

## Have You Heard?

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### EASTER DINNER-SERVE IT SAFELY

Easter will be a special day in many homes, when families and relatives gather to celebrate and enjoy dinner together. Food safety precautions will help insure a pleasant holiday for you and yours.

Ham, the traditional Easter meat, contains some bacteria. Bacteria are found in the air we breathe, on our skin, everywhere. Under certain conditions, bacteria multiply very rapidly. This is what you want to avoid.

Hams labeled "cured" or "cured and smoked" must be cooked before you eat them. They need to be cooked to an internal temperature of 160 degrees F. to bring out their best flavor and tenderness. Fully cooked hams have been cured and cooked by the packer and they only need to be reheated to an internal temperature of 140 degrees F.

Never leave cooked or uncooked ham at room temperature for more than two hours. Keep it COLD (below 40 degrees F.) or HOT (above 140 degrees F.).

People with colds and infections, or sores or cuts on their hands, should not handle food, especially perishable foods such as ham or other meats and poultry. This may spread bacteria.

Keep half hams, cured ham slices or fresh ham, no more than three days before cooking. Once open, any canned ham should be refrigerated. Check labels to see if it needs refrigeration before opening. Use it within seven days.

Creamed vegetables are perishable items, too. Serve them immediately. Do not allow them to stand at room temperature for

more than two hours. Use some method of keeping them hot (above 140 degrees F.).

Cream-filled desserts such as cream puffs or cream pies are extremely perishable. Make them shortly before serving; keep them refrigerated; and do not keep leftovers, even though they are refrigerated, more than a day.

Easter eggs are decorative and fun for youngsters to make. But, if you intend to eat the eggs, keep them refrigerated. If you use eggs as a table centerpiece, they should not be used for longer than two hours. Then, they can be refrigerated and eaten. Otherwise, just use the eggs as decorations and do not plan to eat them.

Can you prepare and serve Easter dinner to avoid foodborne illness? Your family may enjoy meals everyday without problems, but on holidays when large groups get together, the types and larger quantities of foods present different problems. You may not have enough refrigerator space.

Foodborne illness can cause diarrhea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and other unpleasant symptoms which can last for several hours or even days. With young children and elderly people, the results can be more severe. Often, people mistake foodborne illness for a simple "bug" or virus. The real cause may be food that was not properly handled, prepared, or served. This can be prevented.

Perishable foods such as cooked poultry, seafood, and meats should be kept HOT or COLD. Remember bacteria grows best in lukewarm foods. Never allow these foods to stand at room temperature more than 2 hours.

Holiday meals are fun but they

## Bull Behavior

(Continued from Page B14)

"It's a well-funded group," said Ray. "And a lot of people believe in it. What I believe in, I'm not trying to push my ideas on you — you got your own ideas. But that's not their way of thinking. They got to push their ideas on you."

### Alert and educate

What PCA is trying to do is alert and educate their 1,100 members about implementing animal welfare activities in their operations. One concern is downed cattle — what to do about them?

"It's a bad thing," said Ray, "and there really isn't a complete answer for it, because when you haul a load of cattle any distance, there may be a weak one in there that gets down. And when they get to the unloading destination, they got to have a place to unload it. And when they have to hook a chain to it and tow it off the truck, that isn't a pleasant thing to do. I'm sure they don't like it any more than anybody else, but it's a job that must be done. The most human way is to put an animal out of its misery. Most people believe that, but there's always a few that don't."

PCA continues to act as a support organization for the many small producers, who find it increasingly hard to compete for the consumer dollar (especially when consumers are preferring poultry and swine products more often). Ray said the PCA doesn't have the money to spend on advertising that other organizations have. Other industries are supposed to need careful planning. Ask yourself how many people you can safely serve? How much time will it take to prepare the food? Don't try to feed more people than you can handle. Consider the size and quantity of your cooking equipment, your supply of eating utensils and dishes. Figure out how much refrigerator space you will need to store foods safely. Enjoy your Easter dinner, but serve it safely.

ported because they are contract-type, such as feed companies owning poultry and swine. Without the checkoff, beef producers would be "snowed under."

Ray remains grateful that packers such as Moyer and Taylor, who hold positions on the PCA board, continue to remain in the area and purchase beef. Producers would have a very difficult time, according to Ray, selling beef otherwise.

### Supports activities

Nevertheless, through the contributions of industry and individual producers, the PCA continues to support activities which promote beef.

One of the promotions includes youth groups that require money to attend trips as part of meat judging contests. The Penn State meat judging team captured first place in the recent NCA convention in Phoenix.



Ray Grimes, right, works with his 3,000-pound Charolais bull, "Max," paraded last Saturday at the annual Adams County Beef Producers Association Beef Ball during the famous Parade of Bulls at the New Oxford Social Club Pavilion in New Oxford. The bull, one of 12 breeds presented, was paraded by 14-year-old Donna Classen.

## Butchering And Conducting

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"Country-cured hams are our special niche," Rotz said. No one else in the area produces dry-cured hams, and there are only a few others in the state, he said.

Fresh hams are rubbed with a

dry sugar cure made from the family's recipe, and kept at 36-38 degrees for eight weeks. They are smoked over a hickory wood fire for two or three days, then hung in a drying room for three weeks.

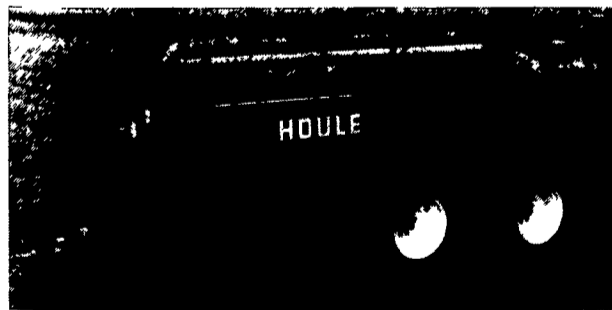
No water is added. The hams lose about 20 percent of their weight during the process, Rotz said.

There is one similarity between Rotz's two seemingly disparate interests. He said of his family's business, "This is an art, not a science."

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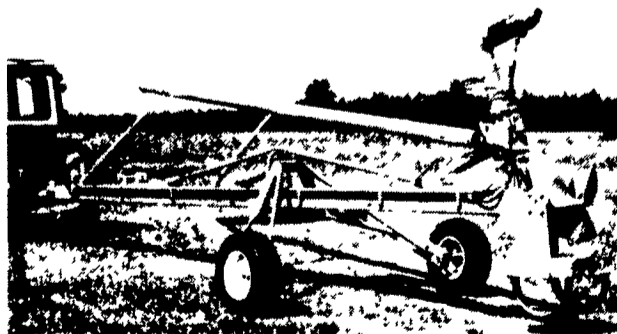
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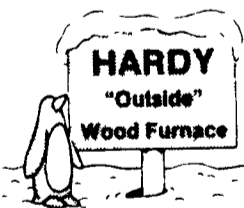
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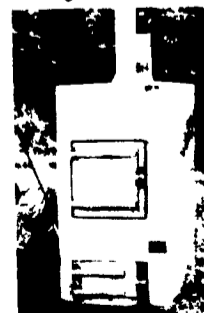
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