

Lebanon's Extension Void Filled By Voight

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff
NORTH CORNWALL (Lebanon Co.) — Delbert Voight seemed a little shell shocked last week, in his office at the Lebanon Agricultural Center last week. The new agronomy extension agent seemed caught between taking telephone messages and talking to people about upcoming events and activities, and digging through reference books seeking answers to questions about weed pests to production crop farming.

A bundle of branches, labeled and cut for a demonstration were lying on the floor between his desk and chairs presumably intended for office guests. Also evidently ongoing was a project of going through an office that was left idle for more than a year with the retirement of Denis Hoke, former Lebanon County extension agent. He had already gone through a lot of the old files and made a number of "discoveries" about the county's agronomy extension



In his office, Delbert Voight takes a phone message while in the middle of giving advise, preparing for meetings, and trying to get the office up to running order.



Delbert Voight, Lebanon Extension agent, discusses uses of pesticides with a client of the extension service.

work, but there is much more to do. At the same time, he was telling his opinions and recommendations based on his knowledge as a holder of a master's degree in agricultural education, and on his experience as a custom crop production manager responsible for the start-to-finish of thousands of acres of corn and soybeans in Iowa. The young married man, with a football player's build and shortcropped black hair, said people somehow think he's from the Midwest. It's true he's lived in Iowa for several years, finishing his master's degree at the Iowa State University and then going immediately to work full time as a crop production specialist for Cenex-Land O Lakes. He personally was involved in the fertilizing, planting and protection of 12,000 to 15,000 acres of corn and soybeans. Perhaps it's his red-checks that

come from working outside and from tossing heavy bags of seed and fertilizer that makes him look like a Midwestern farm boy. Or maybe its the photographs of huge equipment that he used in Iowa, such as equipment to air flow soybeans, huge boom sprayers with balloon wheels, and fertilizer equipment that would have a tough time making a turn around in a typical Pennsylvania corn field. The truth is, he was born and raised in Sussex County, New Jersey, where his father was a manager for the local Agway Cooperative. And while, to the average American, the mention of New Jersey hasn't conjured images of rural bliss for some time, there is still a strong agricultural element in the Garden State. It is an element that Voight was exposed to as he grew up. His father used to raise between seven to 10 registered Holsteins to sell as dairy replacements as an annual sideline business, and from that "Del," as the Lebanon community is beginning to call him,

also got jobs milking cows in the area. "I was milking cows in the area since I was old enough to pull a teat," Voight said, and adding that starting in fifth grade, he was also heavily involved in 4-H. His father's work with the Sussex County Fair also got him involved in helping with the fair. In the meantime, he met and married Lori, the former Miss America Angus, who also happens to be the daughter of Penn State University professor Dr. Erskine Cash, well known in Pennsylvania agriculture because of his work in beef production. In Voight's office last week, during a short time when he was uninterrupted, he took some cucumber seeds and planted them in a container he filled with soil that was purposefully contaminated with a soil pest which typically attacks and destroys seedling plants. He was planting the seeds so that they would sprout and begin to die off just in time for a scheduled tele-

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