

Animal Welfare Student Group Active At Penn State

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — When one group of Penn State students gets together, it isn't to party or talk about the latest music or clothes. This group focuses on the best ways to promote animal welfare and the continued success of animal agriculture.

Their goal is to educate students and the general public on issues pertinent to the welfare, care, and use of animals in farming systems and in agricultural, veterinary, and biomedical research. Other discussions focus on topics such as wildlife conservation and animal use and issues in international agriculture.

These students are members of Students for the Responsible Use of Animals, (SRUA), a Penn State club sponsored by the Department of Dairy and Animal Science and affiliated with Pennsylvanians for the Responsible Use of Animals

(PRUA). The organization began as an undergraduate student discussion group in 1989. Although most SRUA members are enrolled in the College of Agricultural Sciences, students from other colleges participate as well.

Organizing and staffing the Farm Animal Learning Center at the Pennsylvania Farm Show is a major annual activity for SRUA. This year's Learning Center featured six species of live animals, including sheep, pigs, calves, chicks, goats, and a pony. The program's educational effort centered around comparative digestive systems and feeds for farm animals, including by-product materials from agriculture and other industries. Children and adults alike enjoyed viewing a preserved rumen, learning about by-products, and feeling the lanolin on sheep's wool.

SRUA members also tour var-

ious farm and laboratory facilities. Recently, they visited New Bolton Center and Wistar Institute, as well as Hoard's Dairyman Farm in Wisconsin, Hooved Animal Humane Society in Illinois, and a veal farm in conjunction with the American Veterinary Medical Association's Animal Welfare Forum. Other activities include organizing animal by-product and care guideline displays and leading tours of Penn State's farm animal facilities for elementary school students.

Education of the public, especially children, is a primary goal of the group. To this end, SRUA has published seven Welcome to a Farm brochures covering sheep, pig, dairy, beef, chicken, veal, and horse production. They also have developed three Let's Learn About pamphlets on goat, rabbit, and bee production, and plan to publish others on dairy products,

eggs, international use of animals, and other topics. In addition, the club publishes a quarterly newsletter, Pennsylvania Kids Care, concerning important contemporary topics in animal agriculture. These materials are available to teachers and others through county extension offices or by contacting SRUA directly.

Meetings held throughout the academic year provide opportunities for the students to discuss animal welfare issues with experts and critics. These discussions are often held jointly with other student organizations having a shared interest in animals.

Current SRUA officers are Elizabeth Garver, president (York County); Jodie Everly, past president (Butler County); Matt Espenshade, vice president (Lancaster County); Matt Stachmus, secretary (Blair County); Karen Fogle, Agricultural Student Council rep-

resentative and publicity chairperson (Cambria County); and Shawn Jones, Agricultural Student Council representative (Blair County). Brenda Coe, Lowell Wilson, and Stanley Curtis serve as advisers for the SRUA.

This July SRUA members will attend joint meetings of the American Society of Animal Science and American Dairy Science Association in Minneapolis to discuss their goals and activities and to encourage the organization of similar groups at other universities.

For more information, contact SRUA, The Pennsylvania State University, 324 Henning Building, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 863-7738 or (814) 863-3659.

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