

## Soil Health Topics At PASA Conference

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Compost 'king' Will Brinton will be one of several outstanding speakers who will address issues of soil health at the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture's Farming for a Greener Future Conference Feb. 3-4 in State College.

Brinton, a native of southeastern Pennsylvania is founder and president of Woods End Research Laboratory, Inc. in Mt. Vernon, Maine. Brinton has been researching compost biology at Woods End for 20 years and has developed innovative approaches to low-cost methods of on-farm composting.

Brinton has worked with farmers throughout the Northeast in

developing low-tech composting methods as a tool for improving soil health, water quality, and farm nutrient management. His expertise has been called on for a wide range of projects. He was recently asked by Prince Charles to serve on a committee which is monitoring the United Kingdom's progress in recycling and composting. He is also acting as an advisor on composting to the European Community.

Three different workshops focusing on compost will be featured at the conference. Brinton will discuss properties of compost extracts suppressing plant diseases. In a second workshop, Brinton and Penn State agronomist Dr. Doug Beegle will discuss their

research findings of field studies on the release of nitrogen from compost and manures for crop production. The economics of on-farm composting, based on farm case studies, will be the focus of a third session by Brinton, Cary Oshins of the Rodale Institute, and Larry Martick from the Adams County Conservation District.

In other soil health workshops: Dr. Dan Skow, DVM, will be speaking on "The Connections Between Soil and Animal Health," a topic on which he has done pioneering research. Skow is co-owner of International Ag Labs, Inc. in Fairmont, Minn., as well as a practicing veterinarian. Skow formed International Ag Labs (IAL) with farmer Wendell Owens

after the research on various farms in their region indicated a positive relationship between food value, for humans or animal consumption, and soils. Among other things, Skow has found connections between food animal consumption soils, animal performance, human health, and crop storage. The work of IAL counters the assumption that highest yields are always optimum, especially when nutrients are sacrificed and soil is depleted.

Drawing on her research and extensive experience working with farmers, Dr. Marianne Sarrantonio will be leading a workshop "Matching Cover Crops to Niches in Cropping Systems."

Sarrantonio is assistant professor of agroecology at Slippery Rock University. She has done

very "farmer-friendly" research on cover crops for 18 years, primarily in the Northeast, and has experience in Latin America, Asia, and Africa as well.

"The Role of Organic Amendments in Soil Health" will be discussed by Dr. Laurie Drinkwater, a soil scientist at the Rodale Institute. Drinkwater has conducted research on the role of green manures and composts in improving soils in California and Pennsylvania.

Farming for a Greener Future is the Fourth Annual Conference of the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA). The conference will be held at the Nittany Lion Inn in State College. Registration information can be requested from PASA at (814) 349-9856.

## Dairy Workshops Set

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Milk producers can now register for Penn State's popular Dairy Nutrition Workshops, scheduled for February 2, 9, and 16. The workshops will once again be offered via satellite across Pennsylvania and in selected locations in several neighboring states.

This is the second year for these highly successful workshops, attended by more than 500 people last year. This year's sessions — expected to reach nearly 700 farmers at about 40 locations in eight states — will take participants via satellite through a feed mill, on farm tours, and even inside the rumen of a dairy cow.

The workshops will combine local hands-on activities conducted by extension agents and interaction with Penn State faculty via satellite at locations in Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Sessions will feature video segments, exercises on balancing rations, and discussions on nutrition-related topics by county agents, plus a question-and-

answer period featuring specialists in dairy cattle nutrition, agronomy, and agricultural engineering.

Satellite lectures by Penn State Dairy and Animal Science faculty members Larry Muller, Dick Adams, Gabriella Varga, and Jud Heinrichs will focus on feeding and managing cows in early and mid-lactation, dry cows, and heifers, with emphasis on troubleshooting metabolic problems. Lisa Holden will look at basic pasture usage, and Virginia Ishler will discuss how to determine dry matter content of forages. Agricultural engineer Dennis Buckmaster will showcase Penn State's new forage-particle-size separator. This equipment will provide better analysis of silages and total mixed rations. Agronomist Marvin Hall will talk about the proper method for sampling pasture for nutrient analysis, and Maurice Eastridge of The Ohio State University will present a segment on fat feeding for early lactation dairy cows.

Participants also will visit a dairy farm via satellite, where Jud Heinrichs will interview the pro-

ducer and take participants into the milkinghouse and feed room. After looking at the body condition of several cows, Heinrichs and the producer will analyze rations being used and troubleshoot to improve the herd's overall nutrition. Back in the classroom, workshop participants will begin working with specific forage and grain samples to determine the best approaches to balancing protein and carbohydrate fractions of the diet. For this exercise, they will use a forage analysis based on a sample they brought to the workshop the first week.

Workshops will start at 9:30 a.m. and end at 3 p.m., with an hour for lunch. The \$30 registration fee includes the cost of a forage sample analysis. An additional charge will be made if meals are provided, but this will vary across sites. To register or for more information, contact the extension office in your county.

## ADC Reports Strong

(Continued from Page A34)

Dever said that members have to start thinking about milk less as a fluid commodity, and more as an ingredient. He said the cooperative's Mt. Holly butter facility is part of that.

After discussing some of the possibilities with the new political scene on the dairy industry, Dever said, "We believe there will be a support program. A minimum safety net is likely, but (not an income guarantee)."

The outlook for the cooperative with its physical and marketing position, and its relationship with other cooperatives, should be good, as long as quality is stressed and research and product development continue to find more markets.

"The key is aggressive marketing and new products," Dever said.

Several speakers referred to quality production and according to Dever, quality is to be stressed,

especially in today's market place.

"In any industry today, you have to put out a quality product and have an efficient organization." He said that if, through member neglect the cooperative loses a quality rating it means a loss of a significant amount of money.

In other business, Herbert and Teresa Graybill were presented with a plaque honoring the family for 50 years membership in ADC. Herbert said his father John Graybill started with the cooperative and "when I took over (the farm) he was with Atlantic and my father said he had many pleasant years with Atlantic. I hope we can have 50 more."

Receiving 25-year membership awards were C. Nevin and A. Ruth Hershey, and Ray and Reba Ranck.

In other awards, Akers and J. Carl and Doris Zander received recognition for making quality premium standards for 12 straight months.

In an election of officers, because of the expanded membership due to the Hershey contract situation, the number of those nominated to be a delegate was sufficient to fill the positions, and no other nominations were made from the floor.

In the Strasburg/Paradise Local, Allan Rohrer was elected its president, C. Nevin Hershey its vice president, and Marlin Beiler as its secretary/treasurer.

Delegates for the local include Jack Coleman, Dale Hershey, Tom Lapp, and Robert Ranck. Alternates are Kenneth Beiler, Roy C. Neff, Donald Ranck, and Parke Ranck Jr.

In the Quarryville Local, Lloyd Welk was elected president, Scott Mull vice president, and Herb Graybill its secretary/treasurer.

Delegates are Randy Clark, Willie Frey, Herb Graybill, R. Charles Groff, James Krantz, Robert Kreider, Phil Rutt, and Lloyd Welk.

Alternates are Dave Delong, Ed Harnish, James Kreider, Timothy Metzler, Scott Mull, Lloyd Sensenig, and Larry Welk.

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