

England Named Head Of State Farm Council

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Orner Farms, Rockton, was supported for re-election to the State Conservation Board.

Walt Peechatka, acting state secretary of agriculture, said a number of pieces of legislation were passed in the waning days of the last general assembly which primarily come to the Department of Agriculture for implementation. These include consolidated statutes related to the commercial feed act; the establishment of organic food and maple syrup certification programs, and the restaurant inspection program taken from DER to PDA, effective July 1.

"This restaurant inspection program is particularly challenging to the department and to the ag community at large," Peechatka said. "The department will be the administrating agency and the enforcement agency for all food safety functions from preharvest on the farm through the grocery store and restaurant. This means the ag department and the ag community must accept this responsibility honestly and forthrightly if we are going to do the job properly."

Dean Alan Kelly, University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School, told the group of curriculum changes that are of interest to the farming industry. Students can now pick from five tracks: large animal, small animal, equine, mix-

ed, and production ag.

"The reason we have initiated the tracks is because we want to emphasize the importance of production agriculture as a route for our students to train and go out to serve the agricultural industry," Kelly said. "We think this is a very important initiative for the school. And coupled with this program, we have a program of incentives to get students to go into large animal practice for production agriculture."

"Students increasingly come from urban and suburban environments and don't have enough knowledge or background in agriculture to go out into the industry. In addition, we have very high fees, and during the first and second summers, students go out and get high paying jobs mending roads or in the computer industry to pay for their tuition. What we want to do is use the \$25,000 annual subsidy to get students to go to work on the farm and learn all the practical, everyday practices on the farm to give the students enough encouragement and confidence to ultimately go into agriculture."

Kelly also said there is a six-year cooperative program in which a highly qualified student can attend both the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School and Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences. This opportunity is to begin in 1996. In addition, the two institutions continue to have a coopera-

tive dairy management course.

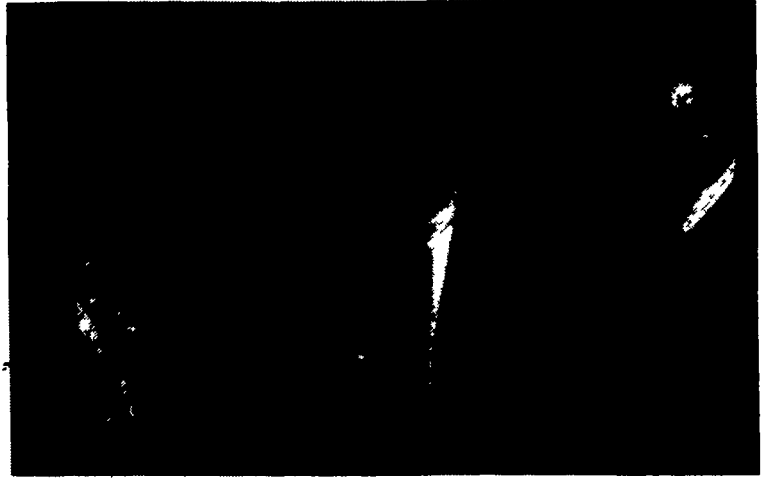
Dean Lamartine Hood, Penn State, talked about Penn State's involvement in the Dairy-MAP program to help farmers become better managers. Penn state researchers have surveyed 1,200 Pennsylvania dairy operation and conducted in-depth interviews with 200 farmers who displayed exceptional profitability. These researchers studied how existing management practices influenced profits and expenses. This information helped form the basis for Dairy-MAP.

Hood also noted the downlink locations for satellite transmissions to local extension offices in Pennsylvania. Thirty-two are installed, 17 are in progress, and 12 are proposed for the middle of this year.

"Penn State Cooperative Extension is a publicly-funded, non-formal education system," Hood said. "This system links Pennsylvania's people, agriculture and related industries with the educational and research resources and activities of Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences and its 67 county extension offices."

From formal surveys and discussions with client groups, a number of goals have been created for the 1996-1999 Plans of Work. These goals include:

- Strengthen families; enhance the development of children and youth, and build caring, safe, and



Retiring president Robert Gabel receives appreciation gift from Laura England, new president, at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations. From left, Roxy LeVan, secretary/treasurer; England; Gabel, and Earl Fink, vice president.

healthy communities.

- Foster the development and maintenance of productive, profitable and competitive businesses and a sustainable food system in Pennsylvania's changing economic climate.

- Ensure the long-term vitality and sustainability of Pennsylvania's natural resources and local environments.

- Enable people to reach informed public judgements on complex issues by fostering public dialogue.

"These goals are not mutually

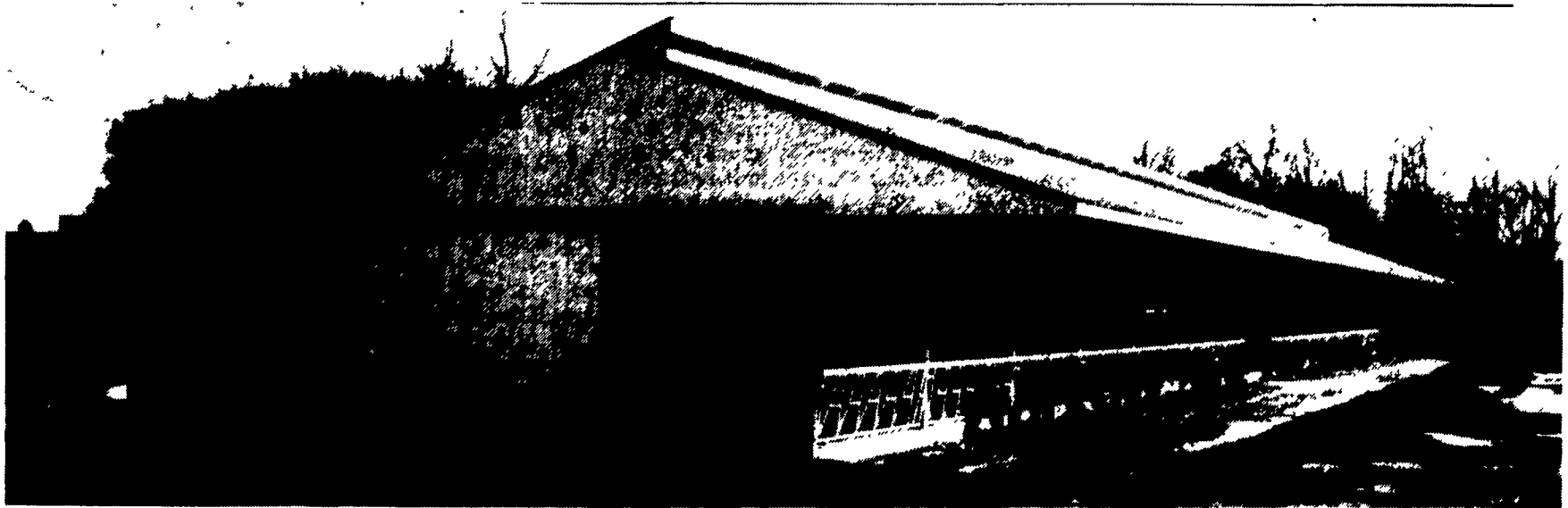
exclusive," Hood said. "Many Penn State Cooperative Extension programs contribute to two or more of these goals."

The Pennsylvania State Council of Farm Organizations promotes the welfare of agriculture in Pennsylvania by bringing together organizations of state-wide activity or influence for the study, discussion and solution of mutual problems. In addition, the Council sponsors and supports constructive legislation to help Pennsylvania agriculture. More than 80 organizations belong to the Council.

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