

Berks Teachers Learn Lessons About Beef During Tour

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Palmer showed the teachers the types of feed used and provided information on how that feed is used by the animals at different stages of growth. He showed them the calf barn and also the feedlot, where he answered a wide array of questions about the breeds he uses.

Papa Farm

Afterward, the group of teachers visited the Papa Farm, owned by Gilles Richard, a career consultant, north of Strasstown. The cow-calf farm, with 42 cows in the herd, including 14 replacement heifers, is managed by Brian and Karen Mohn.

The statuesque farm, situated near the foot of the Blue Mountains, includes 200 tillable acres. Mohn told the teachers that he grows about 130 acres of hay and 60 acres of corn, with the remainder soybeans.

Also, the Mohn family is involved in a small nursery business as part of the overall diversification of the farm to ensure its profitability.

"We try to diversify to make money," he told the tour group.

Stephanie DeNunzio, an art teacher from Holy Name High School, was impressed with the well-maintained architecture of the farm and uses some of the

information in her classes.

David Nace, fifth grade teacher at Brandywine, was on hand to take back the lessons of the farm to the classroom and to obtain information and ideas to market seed-stock Angus on his own small cow-calf operation.

After a meal sponsored by the cattlemen's association, the tour continued to the carefully maintained, fenced, rotational pasturing operation which borders the farm.

"The cows get hay all summer long," said Brian Mohn. He explained the intricacies of calculating feed for all the cows and calves while keeping costs down.

"The animals aren't organically raised, but are naturally raised," he said. Pastures are planted in a wide variety of grasses, including perennial ryegrass, timothy, bluegrass, and fescue.

"Rotational grazing saves producers money and provides a heavier animal at weaning time," said Mohn.

Peters Bros. Meats

Next, the group toured the Peters Bros. Meats facility in Lenhartsville.

Rex Peters was on hand to show the teachers how meat is slaughtered, cut, and prepared for the consumer.

Included in the tour was an

explanation of the steps involved in stunning, cleaning, cutting, and further processing.

Included was a tour of the computerized smokehouse operation — including the sausage-making equipment.

"A big part of our business still is custom-butchering and mail order," he said. He offered free taste tests of the summer sausage and a "pigsfeet" preparation.

Classroom Series

The Teacher Ag In the Classroom Series is conducted annually through the Berks County Cooperative Extension, the county farm bureau, the chamber of commerce agribusiness council, and the farm-city council to bring commodities in this way into the classroom, said Clyde Myers, extension agent.

"I wish every county would have this type of program," said Myers. "It's sad that other counties don't do more of this type of thing — the promotion of agriculture to an important group of people, teachers. We could be missing the boat."

In the future, other commodity organizations, including dairy, swine, and poultry, will be represented.

The Berks County Extension also helps coordinate the Ag In the

Classroom activities conducted throughout the county.

Barbara Ford, coordinator of the health/nutrition programs for the Pennsylvania Beef Council, showed the many different types of student instruction packages available. Many can be ordered through the Catalog Of Educational Mater-

ials flier, which supplies the materials from the National Live Stock and Meat Board.

Teachers who want information on how to obtain the educational materials can contact Ford at the Pennsylvania Beef Council, 4714 Orchard St., Harrisburg, PA 17109, (717) 545-6000.

Animal Housing Expo

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — The 1994 Animal Housing Expo will be held July 12-13 at the Lebanon Fair Grounds in Lebanon, Pa. The event is conducted by Penn State Cooperative Extension in conjunction with local agribusinesses.

"The purpose of the expo is to help farmers in the Northeast learn more about animal housing concerns," says Dan McFarland, general chair of the expo and Penn State Cooperative Extension agent in York County.

More than 1,400 people attended last year's event to learn more about animal comfort, animal handling, building and remodeling, stall design and maintenance, ventilation, nutrient management and environmental regulations, financing, milking parlor designs, composting and more.

Nationally known experts will be on hand, and a variety of

demonstrations and exhibits are planned. Howard Person of Michigan State University will discuss building designs that help to control rodents and birds. David Kohl of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University will review financial planning tools.

Veterinarian Lynn Sammons will discuss cattle treatment facilities. Stephen Spencer, professor of dairy science at Penn State, will explain new trends in milking system design and management.

The expo also attracts commercial exhibitors, providing an opportunity for farmers to see available products and services and to make contacts. Forty commercial exhibitors participated in last year's event. For more information about commercial exhibits, contact Joe Zook, exhibit chair, at 151 East Farmersville Road, Ephrata, PA 17522, (717) 354-4271.



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