

Resources Program Features Pasture Tour

MONTROSE (Susquehanna Co.) — Rainy weather was certainly not enough to convince farmers and area agency people not to come along on the third annual Susquehanna Co. Fall Pasture Tour.

This year's tour was cosponsored by Sonny Golden of Golden Associates in Springville and the Resources Available to Farmers (ReAF) program, which is one of several Susquehanna Conserva-

tion District projects.

Some people travelled from as far north as Canada and as far south as Lancaster and the State College area.

This group of as many as 110 people had two things in mind that day: to view the intensively grazed pastures of five farmers and to speak to these farmers and ask questions. The tour provided a real variety of pasture designs, water systems, and supplemental

feeding, but all agreed that intensively managed pastures is the most profitable way to feed dairy cows.

The tour started at the Dean Mack farm in Brooklyn Twp. Mack milks about 70 Holsteins in a freestall setup and supplements his pasture with a total mixed ration (TMR) fed in the barn. Mack has been using rotational grazing for two years. This year he

has documented savings averaging 42 percent of feed cost over the pasture season, which included some very hot, dry weather.

The next stop was Dave Lauer's farm in Springville. Lauer has been using rotational grazing for seven years. He has solved his problem of providing water to his cows on pasture by building a trailer with a water tank on it. Also, on this trailer, he keeps a fresh supply of dry hay or balage and minerals. Lauer, like the other farmers visited during this tour, are very conscious of cow comfort. During some of the hottest weather, the cows were allowed to return to the barn early for shade, where they were kept cool with fans.

Daryl Button's farm was the next stop for the day. One of the first things you notice here is that there are no electric fences at all. The next thing you notice is the lush green grasses and clovers on the hillside by the barn. Instead of confining cows in a small area with electric fence, he employs a unique clipping strategy. Each week he mows a small section of the pasture. The cows then have the choice of eating fresh mowed wilted matter or lush regrowth in another spot. Button's only equipment is a tractor, a rotary mower, and a manure spreader. Winter feeding consists of grain and hay, all of which is purchased. Button has one of Susquehanna County's top producing dairy herds while maintaining very low feed costs.

Jim Garner's farm in Montrose has been involved with intensive

grazing for three years. Much of the pasture improvement here has been implemented as part of his Chesapeake Bay Program conservation plan. Another integral part of this operation is the manure composting. Much of the manure and bedding is composted and sold bulk to local homeowners. A spring development was installed two years ago, which provides water to each paddock. Garner has minimal equipment and purchases most of his winter feed. He also stresses the importance of grazing a follow-up group behind the milking cows. This leads to better quality pasture and provides very inexpensive feed for heifers or dry cows. During this part of the tour, participants looked at several displays. Duane Pysher from SCS showed many types of fencing materials and gadgets. Wayne Ray, Endless mts. RC&D, demonstrated a Rife water pump.

The last stop of the day was Winston Wright's farm in Rush Twp. The Wright's dairy consists of about 65 milk cows. Prior to setting up this grazing system, the herd had been totally confined. Wright has been experimenting with different seedlings to help out during his summer slump. He has tried such things as clovers, tall fescue, mattua, gammagrass, and perennial rye. Wright also told about his experiences raising calves on pasture. They have been feeding milk in New Zealand-style nipple barrel feeders. They have had very comparable results with the calves grown in the barn but with much less labor and lower feed costs.

Vegetable Estimates Released

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Contracted production for Pennsylvania processing sweet corn in 1993 is estimated at 8,360 tons, down from last year's 15,210 tons. Area for harvest is estimated at 2,200 acres, 400 acres more than the 1,800 contracted a year ago. Expected yield is 3.8 tons per acre, down from last year's yield of 8.45 tons.

Contracted production for processing tomatoes is expected to total 16,110 tons, compared to 34,200 tons contracted in 1992.

Harvested acres should total 900, 300 acres less than a year ago. Average yield per acre is expected to be 17.90 tons, compared to last year's yield of 28.50 tons per acre.

Contracted production for Pennsylvania snap beans in 1993 is estimated at 6,600 tons, compared to 13,620 tons in 1992. Area for harvest is estimated at 3,300 acres, down from 5,400 harvested acres in 1992. Expected yield is 2.0 tons per acre, down from last year's yield of 2.52 tons per acre.

United States' sweet corn pro-

cessing plants expect to take in 2.67 million tons of sweet corn this year, down 18 percent from last year and 21 percent less than in 1991. Area for harvest, at 450 thousand acres, is down 7 percent from last year and 18 percent below 1991. The average yield is projected at 5.9 tons per acre, down 11 percent from a year ago.

Tomato canning contracts call for 9.69 million tons of tomatoes this year, up 12 percent from last year and 11 percent below 1991. Area for harvest, at 308 thousand acres, is up 15 percent from last year. The average yield is 31.47 tons, a 2 percent decrease over last year's yield.

Processors expect to harvest 596,120 tons of snap beans, down 7 percent from last year and down 22 percent from 1991. Area for harvest, at 184 thousand acres, is down 4 percent from last year and down 21 percent from 1991. The average yield is expected at 3.24 tons per acre, down 4 percent from last year's yield.

Feed Grains Set For Reserve

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — Feed grain producers in Berks County plan to enter 107,000 bushels of 1992-crop corn, grain sorghum, and barley in the farmer-owned reserve loan program, according to Richard Troutman, chairman of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS).

USDA authorized up to 900 million bushels of 1992 crop feed grains for entry in the reserve. Eligible farmers had to obtain a regular price support loan and file their intentions to participate by April 30, 1993. During this sign-up period, Berks County farmers filed intentions to place 107,000 bushels of feed grains in the reserve.

An additional sign-up period

was later announced and farmers had an opportunity to file additional intentions to participate by August 31, 1993. However, Berks county farmers did not file any additional intentions.

Troutman said a stated intention to place feed grains into the reserve does not obligate the producer to enter the crop into the reserve.

Farmers will earn quarterly storage payments for reserve corn, grain sorghum, and barley at an annual rate of 26.5 cents per bushel. "These payments will be earned until market prices equal or exceed 95 percent of the established target price for these crops," Troutman said. The current target prices per bushel are \$2.75 for corn, \$2.61 for grain sorghum, and \$2.36 for barley.

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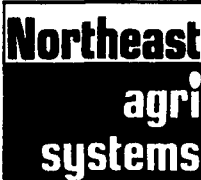
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