



He Farms, She Teaches Ag, Together They Find Balance



Farming must generate enough income to be efficient and not rely upon income from another career, said Christine and David Williams. Farming practices implemented on Chris-Da-Will Farm help the Williams find more family time with their children, Erin, 8; Lauren, 5, and Matthew 3. A story about Erin, who is Lebanon County's LI' Dairy Miss, also appears on page B10.

LOU ANN GOOD
Lancaster Farming Staff
LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) — Before Christine Williams began teaching adult farmers and vocational agriculture at Tulpehocken High School, she was advised that it isn't considered professionally astute to use one's own farm as an experiment.

"But that doesn't quite work out," she admitted.

Buoyed with knowledge from constant exposure to educational research, Christine is eager to apply classroom learning to the farm that she and her husband own in Lebanon County.

Her husband David, an avid reader of agricultural technology, is just as eager to adapt farming practices that mean less work, more

profit, and more time to spend with their children, Erin, 8; Lauren, 5, and Matthew, 3.

Christine said that people often think that the money she earns as a teacher supplements farm income, but she said, "Farm income must generate enough to be self-sufficient. I don't work to pay to farm. I work because I enjoy teaching and David farms because he enjoys it."

Called Chris-Da-Will Farm, the 135-acre farm occupies the inside of a deep bend in the Little Swatara Creek. Within several minutes, almost walking distance from Jonestown, the bordering medium-sized stream provides the family isolation from crowds and urbanization.

(Turn to Page A35)

Apply Now For Liquid Fuels Tax Refund

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Every year, those who use liquid fuels in the course of agricultural production are eligible for a refund of the taxes assessed.

According to state Treasurer Catherine Knoll, "Last year, the Board of Finance and Revenue (an official state agency chaired by Knoll) paid out a total of \$2 million in liquid fuels tax refunds to 11,000 Pennsylvania farmers, with each farmer receiving an average of \$176.

"However, nearly 40,000 farmers did not even apply for the refund," she added.

The reason that agriculture is allowed to recoup taxes collected by the state on liquid fuels is primarily because those taxes are collected to benefit motorists and the transportation industry, not farmers as such.

If a farmer uses liquid fuels to take a vacation and uses the state's highways for transportation, then those taxes collected wouldn't be returned.

However, taxes are returned to those who use liquid fuels to operate tractors, machinery, heating, etc., for agricultural production.

(Turn to Page A39)

Index Of Dairy Stories

Please see general index on Page A3.

Lancaster DHIA.....	A16
Full Circle Dairying.....	A22
American Jersey News.....	A27
ADADC Annual Report.....	A26
ADADC Hispanic Market.....	A26
Glenn's Udderings.....	A28
Dairy Agents Learn.....	A29
Chester Co. Milk Lines.....	A33

(Turn to Page A38)

PMMB Considers Request To Lower Producer Premium

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HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board last week held a public hearing to collect input on a proposal from the Middle Atlantic Cooperative Milk Marketing Agency (MACMA) and the Pennsylvania Milk Dealers Association to decrease the over-order premium to 40 cents.

The Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board is an agency that regulates the dairy industry, and

ensures that farmers are properly compensated for the milk they deliver to processors.

The PMMB also has the authority, unique among states, to place a minimum level on the retail price of milk, and place an over-order premium on the Class I price paid to producers.

Since 1988, the PMMB has acted to add a premium to the price paid to Pennsylvania dairy producers who sell Class I (fluid) milk that retails in Pennsylvania. The prompting of that was a drought

and poor milk prices paid to the producer relative to the cost of production.

The premium has remained in place since, varying in amounts, up to a temporary high of \$1.35 per hundredweight, to the current low of 80 cents per cwt.

The premium is called "over-order" because it refers to the fact that the federal government milk distribution and pricing system attempts to organize and regulate the flow of milk according to "federal orders."

Those federal orders are determined according to certain sized volumes of milk being handled, and geography.

The program is part of the government's effort to ensure citizens plentiful, inexpensive food, as a basic service.

Pennsylvania producers normally directly supply several federal orders in marketing their milk, though local milk or milk products can be and are found in many places in the world.

The PMMB over-order pre-

mium is paid only on Class I milk retailed in Pennsylvania.

The basic argument for the over-order premium has been that it is necessary to help provide the resident Pennsylvania producer with a chance at a profitable sale of milk, while at the same time ensuring a dependable, fresh and high quality product for the state's citizens.

That argument follows the theme that it's better to support a neighbor in business because it's easier to know and influence the

(Turn to Page A32)