

## In Rain, Snow, Whatever — They Care

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Talking with those who fed and watered and otherwise cared for some 1,500 of Penn State's animals during the Blizzard of '93, you'd think it was just another day.

When asked about their experience, Department of Dairy and Animal Science employees said it was pretty much like any other day, except there was a lot of snow. Maybe it's just modesty, but more likely that attitude is a reflection of their day-in and day-out work ethic.

These workers simply give 100 percent every day. To them, the welfare of the University herds and flocks is always uppermost in their minds — weather or not. It took a little prodding, but stories of selflessness, adversity, and heroism began to surface.

In anticipation of the upcoming storm, staffers and student employees began to arrive at their work stations well-prepared with extra clothing and plenty of food. When clothes became too wet to wear, they were left to dry on radiators and heaters and replaced with second or third sets of dry ones. Saturday crews began stockpiling feed and preparing bedding for the animals while the ordeal was getting underway outside. Many of them came prepared to stay the duration, leaving families behind to carry on until the wind and snow subsided enough to return home.

Before the weekend was over, many were to log more than a week's worth of hours in a little more than two days of around-the-clock time. They slept only briefly on couches, cots, or wherever they could curl up. Dairy Center Manager Walker McNeill reported that six of his employees—from 5:30 a.m. on Saturday through 2:30 a.m. on Monday—did the work of 11, and did it under extreme conditions. They contended with drifts four to eight feet high just to move the cows between the milking parlor and the barns.

Beef and Forage Herd Manager Pete LeVan cleared chest-high snow from an outdoor pen at Haller Farm just in time for a heifer to calve. Swine Center student workers Tom Byer, Matt Fenton, and Gary Schick carried feed in plastic bags 1,000 feet through waist-high snow to animals housed in outdoor shelters, then cleared paths for their charges to get to water troughs, which are heated to prevent freezing.

Fellow student Greg Wacik was making similar efforts at the Deer Pens as he attempted to keep full feed bins 100 feet from the barn in nine different directions. He walked on top of the snow much of the time, often right over the top of fences. It took an hour-and-a-half to do what usually takes 20 minutes. Wacik, who walked in one-half mile from Fox Hollow Road, said the yearlings had the toughest time, but deer mostly bed down when bad weather threatens. Sull, the animals came out to greet him every time he approached. "They always seem glad to see you," he said, "even if they already have feed. They seem to appreciate you just being there."

Dairy Center student employee Terry Martin, who said he came in because he knew others wouldn't be able to make it, trudged through the drifts from Beaver Hill Apartments to help. Martin spent 18 hours digging out feed. He was one of six people from the Dairy Center crew who expressed

their thanks to McNeill's wife, Jean, for feeding them a hearty dinner on Sunday. They said eggs, sausage, grits, warm applesauce, and biscuits never tasted so good.

Beth Garver and Chris Polacek, also student employees at the Dairy Center, brought food from Hardy's when they reported Friday evening, prepared to stay. When that ran out, they raided the student apartment upstairs, confiscating canned goods and other foodstuffs they planned to replace after the storm, and then enjoyed Jean's Sunday meal. Workers at the Beef and Sheep Center had a two-day stack of pizzas delivered before the roads became impassable.

Meanwhile, down at the Horse Barn, Brian Egan and student Jay Brehm not only kept the horses fed and watered, but trudged through the snow and wind to bring in seven brood mares and seven yearlings which were out on pasture. They even managed to breed a mare and deliver a foal.

Brenda Hogan and Jackie Reed, both student workers at the Sheep Center, logged 30 hours keeping the flock fed during the blizzard. Even Rock, the resident Border Collie, who usually beds down in an outdoor kennel, spent the weekend warm and safe inside.

Beef Center employee George McQuiston said the weekend was quite an experience, one that is "nice to be done with." He spent much of Saturday morning trying to dig out the road at Beef Center before helping deliver several



Blizzard, a Holstein calf, and Snowflake, an Angus calf, joined the Penn State herds at the height of the Blizzard of '93. Shown here with four of the 22 employees with the Department of Dairy and Animal Science, who worked around the clock to keep more than 1,500 animals fed and cared for during the severe weather, are, left to right, Don Nichols, Myron Rudy, Pete LeVan, and Dick Todd.

calves. McQuiston said he believed the experience helped everyone get to know one another better.

Night shift dairy worker Boyd Homan, who used a skid loader to clear his home lane because it was too deep to plow, said he enjoyed working with the morning shift.

When all roads from Bellefonte

were closed on Saturday and Dave Hosterman was stranded at home, he kept in touch with the three young men at the Swine Center via telephone.

Dairy Supervisor Myron Rudy, who called the student employees "lifesavers," said, "We really would have been stuck without

them."

Haller Farm's Pete LeVan said everyone gave service above and beyond the call of duty.

