

# Emus Viable Product For Future

ETTERS (York Co.) — On June 3-4, the Eastern Regional Emu Chapter (EREC) of the American Emu Association (AEA) held a combination annual membership meeting and seminar, "Emu For The Future," in Mahwah, N.J.

This northeastern event was attended by farmers, ranchers, investors from as far away as Maine, Vermont, Connecticut and Canada, as well as New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

Mark and Roseann Annunziato of Rosemark Farms, along with the program committee of EREC, coordinated a comprehensive and entertaining seminar.

Guest speakers included Ralph Benton, Bernard Redlawsk, and Scott Morgan, members of the AEA board of directors; Dr. Bruce Wittels, DVM, owner/operator of the Mid-Monroe Veterinary Hospital and the Tristan Veterinary Clinic, both in New York; and Bill Hayes, vice president of EREC and attorney who raises emus at his Golden Pond Ranch in Williamstown, N.J.

Ralph Benton of Grotce Coyotee Wildlife spoke on the Emu market, where it is and where it is going, product development, and the function of cooperatives for the future success of the Emu ranchers. Three new products were introduced from Emu Ranchers, Inc., (ERI) and then donated by Ralph to the EREC Silent Auction for the benefit of the association. The Emu is a viable product for the future, land efficient, and totally consumable. Advice was given to look at the Emu not as a "Get rich quick scheme," but

for a long-term growth investment. As with any new venture, the Emu is going through a correcting of pricing, which will make it attractive to many more ranchers of the future.

Bernard Redlawsk of Bernie's Flying Emu Farm and president of EREC presented a discussion on facilities for Emu, covering specialties for chicks, yearlings, and breeder pairs. Discussion included planning and taking care of Emus, especially in severe weather.

Scott Morgan talked about contracts from all perspectives - buyer, seller, investor, and boarder. He said that you should put everything into a contract that you can think of and that, if possible, you should consult an attorney in drawing up your contracts. He also emphasized that you should feel comfortable with the person with whom you are doing business, as if you could do business on a handshake. Contracts serve to refresh memories on already agreed details.

Wittels addressed the care and management of Emus, as well as preventive medicine/maintenance for Emus. He believes that 90 percent of all problems are directly related to improper management, and that the two most common ways diseases are transmitted on ratite farms are humans and other birds. Nutrition should be of key concern, as well as overall flock health and facility cleanliness (including incubators, work areas, and transporting equipment). He also thinks that facilities should be designed with reference to biosecurity and stress management of the birds.

Bill Hayes delivered his com-

ments on how to sell yourself and your birds and how to get your local publications involved by writing feature stories on your birds, business, facilities, hatching, or just about anything of newsy interest that a newspaper/magazine would print. This equals free advertising. He suggested speaking before local clubs such as Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, etc. Getting involved outside your farm is crucial to educating others about this industry.

Linda Woo from Showcase

Farms, a founding member of EREC, made a special effort to address attendees on EREC's function and purpose while thanking the founders for their past efforts.

A first "Roundtable Lunch Workshop" was held, with at least one experienced Emu breeder at each table. This format allowed one-on-one discussion and addressed specific problems and thoughts within the group. Afterward, each table answered specific questions, and these were compiled into a handout for all the participants.

Following the general membership meeting Friday night, there were vendors exhibiting Emu-related products and a reception featuring Emu meat cooked four different ways. Also set up was a comparison taste test of Emu and beef. The panel of tasters was selected at random from the audience. There were only two out of nine who correctly guessed which was which. Chef Pete Heth of College Fund Emu Farm was a hit with his wok preparation of the Emu and beef taste samples.

## Young Farmers:

### Do You Have Strong Opinions?

ALBANY, N.Y. — Young farmers looking to broaden their capabilities and openly engage in lively discussions about issues impacting agriculture should plan to enter Farm Bureau's Young Farmer Discussion Meet.

Organized for farmers between the ages of 18 and 30, the discussion meet differs from a debate in the sense that the participants work together to arrive at the best solution to agricultural policy concerns. The winner is the individual who best develops and defends his positions.

