

Susquehanna County Holds Dairy Day

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— Two "hot" topics getting a lot of attention by dairy farmers, plus a third which is always of interest, were the highlights of the Dairy Day sessions held at the Elk Lake High School.

The event was sponsored by the Susquehanna County Penn State Cooperative Extension and area organizations and suppliers.

More than 50 exhibitors and sponsors were present and contributed door prizes. They also arranged for and provided a catered roast beef dinner to those in attendance.

Scott Harrison, Penn State specialist on pest control, led off the sessions by giving a description of the worker protection standards which were introduced two years ago, and which go into effect on April 15 of this year. Some dairy farmers will be affected, in cases where their employees handle pesticides or in the course of their duties go into treated areas which are restricted.

Harrison emphasized the importance of directions which must appear on the labels of pesticides. To be in compliance with the law, these directions must be observed by commercial applicators and users who employ persons who may come in contact with the substances.

Very important are the restricted-entry intervals which must appear on the labels. Such intervals range upward from 12 hours, and if restricted substances are used, employees must be trained on safe and proper ways in which they should be handled.

Any area treated by pesticides with stated restricted entry intervals must be posted with a warning "Do not enter." Sometimes it may be necessary to enter such areas during the restricted interval. When this is the case, instructions will be on the labels regarding protective equipment or clothing, and these instructions also have the force of law. Labeling is the responsibility of the manufacturer, and while existing stocks may be sold to users, all new materials must be properly labeled.

Harrison also pointed out the importance of keeping records on the use of all pesticides. If hazardous materials are kept, notice must be posted in a place apparent to hired workers, along with instructions for prevention of injury and safe use of the materials. Enforcement will be by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA), and noncompliance will subject farmers to penalties. Further information on the standards may be obtained from county extension offices or from PDA.

Dairy farmers appear to be less

affected by the standards than are fruit and vegetable growers, as the standards do not apply to use of substances directly on livestock. However, as further rules may be promulgated by the EPA where soil and water quality may be affected by pesticides, it is important that dairy farmers keep alert to any requirements which may apply to them.

Pesticide credit may be awarded for this program.

Nick Place, Susquehanna County extension director, made a presentation on the issues of BST use. BST, or bovine somatotropin, is a hormone which is naturally produced in a cow's system. It has been used for some years in its natural form to enhance growth in cattle and to try to increase milk production. The natural form was obtained from the pituitary gland of cull cows. Naturally, this limited the supply and did not provide enough of the substance to be an economic factor.

However, during the 1970s, a recombinant form was developed, using a host bacteria to provide the hormone in quantity. During the 1980s, tests on dairy herds were conducted. Based on these tests, BST was declared safe by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and approved for use in producing herds in mid-February 1994.

When BST is injected in cows,

it acts on the liver to stimulate growth, milk production, and other body functions. Because the FDA has made the determination that no adverse effects result from its use, no labeling is required for products produced through its use.

Place showed a short videotape which showed how recombinant BST was developed, how it is used, and how it was tested prior to its FDA approval. He noted that it would add another management tool to dairy husbandry, and through its use milk could be produced at less cost, thereby making dairy products more competitive on the world market.

The video presentation showed how more feed would be needed to maintain cows' conditions with the added production, and also that high production, no matter how achieved, tended to bring on a greater incidence of mastitis. Also, high production goes hand in hand with a delay in settling cows with calf, and this phenomenon has been evident in the animals in the tests.

Susquehanna County Dairy Princess Jennie Ann Shamro and Dairy Ambassador Michael Kowalewski were introduced, and each gave a brief rundown on their activities during their period of service thus far. They were emphatic in stating the self-confidence they have gained and the new contacts and friends they have made as they carry out their promotional activities for the dairy industry. Most impressive is the enthusiasm with which they are received by school children and by residents of homes for the aged.

Following dinner served in the high school cafeteria, Harrison returned to continue his presentation on pesticide management. Since there is always a potential for contamination when these substances are transported and used, care must be constant, and at least rudimentary preparation must be taken. It is wise to carry a shovel and a substance similar to cat litter to contain any spillage if it occurs.

Proper storage is also vital. Ideally, storage areas should be separated from other areas of activity. Structures should be in good shape with solid roofs and floors that are waterproof. Any pesticide should be kept apart from stock feeds, seeds, and fertilizers. There is always a concern about ground and water contamination, and mixing areas and equipment cleaning sites should be built and managed to insure that no pesticides pollute any area.

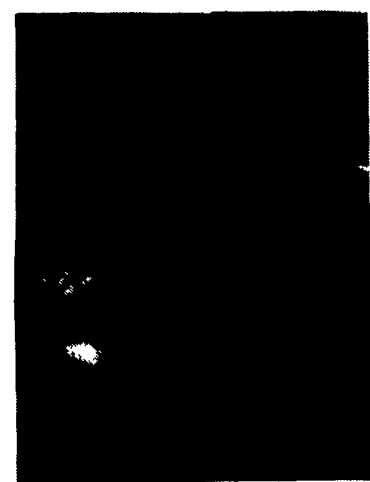
Ideally, when a pesticide is applied, there should be no material left over. If there is, it should be diluted and the weak solution applied to a treated field. Empty containers must be cleaned thoroughly by triple rinsing. Some landfills accept this, and it is possible to have plastic containers recycled. Outdated substances and those which should be disposed of should be carefully stored until arrangements are made to dispose of them. The state conducts a one-time disposal system called Cleansweep, and your county agent will tell you when this service will be available.

Dr. Larry Muller, professor of dairy science at Penn State, gave his thoughts on what the dairy industry in this country will be like 10 years hence. He foresees

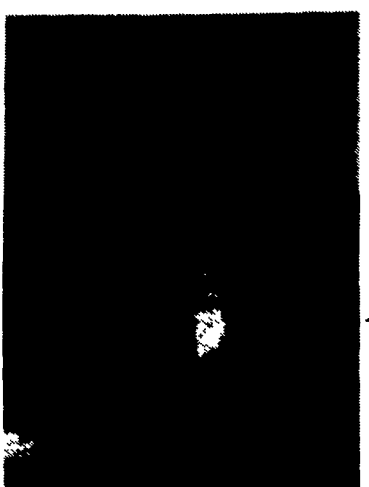
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Nick Place, Susquehanna County agent, addressed the issues of BST use.



Dr. Larry Muller, Penn State, peered into his crystal ball to predict dairy farming's future.



Mike Kowalewski, one of the first two dairy ambassadors in Susquehanna County.



Jennie Ann Shamro, dairy princess in Susquehanna County.



Scott Harrison, Penn State pesticide expert, talked about pesticide management and regulations.

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