

Farm Link, PASA Set Beginning Farmer Workshop

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — In an effort to promote and sustain family farming in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Farm Link program and the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) are jointly sponsoring a beginning farmer workshop here at the Nittany Lion Inn on Feb. 2.

According to Farm Link Coordinator Marion Bowlan, "The number of farms in Pennsylvania has declined by 55 percent since 1960. Half of our farmers have to work off the farm to make ends meet and over 65 percent of our farms gross less than \$40,000 annually."

Bowlan said these adverse economic conditions have caused people to leave and also discouraged people from entering the farm sector.

Bowlan said the future of Pennsylvania agriculture depends on young people being able to enter farming. Because it is a capital-intensive business, many young people do not have the economic resources needed to start up a farm. At the same time, many older farmers are finding it difficult to phase out of farming and maintain adequate resources for retirement.

Pennsylvania Farm Link brings together experienced farmers nearing retirement, or other interested landholders, with beginning farmers looking to operate their own farm. Farm Link is a component of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, a legislative agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, that works to promote and sustain the vitality of Pennsylvania's rural and small communities through grants, research, policy development, and technical assistance.

According to PASA Executive Director Tim Bowser, beginning farmers need to find ways to lower

the high costs of entering farming. "New sustainable, less capital-intensive methods such as rotational grazing, reducing dependence on purchased chemicals and fertilizers, and diversifying farm production offer hope to beginning farmers who need to squeeze more out of tight profit margins," he said. "At the same time, sustainable farming practices are pro-

tecting our resources now and for future generations."

A member-based organization working to develop, support, and promote food systems that are environmentally sound, economically viable, and community based, PASA offers ideas and techniques on how beginning farmers can decrease their off-farm purchases and put more

money in their pockets.

The workshop will address farm transfer issues, estate planning, business planning, farm loan resources, alternative enterprises, buying equipment, grazing strategies, marketing ideas, startup strategies, and goal setting. Participating agencies and individuals include Pennsylvania Farm Link, PASA, Penn State Cooperative

Extension, York Farm Credit, Centre County Rural Economic Community Development (formerly Farmers Home Administration), and a panel of farmers.

There is a fee to cover lunch, breaks, and administrative costs. Please contact the PASA office at (814) 349-9856 or Pennsylvania Farm Link at (800) 9PA-FARM to obtain registration information.

School For Ag Sciences Celebrates Anniversary

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — College graduates with expertise in agricultural sciences will enjoy a strong employment market through the 1990s, according to a recent USDA report. Positions in marketing, merchandising and technical areas will be difficult to fill, and scientists, engineers and related specialists will be in great demand.

"There are tremendous opportunities in the agricultural sciences for young people today," said Dr. Marianne Houser, a Penn State assistant professor who directs the Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Agricultural Sciences. This year the school is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

Penn State is trying to catch the best and the brightest high school students in the state, to teach them about career opportunities in agriculture. This summer, from July 2 to August 5, the 64 high school juniors and seniors enrolled in Governor's School will spend their vacations on Penn State's University Park Campus studying agricultural economics and business, plant and animal science, land use, remote sensing and computers.

Students from both urban and rural areas will be selected for their strong academic credentials and interest in science and technology. Each student will be

awarded a full scholarship covering tuition, classroom materials, student activities and room and board in the university's residence halls.

"Governor's School is a once in a lifetime experience," said Houser. "Students are exposed to a wide variety of fields — agricultural economics and business, animal science, engineering systems, plant science, international agriculture, and managing natural resources and the environment. They learn about methods and techniques of agricultural research, leadership development and career planning."

Participants also may choose to study entomology, agricultural engineering, food science, remote sensing, and geographic information systems. They will work indi-

vidually with faculty members on independent study projects.

Penn State's extensive teaching and research facilities provide the students with access to classrooms, computers, libraries, and laboratories. Governor's School assistants supervise the students and take part in classes, special events, and field trips.

Governor's School scholars also have the opportunity to meet and interview professionals about career opportunities in industries such as food processing and agricultural communications.

Field trips and activities are planned, including visits to Longwood Botanical Gardens, Hershey Foods, the New Bolton Center at the University of Pennsylvania, the Atlantic Breeders Cooperative

and Shaver's Creek Environmental Center.

The Governor's School for the Agricultural Sciences is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the state's intermediate units, and Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences. Pennsylvania's Governor's Schools also are offered in the arts, sciences, education, health care, and international studies.

Applications are available in high school guidance centers. Those who are interested in applying should act now. Deadlines for application are in early February. Questions about the Governor's School for the Agricultural Sciences can be directed to Marianne Houser or Nancy Walker at (814) 865-7521.

N.Y. Farm Bureau Elects President

CALLICOON, N.Y. — John Lincoln, an Ontario County dairy farmer, was elected president of the 25,000-member New York Farm Bureau, at the organization's state convention at the Villa Roma Resort Hotel.

Lincoln is the first Western New York farmer to head the state's leading farm and rural advocacy group in over a quarter of a century. Lincoln succeeds the

retiring Charles Wille, an Orange County dairy farmer who was first elected state president in December 1985.

Lincoln has been vice president of the New York Farm Bureau since December 1986. Prior to being elected vice president, he served for six years on the New York Farm Bureau board of directors.

On his 350-acre farm in Holcomb, he milks 100 cows. A grad-

uate of Cornell University, Lincoln represents New York Farm Bureau on the Council of Agricultural Organizations, the Farm Family Insurance Companies board of directors, and the Department of Environmental Conservation's Agricultural Advisory Committee. He has also served as chairman of New York Farm Bureau's Safety Group #486, the State Resolutions Committee, and the Audit Committee.

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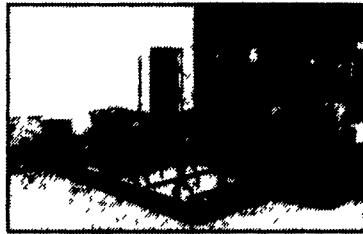
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