

Price Heads Lancaster

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show me the whys and hows of the poultry industry," Price said.

He also joined the Lancaster County Poultry Association, where he was immediately appointed as secretary to the board.

"It was a great opportunity to meet everybody in a hurry and be involved in the industry in a different level," Price said of his position on the board.

A job offer from Agway Feeds gave Price the opportunity to learn the feed end of the industry. He covered the Pennsylvania and Maryland area, but, after 15 months, found it to be a lonely job much of the time. Now, as sales representative and account manager for the northeast region of Hy-Line International, Price finds it exciting to work with a young and aggressive company.

"I did not even consider becoming a chick salesman until the opportunity arose," Price said. "It's exciting to think that there are only four or five of us in the industry. I feel like I am the most fortunate person in the world."

Even more exciting to him is the poultry industry as a whole.

"It is an outstanding association. There is so much involvement from industry and producers. Because everybody contributes a little, we (the organization) are

able to do a lot," Price said.

The focus of the Association has changed in recent years. The main focus several years earlier was the farm tours. Now the Association focuses on educating the members on issues such as animal rights, environment, and food safety.

"The Association spent more money and utilized more resources in the past few years than they probably did in the last 25 years," Price said.

He thinks that media advertisement with billboards, radio, and television enables "the poultry message" to reach the consumers.

The positive message for the poultry industry is sometimes muddled by voices from animal rightists and environmental issues, he said.

"It's a challenge. It will be more of a challenge next year than last and continue to be that way. But we want to be less defensive and more offensive in our message," Price said.

As president, Price hopes to make the industry stronger by offering insight on how to react to reactionary groups.

"This is an industry that doesn't hide its challenges," Price said. "Evidence of that is how the industry dealt with avian influenza and the Salmonella enteritidis."

"We dealt with these problems and grew because of them," Price



Mark's wife Krista will graduate from veterinary school in May. The couple plans to move to Lancaster so that Mark's long commute can be eliminated.



Guy Martin, left, hands a certificate to Lancaster County Poultry Ambassador Michele Stauffer. At right is Michele's sister Melissa, who served as queen of the organization last year. Also pictured is George Georges, vice president of the Association.

said. He foresees using the animal rightists' confrontations as positive influences for the industry.

By using resources from the Pennsylvania Poultry Federation, the Egg Association of America, and the United Egg Producers, Price believes the "poultry message" can be even stronger.

"My feelings toward affiliation with other poultry associations has changed somewhat," Price said. "I thought at one time that we (the county association) had a complete grasp on understanding what the public needs to hear, but I realize that others sometimes see areas of need that we haven't even considered."

Last year the board devised their own television commercials, but some had already been developed by the national association and are available for use locally.

Money for the association comes from the fundraiser of a poultry food stand at the Ephrata Fair, which made a \$3,200 profit this year, from sponsorship by allied members and producers, and the annual \$20 membership fee.

Members receive a bimonthly newsletter and may utilize the association for resources. If they have a problem with their flock, for example, they may consult the association for help and for information on who to contact.

One of the changes made by the association recently was to appoint a poultry ambassador instead of a queen. This year's ambassador is Michele Stauffer. The board is in the process of defining her duties. They want her to continue classroom demonstrations.

"It's an outstanding way to educate young people about the industry," Price said.

Price said that in his work with producers, most have at least 30 years experience on generational farms.

"This is an area where producers

are a well-educated group, and they have the ethics and the knowledge of how to do things," Price said.

"When you visit their farms, they already know what problems they have. They only need support and technical advice," he said.

He finds this surprising since the county is known to be conservative. "Producers are still in the business for a reason — because they are willing to try new things combined with their ethics."

Board members are limited to five years of holding any position on the board. They must take a year off before returning to the board. Most presidents serve only a one-year term. Price sees this as an advantage.

"You can bring a lot of enthusiasm, new ideas and anticipation to the position for one year. After that, one has the tendency to burn-out since it is a volunteer position," he said.

Price and his wife are looking forward to May when Krista graduates from veterinary school. They plan to move to Lancaster County and Krista hopes to get a position at a small animal hospital.

"She's very sharp — first in her class — and has done her part to take advantage of all the opportunities during her training," Price said.

Krista also has some aspirations to become a poultry veterinarian. She has spent some summers working in poultry research and finds it fascinating.

After years of being unable to spend much time together because of Krista's strenuous schooling and Price's long working hours to provide the finances, the couple plan to celebrate Krista's graduation by taking a two-week honeymoon trip to Montana.

For relaxation, Price is an archery hunter and likes to golf.

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