

# Ag Progress Days To Show What's New In Agriculture

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In the pre-tractor days before farm mechanization, farm work was accomplished by "muscle power." At the Pasto Agricultural Museum, visitors can examine items ranging from a 175-year-old hand-powered apple peeler to a milking machine powered by foot-pedals. Other items on display include cooking pots, wash tubs, scrubbing boards, rug beaters, ice-cutting equipment and even a gas-engine iron.

Young and old alike might find the Insect Petting Zoo in the Family and Youth Exhibits Building a worthy destination. The zoo features a beekeeping display offering honey samples and such multi-legged attractions as walking sticks, ladybird beetles and hissing-cockroaches. Llamas are on display at the Dairy and Livestock Tent and ostriches can be seen at Exhibits Building 1.

"Kids Back Then," running continuously in the Family and Youth Exhibits Building, features Bill Metzler, a storyteller and folk tradition expert, who will entertain youngsters by showing old-time toys, vintage musical instruments and dolls. Storyteller Jan

Kinney will perform in the College of Agricultural Sciences Exhibits Building Theatre every day spinning stories for a half hour to 45 minutes.

Other displays sure to tickle a child's fancy include the Happy Valley Friendly Farm, next to the Family and Youth Building. Calves, lambs, goats, chicks and pot-bellied pigs will be on display. Shaver's Creek Environmental Center will show wildlife such as owls, hawks, turtles and snakes at its tent. Oh yes, Smokey Bear is sure to be seen wandering the area all three days.

Other family-oriented exhibits include horse events, crafts displays, and food booths offering tasty treats from fried mushrooms to University Creamery ice cream.

Gardeners and homeowners can visit the Landscape, Lawn and Garden tent to harvest knowledge on plant and insect problems from faculty and extension agents. Visitors can even bring in samples (in good condition) to be diagnosed.

Farmers can see the latest in planting, harvesting and tractor technology at state-of-the-art demonstrations. Precision planters and a high-tech tomato and pepper



A crowd gathers on Main Street at noon where good food is a tradition at Ag Progress Days.

harvester will be demonstrated. In addition, demonstrations on hay mowing, baling and bale handling and intensive grazing for sheep are scheduled.

Farm technology also extends to manure, as the manure composting display above West Twelfth Street attests. These commercial-size bins show producers

an alternative to excess manure problems.

Research tours will reveal Penn State's scientific forays into dairy and poultry research, potato research, agricultural conservation, urban conservation, forest stewardship, composting, stream corridor management and integrated crop management.

Penn State's Ag Progress Days

features more than 500 acres of educational and commercial exhibits. The Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center is located nine miles southwest of State College on Route 45. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, with extended hours on Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission and parking are free.

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## Field Crop Research Tours Scheduled

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.) — Ongoing research projects such as growing a living mulch to prevent weeds in corn and using tiny worms to control insect pests in potato crops will be showcased on free bus tours at Ag Progress Days, sponsored by Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, August 16-18.

Thirty-minute tours of the college's horticulture, plant pathology, agronomy and entomology research farms and the USDA Pasture Research Laboratory will highlight dozens of projects designed to enhance food safety as well as increase production yields, reduce reliance on pesticides and conserve soil and water.

Visitors to the event at the Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center at Rock Springs will discover how agricultural research works to improve food safety and food quality while also enhancing farm efficiency and protecting the environment. The theme of the event is "Penn State Ag Sciences... We're More Than You Think!"

Researchers have planted the ground cover crown vetch and legume crops to act as a living mulch for corn crops. Ideally, the mulch allows the crop to grow to maturity and after harvesting conserves soil as a ground cover.

University entomologists are using nematodes, tiny parasitic worms present in soil, to control the Colorado potato beetle. The nematodes prey on the beetle larvae, preventing the adult insect from infesting the crop. Researchers are also experimenting with the use of propane flame treatments to control adult insects that have emerged after dormant winter.

Some of the other projects featured include an experimental windbreak that prevents orchard trees from becoming misshapen by winds, test plantings of pest-resistant southern corn and tomato varieties to see how such crops adapt to Pennsylvania, and clear plastic canopies designed to prevent damage by spring frosts.

Tour riders also will see how Christmas trees resist various types of diseases and observe how alfalfa has grown in a field that was last plowed in 1968. At the USDA Pasture Research Laboratory, visitors can see several varieties of grasses used for cattle grazing. One species, Puna chicory, is undergoing grazing trials.

The Clarke Kerr Apple Variety Museum is also on the tour route. The orchard museum displays about 120 varieties of apples.

Tours are offered every 20 minutes from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. all three days of the event. Tours continue until 6 p.m. during extended hours on Wednesday, August 17.