The topics for this year's discussion meet competition include concerns that are critical to the future of American agriculture. The 1994 discussion topics are as follows:

(1) As agriculture's political influence is diminishing, should Farm Bureau seek coalitions with other organizations?

(2) What is agriculture's responsibility in management and disposal of waste?

(3) What role do we, as rural citizens, have in restoring our country's values?

(4) Why are so many farmers seeking off-farm employment?

The Farm Bureau discussion meet competition is an excellent way to sharpen leadership skills, meet new people, and have fun. As in past years, winners of the state competition will receive a cash award and 50 hours use of a Case IH Maxum Tractor, as well as a chance to vie for national honors. The national champion wins a Dodge Dakota Club Cab 4x4 pickup truck and have his/her registration fees waived for the 1995

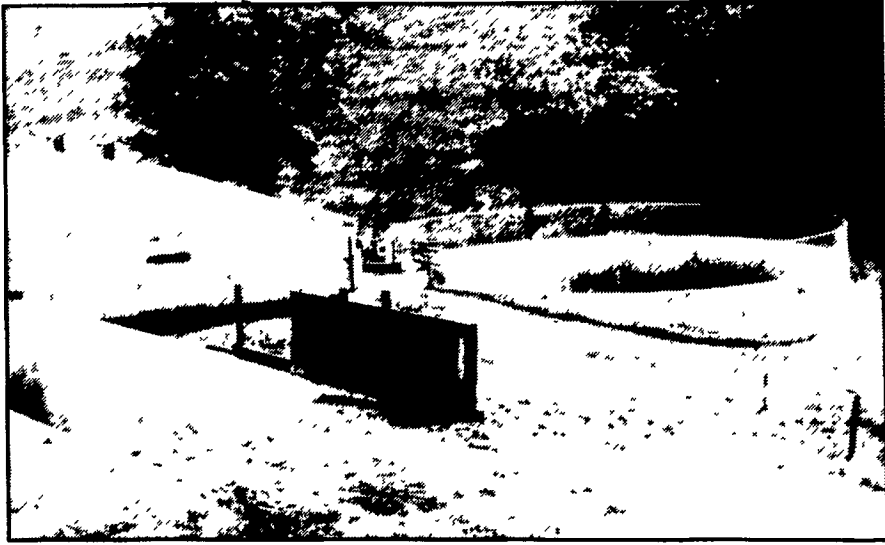
Leadership Conference.

Past winners of New York Farm Bureau's Young Farmer Discussion have come from all across the state and include the following: 1993: Peter Dueppengier (Wyoming County); 1992: Kurt Gehrke (Jefferson County); 1991: Christine Nellis (Montgomery County); 1990: John Mueller (Ontario Co.); 1989: Dana Rodgers (Wyoming County); 1988: Mark Masler (Cortland County); 1987: Kevin Grupe (Saratoga County); 1986: Doug Young (Cayuga County); 1985: Paul Herington (Rensselaer County).

For information on participating, contact your county Farm Bureau young farmer chairman or call (518) 436-8495 for details.

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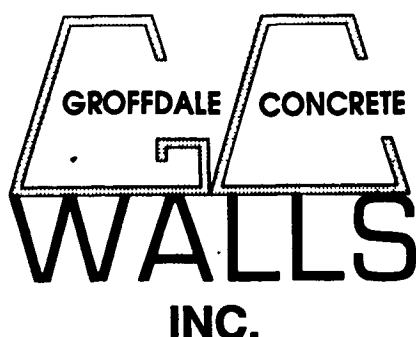
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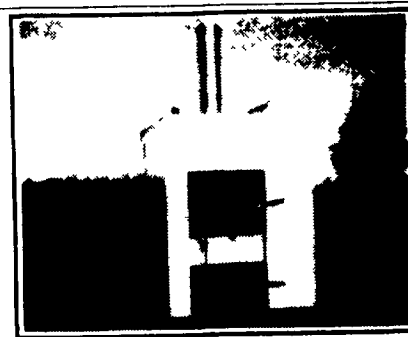
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