Other employees who worked during the blizzard include Craig Fleck, Scott Marsteller, Don Nichols, Tim Smeltzer, Dick Todd, and Dan Walters.

## Agriculture Top Industry In Tioga County

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— Agriculture is number one in Tioga County. That was the message delivered to those attending the Potter-Tioga Chapter of the Pennsylvania Farmers Association annual banquet April 1. Among those in the audience were members of the Tioga County Development Corporation (TCDC), a volunteer group of county residents whose goals are to create employment opportunities, raise wage scales, and provide adequate housing, health care, transportation and communication systems within the county. Many of TCDC's members include business owners or department figureheads of prominent institutions within the county. As part of their plan to achieve their goals, they hired consultant Wade VanLandingham with Richard C. Sutter and Associates, a comprehensive planning and economic development firm out of Holidaysburg. It was VanLandingham who spoke of agriculture's importance as an industry in Tioga County at the banquet.

"Agriculture is important to Tioga County," said VanLandingham; "much more so than I was at first led to believe, and much more so than what I was expected to find as I was driving around the county." For generating income within the county, the consultant was brought in under the assumption that travel and tourism was the leading industry. "Most other people within the county don't know how important agriculture here is, either." Directing his comments to the farmers present, he said, "You need to blow your own horn."

Citing 1989 figures from the most recent Pennsylvania statistical abstract, VanLandingham



Karl Kroeck, president of the Potter-Tioga Chapter of PFA, welcomes those attending the annual banquet.

said, "Agriculture employs twice as many people as travel and tourism, and it generates twice as much in total gross sales as travel and tourism; twelve hundred people verses six hundred; generates about 55 million dollars in gross revenue verses 25 million in gross revenue"

"Agriculture employs four times as many people in Tioga County as in the Commonwealth, as a whole. Tioga County ranks 14th in the State in value of agricultural production, and it ranked 11th in value of dairy production. It ranked 5th in value of production per cow per person person residence of the county."

But, as the consultant pointed out, because agriculture has such tremendous impact on the local economy, there are potential problems. Comparing wage growth and income growth in the Commonwealth overall, farm family incomes did not rise as quickly as

incomes elsewhere, therefore, Tioga County incomes did not rise as quickly. Seventy percent of agricultural production in Tioga County is dairy, which is not currently a growth industry.

With this in mind, TCDC is looking to bring dairy-valued industry into the area to provide another avenue of marketing the milk produced within the county. As a joint effort, TCDC invited farmers to express their ideas on how to strengthen the link between agriculture and other county industries.

State Representative Matt Baker was on hand to congratulate the farm industry, as well as TCDC, for putting the program together. In reference to agriculture throughout the state, Baker said, "The State budget is \$15 billion dollars, and agriculture should reflect that. Unfortunately, the budget in promotion of dairy products and research will be taking some cuts as proposed by the Governor. We will try to change that if we can and refocus where the focus should be in this state and that's our number 1 industry, agriculture."

Other guest speakers at the banquet were Ed Lazowski, Pioneer Hi-Bred Field Sales Manager; Bob Weller, Agway Regional Manager; Bob Reich, Northeastern Farm Credit CEO; Richard Denison, PFA Associate Administrator; Gene Field, PFA ROD; Beth Ask, Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hospital Dietitian; Ann Krohn, Project Concern coordinator; and Bob Blair, TCDC Secretary.

Lazowski, who spoke on the future of farming, said we will continue to see a sharp increase in productivity. "To be a low cost producer has been the way to be profitable, and that, too, is going to continue. It is necessary to

improve demand to where it will absorb normal production at prices that will return a reasonable profit to the average producer." According to Lazowski, that is the challenge and farmers need to adjust to that challenge to make their farms profitable.

Nutrition, diet, and health will also continue to be major concerns in the future, Lazowski stated. "While the same foods and fiber will be utilized, the trend will be away from animal meat and fat, towards more fruits, vegetables, and complex carbohydrates.

This message was reinforced by Ask who gave the food pyramid as an example of how Americans should eat on a daily basis. The majority of our food consumption, according to the pyramid, should range between 6 and 11 servings in the bread, cereal, rice, and pasta group, followed by 3 to 5 servings from the vegetable group and 2 to 4 servings from the fruit group. Dairy products as a group and the group comprised of meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts should consist of 2 to 3 servings per day. The least desired group is the fats, oils and sweets, which should be used sparingly.

To stress her point, Ask planned a nutritious luncheon based on the food pyramid to give those attending the meeting an idea of how the food groups can be used accordingly on a day-to-day basis.

Adding to the overview of the farming industry, Krohn gave a presentation on major health concerns for farmers ranging from machinery accidents, to injuries from animals or chemicals and cleaning solutions, to respiratory problems in breathing such toxins as silo gas, hay dust, molds, and spores. Tips on how to handle or possibly avoid dangerous situations were discussed, as well as what to do if the problems occur.