

Lancaster Farming

RECEIVED
MAR 21 1984

Vol. 39 No. 20 60¢ Per Copy Lancaster Farming, Saturday, March 26, 1984 Five Sections \$19.75 Per Year

'Waist-High' Soybeans Create Award Opportunity For Berks Farmer

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
BARTO (Berks Co.) — Late in July last year, cash cropper Wilson R. Hoffman inspected his fields and noticed the "waist-high" canopy of soybeans. Then he read a notice for a soybean yield contest in *Lancaster Farming*. Almost immediately, he decided to sign up.

The decision to compete against 16 others in the first Pennsylvania Soybean Promotion Board Yield Contest garnered him first place for a three-acre plot, netting a 74.8 bushels per acre yield using Dekalb CX415.

But mostly, it wasn't just to see if he can win the award. "It was not something I was really trying to win," he said. "I mean, it doesn't pay to go overboard and spend all kinds of money just so you can win an award."

Hoffman said that "economics" are vital in managing soybean yields — to achieve the highest yield at the least cost. But what farmers often overlook, and what is extremely important to the Berks County soybean grower, is the benefits of using the contest to promote soybean marketing.

According to the state Soybean Promotion Board, the contest was established last year to demonstrate the practices necessary to pro-

duce maximum economic yields and to encourage the production of high-quality soybeans, according to John Yocum, manager of the Penn State Landisville Research Farm and contest coordinator.

Participants are restricted to nonirrigated soybeans only, but not to the variety, fertilizer, spacing, or other cultural practices, according to Yocum.

Hoffman uses a combination of tillage practices, including about 75 percent minimum tillage (chisel plow and disc) and 25 percent no-till. He said he waits until the soil is dry enough before going into the fields to prevent compaction. The soil is Steinsburg loam, including a silt loam and Norton gravelly loam.

Hoffman's used a preemergent herbicide, Squadron, at 2 pints per acre, incorporated with a culti-packer. He also used a starter fertilizer, a 3-9-12 liquid, before planting, according to soil test recommendations. No lime was applied.

The state winning yield was planted May 6 in 7-inch rows with a powder inoculant. Seed density was about 180,000 per acre. The plants per acre at harvest was about 160,000. Total soybean acreage averaged about 64 bushels per acre.

For weed control, the preemer-

gent application of Squadron proved best at taking care of an assortment of problem grasses and pigweeds in addition to velvetleaf and some lambsquarter.

One of the reasons Hoffman uses minimum tillage, he said, is because he gets better control of weeds with less expense over no-till.

"I had no idea I'd really be close to the top for yields," said Hoffman.

He said there are many good farmers who have field and soil conditions that were right and could experience similar or even higher yields.

This year, "the Good Lord allowed enough rain and good weather," said Hoffman, to grow the soybeans. While much of the southeastern portion of the state was subjected to drought stress, the Berks/Montgomery County region had enough rain to carry the crop.

"It's really an honor to be the first in the state," he said.

Hoffman, who went into farming after a career as a Philadelphia Suburban Water Company utility maintenance worker until the mid-1970s, attributes much of the success he's had with growing crops to his father, Chester, a dairyman. "He played a big part in (Turn to Page A33)



The decision to compete against 16 others in the first Pennsylvania Soybean Promotion Board Yield Contest garnered Wilson Hoffman first place for a three-acre plot, netting a 74.8 bushels per acre yield using Dekalb CX415.

Experts: Pasturing Is Agronomic Art

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff
HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Pasturing has been given a lot of attention in the past several years, and testimony has held that

it can help the family farmer survive, but from the latest accounts of the practice, it's not merely a matter of opening the gate to livestock to graze a parcel of land otherwise unsuitable for crop

production. According to reports from experts at Penn State University and with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, pasturing, as a field of (Turn to Page A28)

Safety Should Be Top Concern

RANDY WELLS
Indiana Co. Correspondent
INDIANA (Indiana Co.) — Each day thousands of people, including young children and senior citizens, go to work at the most dangerous job site in Pennsylvania — the family farm.

Indiana County dairy farmer Dan Griffith knows the dangers firsthand. He's suffered a hyper-extended knee and the expected cuts and bruises from working every day around big equipment and big animals.

Once he thought he had pesticide poisoning.

For the past 13 years, Dan and his wife, Leanne, have been working to make farms a safer place — especially for children. And their safety tips are now spreading statewide.

"Farming is the most dangerous occupation in the state of Pennsylvania," Leanne said. "Coal mining is second. None of us would consider sending a child into a deep mine, but farm families daily send their children out to help with the farm work, more often than not because of economic necessity." (Turn to Page A22)



In his family's videotaped testimony, 5-year-old Christopher Griffith demonstrates how a child can be suffocated in a gravity box wagon.



Seven-year-old Michael Bezner enjoys helping his grandmother and her friends make chocolate candy. His grandmother, Dottie Stricker, president of the state Society of Farm Women, believes that families are strengthened by involving children in activities with the church and community.

Strong Families Become Involved In Community

LOU ANN GOOD
Lancaster Farming Staff

ROBESONIA (Berks Co.) — With nine children and 17 grandchildren, Dorothy Stricker knows a lot about family living. She places value on the importance of family for happiness, for making the world a better place, and for enduring relationships.

It's her strong belief in the importance of family that influenced Dorothy, as president of the state Society of Farm Women, to chose the theme "Strengthen Your Family," on which the 3,148 members will focus their energies during the first of her three-year term.

Dottie, as she prefers to be called, is full of ideas to strengthen families. But those who know her best realize that she is not merely an idea person. She is an action person — one who works diligently behind the scenes because she sees needs. (Turn to Page A34)