



Soil Conservation Service Cooperator of the Year Award went to an owner/tenant team. In the front row is Matthew Yoder, Nathan Yoder, Luke Yoder, Crystal Yoder holding the sign, Joe Yoder, and Brian Yoder. Back row, includes Bradley Yoder, farm operator Lee Yoder holding Cathy, wife JoAnn Yoder with Timothy, farm owners Betty Bonson and Howard Bonson, and Cindy Yoder.

**GAIL STROCK**  
Mifflin Co. Correspondent  
**BELLEVILLE (Mifflin Co.)** — Members and guests of the Mifflin County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) and the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) met recently for their annual Joint Ag Banquet held at the Belleville Community Hall.

Highlights for the evening included awards and speaker Dr. Gary Alt, research biologist for the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

One of the highest awards given by Washington, the ASCS Administrators Award, went to D'Ann L. Smith for her work on the Disaster Reserve Team. Smith was recommended for and accepted the challenge to go to Washington to help with the 1991 Disaster Assistance Program, a program connected with crop disasters due to the 1991 weather. Smith has been a program assistant in Mifflin County's ASCS office for six years.

Stanley McKeen, Fred Myers, and Earl Vaughn accepted Certificate of County Service awards for 10 years of ASCS service as community committeemen.

Mifflin County ASCS Executive Director Donna Snook

received a certificate for 30 years of service.

Commissioner Murry Laite presented the Soil Conservation Service's Cooperator of the Year Award to an owner/tenant team for their conservation practices. Owners Howard and Betty Bonson accepted the award along with farm operators Lee D. and JoAnn Yoder who manage the 70 acre farm close to the Juniata River.

James Laughlin and son Joe Laughlin received the Goodyear Award, given to the previous year's Cooperator of the Year Award recipient.

ASCS member Don Baker presented a \$25 check to the local FFA Chapter. John L. King presented the same amount to both the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. The money is to be used for conservation-oriented programming.

After the awards program, Master of Ceremonies Kenneth Loht introduced Dr. Gary Alt, Research Biologist for the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Alt's entertaining slide show and narrative revealed some interesting black bear facts and habits — man of which kept the audience smiling through the whole program.

- Black bear milk fat content is 24 percent compared to 4 percent for cow's milk.

- Black bears relocated within 100 miles will go straight home again.

- Pennsylvania black bears are the largest in the world. Overall, adult males average 205 pounds compared to an average 486 pounds in Pennsylvania. The abundance of food is the reason.

- For this same reason, black bear newborns double their weight in two weeks and triple it again in four weeks. Black bear cubs weigh an average of 12.8 ounces at birth making black bears, in relation to all mammals, the smallest in proportion to their mothers.

- Female black bears cover an average range of 3 to 5 miles compared to 10 to 15 miles for males.

- Alt said if confronted by a black bear it's useless to climb a tree (bears love to climb a tree any size), forget about entering water (bears love water), and don't even think about outrunning black bears (they can run more than 30 miles per hour). The key to escaping a bear attack, Alt says, is to take a friend along who runs slower than you!

- Seriously, Alt said, never stare directly at a bear. Alt said bears give warning signs before charging. Their ears fold back, their lips roll up, they clash their jaws, then they lunge forward and slam the ground with their paws. After this, they will charge. Alt said he has been the target of numerous bear charges — each bear broke off its charge between 3 to 10 feet.



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Left to Right: Tom, JoAnne, John, Peg, Bob and Charlotte Clouny

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