



Lancaster Farming

Vol. 39 No. 41

60¢ Per Copy

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, August 20, 1994

Four Sections

\$21.00 Per Year

Series Of Tractor Safety Demos Held This Week At Ag Progress

Without ROPS, Tractor Overturns Kill

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.) — Message to tractor operators: 85 percent of accidental rear overturns result in death.

That was the message delivered by Dr. Tim Pierson, Penn State research associate, to thousands of visitors at Ag Progress Days at the Russell E. Larson Research Center here from Tuesday through Thursday this week.

Visitors to the Ag Progress Days were able to view, at the specially prepared rollover inspection site at the west end of the exhibit grounds, a remotely controlled tractor as it overturned, pinning a mannequin beneath thousands of pounds of steel. The mannequin, with the trade name "Tuff Kelly,"

was used to show the effects of a rollover on a human operator.

In this case, Tuff Kelly was prepared. A special ROPS with an extender bar to protect the demonstration tractor (20 horsepower) was installed. And, just as impor-

tantly, Tuff Kelly was wearing his seatbelt.

According to Dennis Murphy, professor of ag engineering at Penn State, those who die don't have a rollover protection structure (ROPS) on their tractor.

Those who do, according to facts supplied by the National Safety Council, survive to tell about it.

In one demonstration, Tuff Kelly was using an improper hitch to remove a (simulated) 6-inch tree

stump. When he engaged the gears, the front of the tractor was tilted upward, and overturned. Luckily, the ROPS protected Tuff Kelly from injury.

"If not for the ROPS," said Murphy, "the operator would have been completely crushed by the tractor."

At the Tuesday morning demonstration, about 1,500 visitors were on hand to see the small tractor, specially outfitted with ROPS, make its way onto a 20-degree slope. The site was specially constructed to study the "variables" involved in small side overturns and to show the value of using ROPS in conjunction with a seatbelt, according to Murphy.

While operating on a slope, going at a high rate of speed, and hitting certain obstacles such as rock, groundhog holes, old logs, or other items make a rollover even more likely, according to Pierson.

Murphy said that rear overturns are the single most common type of fatal farm accident.

Improper hitching has led to a great many rear overturns.

Pierson said a long-term Penn State study will examine tractor safety and how farmers can retrofit ROPS if their tractor isn't outfitted with one.

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With the rollover tractor demonstration, a large crowd of people and the commercial exhibits in the background, this photograph is representative of all the components of a successful Ag Progress Days held at Rockspring in Centre County this week. You will find other stories and photographs in this issue as seen and reported by the *Lancaster Farming* staff. Photo by Everett Newswanger, managing editor.

Smith Clan Churns Best Ice Cream

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.) — Mud and pouring rain did not hinder Elsie Smith and her grandchildren from churning their way to the \$300 first-place prize at Ag

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Many Demonstrations Show The Technical Side Of Farming

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.

Lancaster Farming Staff

ROCKSPRING (Centre

Co.) — Futuristic farming:

- An automatic tomato picker and separator that can tell the difference between a red and green tomato and harvest 30 tons an hour.

- A manure-slurry injection system that can put about 3,500 gallons of manure slurry (16 percent solids) per acre in the top four inches of soil, but not on the existing cover crop. No odor problem.

No manure burn to plants.

These are two of several pieces of new types of farm equipment that were demonstrated Tuesday during the 1994 Penn State Ag Progress Days event held at the Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center, in Rockspring.

Whether or not the agricultural community takes to the devices, only time will tell, but that's part of the attraction to some of the displays at Ag Progress Days — the physical demonstration of a machine that someone had envi-

sioned and made come true in the hope that others would see a better tool and want to use it.

It is a strong example of the better mousetrap concept that is the historic drive behind innovation, speculation, and motivation to get things done.

The promise of financial reward has to be included, for without it, it would be difficult to attract investment funding to capitalize the creation of a dream.

But like a science fair, those dis-

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Singel Seeks Farmer Votes At Ag Progress

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Managing Editor

ROCKSPRING (Centre

Co.) — Lt. Gov. Mark Singel

brought his Democratic gubernatorial election campaign to farmers Wednesday with a visit to government/industry day in the activities building at Ag Progress. After the noon luncheon, Singel held a news conference in the Penn State Alumni tent to announce the endorsement of the Singel/Foley ticket by farmers representing 27 counties across Pennsylvania and expounded upon what his administration will do for farmers.

"We are here to make a strong commitment so that agriculture will remain Pennsylvania's num-

ber one industry," Singel said. "We will do whatever we can at the state level to insure it's vitality."

While recognizing that less than two percent of the people in Pennsylvania are farmers, Singel said the other 98 percent wish they were farmers. "What is happening in Pennsylvania is a model for the rest of the nation," Singel said. "Our farmers are tremendously productive, they feed the urban areas, and they provide the family values and industry that are vital, not only for goods and services, but as a model of a way of life for Pennsylvania."

As acting governor, Singel said he was able to sign into law an extension of the Ag Loan Forgiveness Program to encourage more

people to get into farming and to forgive debt when students apply their knowledge and go into ag industry.

He said that the key to any ag program is the secretary of agriculture. "We are proud of Boyd Wolff, who comes to us as a dairy farmer from central Pennsylvania," Singel said. "He has provided a perspective that not only relates to farmers but also to consumer groups."

"So my secretary of agriculture is going to be someone with that kind of expertise and the ability to communicate and to interact with all aspects of our society. He will have my ear as Boyd Wolff does."

Singel listed a number of priori-

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First-place winner in the Ag Progress Ice Cream Churn-Off Contest is Elsie Smith, who was also last year's champion. Her Orange-Pineapple Ice Cream bought her \$300, which she spends on a family activity with her 10 grandchildren who help hand churn the ice cream.