

Coolidge Dairy Of Distinction

(Continued from Page A29)

Once milk leaves the farm, there's more to it, and to understand some of that is valuable.

"Being involved with the co-operatives gives you access to resource people and lets you know what technology is available. You learn how to decide what techniques should or shouldn't be a part of your operation, how it can improve your efficiency, and why yours may be different from other operations. You learn to be a goal-setter — you learn to project where you want to be three or five or ten years out and how you are going to get there."

Indeed, with all Erick has learned over the years, he has become a respected figure in the agricultural community, as well as in other fields of interest. He has served as GOP chairman for Tioga County, is a trustee for the Coolidge Hollow Methodist Church, is on the board of directors for the Little League and Laurel Health Services, and has been a 20-year

member and past president of the Wellsboro Men's Chorus.

He has been a Dairylea sub-district president for 10 years. Recently, he represented Dairylea at the Northeast Dairy Conference held at the Hilton Hotel in Corning, N.Y., where he served on a panel with George Miller of Clifton Springs, N.Y. representing Upstate Milk, and Bob Foster of Middleburg, Vt. representing Agri-Mark. Their topic of discussion focused on what they felt would affect the farmer most during the next 10 years.

Erick said he believed the major influences were based on technology, legislation, and regulation, and economics and marketing factors. Speaking on the technological aspects of his presentation, he said, "There seems to be an overwhelming feeling that technology has some pitfalls and is therefore viewed negatively, particularly where biotechnology is concerned."

"Looking back at mechanical technology, we quickly adapted to

the larger tractors, balers, bulk tanks. It is the same with information technology. A smart businessman realizes how quickly he can access, on a daily or weekly basis, information that is pertinent to his business through the use of computers, fax machines, etc." The Coolidges use a computer for keeping farm records and payroll. They are in the process of expanding the memory to incorporate the machine's use even more in their dairy operation.

"Biotechnology is just as important," said Erick. "With scientific technology, the possibilities that open up for us are almost beyond our imagination. It fits, it can enhance our operation."

"But we're not educating the consumer as readily as special interest groups are who resort to scare tactics to create a negative viewpoint," said Erick. "I don't claim to be an expert, but those who I rely on to inform of these issues get their information from several sources, not just one."

As an example, Erick cited the

controversy over the hormone bovine somatotropin (BST) that causes the cow to make more milk. "It's already naturally produced in the cow. We didn't breed it into them." But there are some that are against increasing the level of BST in a cow through added injections. Their objections may be based on the fear of farmers using BST to increase milk production, thereby flooding an already overflowing market.

"Others dislike the idea of using BST for fear that it will somehow contaminate the cow and cause health problems in anyone who consumes the milk or meat."

Discussing these two negative speculations, Eric said, "Here is where the farmer becomes a manager. Using a larger tractor, plow, disc in the long run has also help-

ed the farmer make more milk. If he chooses to use BST, he would need less cows to produce the same amount of milk he's producing now. With less cows, he'd need less feed and his costs would go down. Lower costs, more profits.

"As far as a health threat, it would not, could not enter the food chain unless it was thoroughly proven to be safe."

For Erick, educating the public to such truths is a responsibility the agriculture industry must undertake if it is to survive in the future. As one farmer very much involved in many of the organizations that make up that industry, Erick said, "We are here for only a short time. What we choose to do is up to us."

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Ag Association Elects Officers

MILLHEIM (Centre Co.) — During its April meeting, the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) board of directors met in Harrisburg to elect officers for the 1993-1994 year.

Elected by their fellow board members were president, Preston Boop, grain and livestock producer, Union County; vice president, Cass Peterson, vegetable producer, Fulton County; treasurer, Paul Shaw, general manager, Walnut Acres, Snyder County; and secretary, Lamonte Barber, agricultural policy specialist, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Harrisburg.

PASA Board members previously elected by the general membership at its February meeting are Lee Bentz, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture; Leslie Bresee, dairyman, Bradford County; Ellen Dietrich, Soil Conservation Service, Clinton County; Bud Glendenning, vegetable producer, Armstrong County; Robert Junk, President PFU, dairyman, Fayette County; Betsy Lyman, agricultural researcher, Rodale Research Center; Anne Nordell, vegetable producer, Lycoming County; Phil Rzewnicki, cooperative extension, Blair County; Carolyn Sachs, professor of rural sociology, Penn State; Jodie Snyder, president Pennsylvania

OCIA, hog and poultry producer, Schuylkill County; Maria van Hekken, associate director, SANRUE.

PASA is a coalition of Pennsylvania farmers, consumers, industries, and educators working toward the development of sustainable food and farming systems statewide. The board is responsible for programs which provide general education and outreach on sustainable and organic agriculture, on-farm demonstrations and field days of sustainable productions systems and techniques, new and innovative strategies for marketing sustainable and organically produced crops and livestock, and policy directions in support of sustainable agriculture.

PASA is also initiating farmer-to-farmer networks for information sharing and support and has begun programs to establish linkages between sustainable producers and urban consumers, distributors, and marketers. The quarterly newsletter, *PAS-SAGES*, keeps members informed about sustainable ag happenings around the state.

For more information, a sample newsletter, or membership materials, contact PASA, PO Box 316, Millheim, PA 16854.

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