

Promoting Beef

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foster beef promotions. This past summer, recipe demonstrations went on in several select supermarkets in the region.

In the promotions, Balthaser said the Council relies on either the store or the store supplier to supply the beef. Beef representatives — this year, Tammy Gelsinger and Amy Eshelman, both from Berks County — provided the cooking demonstrations.

The Beef Council, however, relies on packers and retailers to supply the product because of an increasingly tight advertising budget. While the Council can supply various "hands-on, tangible" items such as recipes, bumper stickers, balloons, pins, etc., according to Balthaser, the Council cannot supply free beef products.

For every head of cattle sold, a checkoff of \$1 goes toward the promotion of beef. "We are looking at limited funds, and a limited

budget," she said. The cost of advertising, according to Balthaser, has increased since 1986, when the checkoff started, while cattle supplies in the state have remained level. "Our money isn't buying the media exposure it once bought. We are seeing an erosion in the buying power of beef checkoff dollars," she said.

Sprint car races are more widely televised now, and will reach more people. This year alone, about 20 races will be televised throughout the country. "This is what we gotta do," he said. A program is televised every Saturday night, called Slick 50, that reaches thousands — the potential target market for beef promotion.

The livestock buyer believes more producers and those in the industry should also get more involved in getting the message out. Recently, on a trip to Iowa, a top IBP executive told Weikert that the giveaway sandwich promotion and the advertising on the



Jim Baumgardner helps prepare the roast beef at the special beef giveaway at the Speedway.

sprint car was the best promotion he had ever seen. and making good communication."

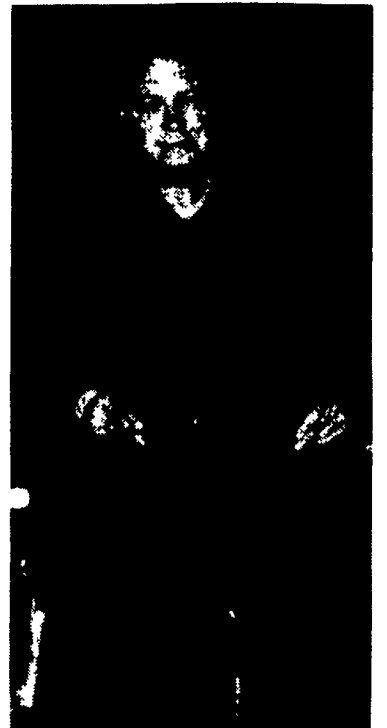
"I think this is a wonderful thing," said Weikert. "You can't beat getting in contact with people Weikert is in business with his four sons, Jeff, Robert Jr., Howard, and Tod.



Tammy Balthaser, industry relations/compliance manager of the Pennsylvania Beef Council, back, helps hand out free beef sandwiches during the special Beef Night at the Speedway last August.



Roberta Gribel, president of Juniata County Ag Society, left joins Tom Little, Speedway announcer, center and Bob Weikert during Beef Night at the Port Royal Speedway.



Bob Weikert was recently honored for his contributions to racing by the Port Royal Speedway in August.



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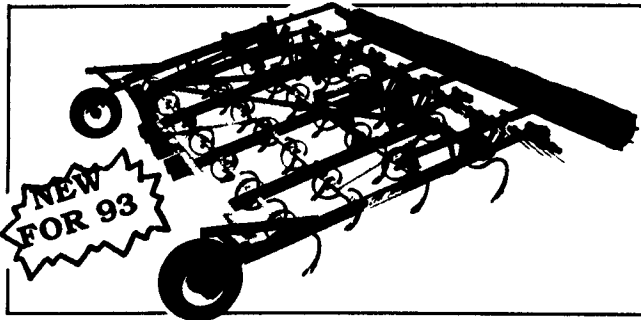


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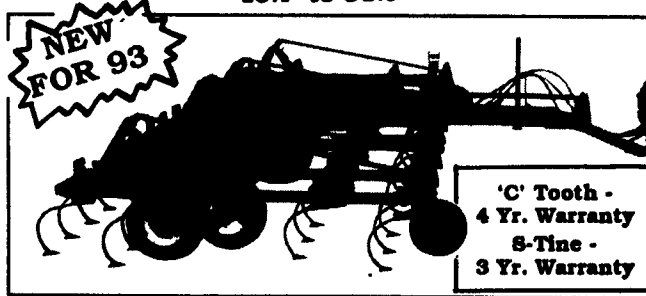
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