Second Jamboree

CONNIE LEINBACH
Berks Co. Correspondent
LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — The Berks County 4-H will present another Jamboree on Saturday, March 6, from 6 to 11 p.m. here in the 4-H Community Center.

This is the second hoedown held to raise funds to build a pole barn behind the center, said Rick Kauffman, 4-H extension agent.

Along with square dancing to the music of the Blue Marsh Ramblers, there will be an auction of various items and services organized by Mike Firestone of Lebanon Valley National Bank, the auction sponsor.

Since the land was leveled last spring by the volunteer efforts of

members of Local 542 of the Operating Engineers union, Kauffman and other volunteers have been working on obtaining drawings for the site.

"We have the building plans," Kauffman said. "Now we have to decide how to go after the money."

A dinner featuring beef barbecue catered by Big John will precede the festivities.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 6 to 18. Children under 6 are free.

Tickets are available through Berks County 4-H office, (215) 378-1327, or at Big John's Restaurant on Schuylkill Avenue, Reading, and at Keystone Farm Credit in Shoemakersville.



Recently Connie Rutt spent three weeks in Poland to help set up a 4-H program. Connie used slides of the dairy farm she and her husband Ken operate to help the people understand the concept of sole proprietorship. For more about Extension's work in Poland, turn to page B2.