

PASA Conference Offers Glimpse Of Future

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Five hundred farmers, consumers, environmentalists, agricultural agency personnel and others attended the 3rd annual *Farming for the Future* conference held recently in State College, PA. Presented by the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), the theme for this year's conference was "Sustaining Agriculture and the Environment."

Keynote speakers for the event were Greg Watson, former Massachusetts Commissioner of Agriculture and Will Baker, President and CEO of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Both gave numerous examples of the ways that farmers and environmentalists are working together to protect our natural resources. From pesticide regulation and Integrated Pest Management to composting and water quality protection, both Baker and Watson made it clear that sustainable agriculture is a major factor

in true environment protection.

Farmers Joel Salatin of Swoope, VA and Lorna McMahon of Tiptonville, TN offered real life evidence of the linkage between sustainable farming practices and environmental protection and enhancement. The Salatin family raises beef, broilers, eggs and rabbits on 550 Shendandoah Valley acres, of which 455 are wooded. Using intensive rotational grazing, composted manures, direct marketing and forest management, the Salatins have developed a system which encourages wildlife and biodiversity and allows them to farm profitably without synthetic chemicals of any kind.

Lorna McMahon and her family raise organic cotton, soybeans, wheat, spelt, vegetables, fruit and Christmas trees on 2300 acres in the Mississippi Delta. Through aggressive wildlife habitat protection and tree planting programs,

McMahon has seen the reentry of bald eagles on her farm and actually had chicks hatch out last year. She has also found that organic cotton production is far more lucrative than conventional cotton growing.

In the news, we frequently hear how bleak farming is in the US and here in Pennsylvania. However, the 500 conference participants who came together to hear speakers, attend workshops and participate in panels displayed a rare vitality and commitment to farming. Particularly impressive was attendance of over 100 at a workshop designed to help prospective farmers identify what is needed to "start and sustain a farm." Speakers at the beginning farmer workshop included dairy farmers Garry and Linda VanDeWeert of Athens, Pa., vegetable growers Jim Crawford of Hustontown Pa., and Ward Sinclair of Warfordsburg and fruit growers David Tait and Kim Knorr of Centre Hall. Also presenting information at the

workshop were representatives of Penn State Extension, Farmers Home Administration, Farm Credit, LandLink and others.

Other conference workshops offered practical solutions to problems faced by livestock producers, graziers, vegetable and fruit growers, and crop farmers. In addition, there were discussions of CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), urban-farm links, farmers markets, lawn care, greenhouses, wholesale marketing, "ag in the classroom," and trade agreements impacting agriculture.

At the Annual Meeting, five directors were elected for three year terms to serve on the PASA Board of Directors. New directors are Teri Sorg-McNanamon, Lehigh County, Advertising Director at The New Farm magazine; Allen Matthews, Washington County truck farmer; Leslie Breese, Bradford County dairy farmer; Lee Bentz, Adams County, Integrated Pest Management coordinator for the Pa. Dept. of

Agriculture, and Carolyn Sachs, Centre County, Rural Sociology professor at Penn State University.

At the Friday evening banquet, the 2nd Pennsylvania Sustainable Agriculture Leadership Award was presented to Paul Keene, founder, in 1946, of Walnut Acres farms at Penns Creek, PA. Keene serves as a continuing inspiration to sustainable farmers across the country and around the world.

The Farming for the Future conference was sponsored by Albert's Organics, American Farmland Trust, Center for Rural Pennsylvania, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Conklin AgroVantage, Erth-Rite, Inc., Fertrell, Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development Council, PennAg Industries Assoc., Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Resources, Pennsylvania Farmers Union, Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, Rodale Institute and Walnut Acres Organic Farms.

Lancaster Sets Swine Club Meeting

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The reorganizational meeting of the Lancaster County 4-H Swine Club will be held at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, March 10, at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center.

This countywide 4-H club has a focus on producing and marketing lean pork in a program that has timely educational efforts, member recognition, and community support opportunities.

The evening's program will include official sign-up, distribution of project books, explanation

of project goals, election of officers, and introduction of leaders.

