

Lancaster Farming

Vol. 38 No. 29

Four Sections

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, May 29, 1993

60¢ Per Copy

\$19.75 Per Year



The Fink family owns 1,000 acres of Heidel Hollow Farm near Germansville, in the rolling hills of northwestern Lehigh County. The farm took its name from Heidelberg Township and the natural hollow in the hills where the farmstead sits. From left, Sonia and David Fink, son Michael, and David's father, Orrin. Photo by Andy Andrews.

Award-Winning Alfalfa Producer Knows Importance Of Growing Conditions

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
GERMANSVILLE (Lehigh Co.) — David Fink remembers last year's wet, cool summer, and how much it threatened his quality alfalfa growing on the family's Heidel Hollow Farm.

Six solid weeks, he said, of wet weather lasted from July 4 until August 10, 1992. But despite dealing with a loss of some 40 acres because of a related fungus disease, rhizoctonia, he was still able to get in a good three cuttings.

The farm depends on good weather conditions, the right planting times, a good seed, and quality soil preparations to continue its bread-and-butter business — hay making. For his farm's efforts in producing and promoting the "queen of forages," and for serving the industry, Fink was recently honored with the Producer Award

for the Northeast region from the Certified Alfalfa Seed Council at this year's alfalfa awards program in Appleton, Wis.

Stands fair

So far, this year, of the 600 acres of hay he grows (250 acres of pure alfalfa, 250 acres of an alfalfa/timothy hay mix, and 100 acres of pure timothy), the stands look fair. "That's all I can say," he told *Lancaster Farming* during a recent interview at his farm. "It only looks fair, it doesn't look great.

"We need rain," he said, which he soon obtained as a storm system came through the southeastern portion of the state. "This rain was timely — we needed this."

Last year, the best forage tested was about 20 percent protein with a relative feed value of 160 — not

(Turn to Page A20)

Proposed Seasonal Farm Labor Regulations Threaten Family Farms

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Pennsylvania farmers could face more difficulties hiring help if proposed laws and regulations for farm labor and seasonal farm labor are approved, according to a lobbyist for the Pennsylvania Farmers Association.

Karl Brown is PFA director of agricultural employers programs, and, in addition to helping members understand labor laws, he works in Harrisburg to lobby for

PFA's position on labor issues.

On Thursday, Brown said that PFA members need to be aware of two efforts now at the state level which would change farm labor laws and regulations. He said the effect would potentially drive many typical farm family operations out of business or make it prohibitively expensive to hire anyone to help run the farm.

The most pending problem comes from the state Department of Environmental Resources (DER), which has responsibility for ensuring certain standards for the physical conditions of seasonal farm labor camps.

Brown said that, because of a 1988 court settlement stipulation that DER signed, new regulations now proposed by DER would open up the legal definition of a seasonal farm labor camp to include many family farms where housing is included as part of the compensation or housing is provided.

Brown said the proposed regulations, which were recently approved by the Environmental Quality Board, are mandated through a court agreement.

In 1984, on behalf of mushroom workers, a group sued DER claiming that it wasn't correctly implementing the provisions of the Seasonal Farm Labor Act. DER has had this responsibility since the 1978, when the act was passed.

In 1988, to settle the matter, DER agreed in court documents to create stricter regulations to ensure proper facilities for seasonal farm laborers.

(Turn to Page A30)

Tobacco Planting Off To Slow Start



Like other crops this year, tobacco planting in Lancaster County is off to a slow start. A few farmers in the Ephrata area had plants under glass, and small patches were planted as early as two weeks ago. Farmers who depend on plants shipped from the South were reported still waiting late this week.

Several farmers started to plant from locally grown outdoor beds. In the photo, from left, Robert, Gary, and Richard Neff were pulling tobacco plants on one of their farms along Sheep Lane southwest of Millersville Thursday morning. The Neffs began to plant on Monday, and the plants were growing fast enough to keep the planter going. High winds Thursday dried the fields and was hard on the newly planted tobacco.

Many farmers say they will reduce acres planted because of the unprofitability of last year's prices. The Neffs usually plant 22 to 25 acres. This year they will plant 20 acres that include three or four acres of Maryland type. They don't understand a market that saw a range of \$.50 to \$1.20 last year, but two years ago they received a good price. So they keep planting each year and take the bad years with the good years.

Photo by Everett Newswanger, managing editor.

Office Closed Monday Dairy Issue Next Week

Lancaster Farming's annual dairy issue will be in your hands next week. Again, we have special stories and also messages from our advertisers. Farm interviews come from all across the area, and experts write about forage and dairy herd management.

As usual, the first of our dairy contest recipes will be published, and our livestock, grain, and auction reports and regular columns will be in place.

Watch for next week's special tribute to the dairy farmers and agri-businesses which help provide the consumer with all those good dairy products.

Special Note: Our office will be closed Monday, May 31, to observe Memorial Day. But our office will reopen for business at 8 a.m. Tuesday morning.