The club will hold seven meetings each year, a roundup and sale in August, and a recognition banquet in October. Members of the club will have the opportunity to participate in livestock and meats judging programs, pork bowl and public speaking competition, and the Pennsylvania Farm Show junior swine events.

For additional information, contact Chet Hughes, Penn State Cooperative Extension livestock agent at (717) 394-6851.

Myers Fills York Dairy Extension Role

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ing. "There's less formality than other school settings and they are very challenging. They put you on the spot sometimes, but they have a great deal to offer. And they respect a person who takes time to listen to them and discuss their inputs as adults."

After more than five years with the college, Myers accepted a position in January 1990, as extension agent in Harford County, a move which brought him a bit closer back home. Later, his responsibility of working with adult programs in dairy, livestock, part-time farming enterprises and agro-

nomy was expanded to include Baltimore County. He also continued coaching dairy judging teams.

"But, I'd always wondered if I should be milking cows," Myers grins. "I'd hurt my back working at home on the farm during my undergraduate years, but the thought of dairy farming was still there."

So when a college friend called him at the extension office in search of assistance in finding a farm manager, then later offered him the job, Myers accepted the challenge. He began managing the dairy operation near Port Deposit, Maryland, in January 1993, but a month later was already facing a recurrence of his back problems. Myers remained at the dairy operation through last June, then relocated back to his Bel Air, Maryland, house.

Along with his York Extension responsibilities with both youth and adult programs in dairy cattle and dairy goats, Myers consults

part-time for a new education program begun by the national Holstein Foundation. His role is in planning and leading the Foundation's Young Dairy Leaders Institute, aimed at surfacing dairy leadership among Holstein members ages 22-35. The first four-day training institute, with about 100 young dairy leaders from across the country participating, was held earlier this month in Florida.

Gifted with a beautiful singing voice, Jerry Myers is in frequent demand to sing at weddings and church events. He was the soloist at the weddings of many of his Delaware Valley students and enjoys singing with barbershop quartet groups. The extension agent is also an enthusiastic collector of antiques and of "cow" items.

York County dairy extension agent Jerry Myers may be contacted at the York Agricultural Extension offices at (717) 757-9657.

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UPS DAILY

You are invited to join the Ephrata Area Young Farmers for the following educational meetings

Date: 3-08-94 • Time: 7:30 p.m. • Location: Ephrata High School/Rm 192

Dan Gard, Monsanto, will present information on the new and controversial dairy growth hormone Bovine Somatotrophin, better known as BST. This subject is inspiring lively debates on consumer safety, animal safety, and farm profitability.

Date: 3-15-94 • Time: 6:45 p.m. • Location: Cloister Restaurant

This meeting will be a pesticide spray meeting. It is a dinner meeting, and will be held at the Cloister Restaurant. There will be representatives from two chemical companies. Ciba and DuPont, present to review their product line and related safety issues. In addition, a representative from the PA Dept. of Ag, Luke Bruckhart, will be providing additional pesticide safety training. Training credit points will be awarded.

Date: 3-29-94 • Time: 7:30 p.m. • Location: Home of Vernon Leininger

Mike Brubaker, EAYF Advisor, has been asked to share his experiences and slides from his trip to Romania last year, which he took as part of a humanitarian project. Mike stayed with the Ben Lapp family in Romania who are working with Christian Aid Ministries to establish a dairy farm operation there. For 10 days Mike was their guest while he provided agronomic expertise on the farming aspects of this mission operation. Vernon Leininger and his wife have graciously offered their home in Reinholds for this meeting and we thank them for their consideration.

Date: 4-12-94 • Time: 7:30 p.m. • Location: Earl G. Martin Farm

This will be a Sprayer and Corn Planter Calibration Meeting. Earl Martin has offered the use of his farm and equipment in order for Mike Brubaker to demonstrate proper calibration methods and techniques. Among the topics that will be covered will be fertilizer rate calculations, plant population determination, proper pesticide application (planter). Both liquid and dry application equipment will be discussed, as well as pre-season equipment maintenance checklists.

Join us for all the meetings listed above by calling Karen Becker at (717) 859-3276 to place your reservations. All meetings are free and open to the public, but reservations are required.