

Laura Watt Becomes First Woman Elected To Extension Agents Vice Presidency

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Cumberland Co. Correspondent
CARLISLE (Cumberland Co.)
— Laura Watts has done something that no woman ever has done before.

Watts, who is an agent with the Cumberland County Agricultural Extension Office, has become the first woman to be elected as vice president of the Pennsylvania Association of County Agricultural Agents.

The Carlisle area woman knows she has a big job ahead of her leading the association, which is a professional association open to all county agents in the state.

"Being a county agent is getting harder and harder, with all the budget cuts," said Watts, who has worked for Cumberland County for 15 years.

"This organization is one way we can all work together as agents, networking with one another for better ideas, encouragement and support throughout the state and nationally," she added.

Watts has just the right back-

ground for her new position.

For four years she was the computer support person for her region. In the Cumberland County office, her main responsibilities include serving as livestock agent, 4-H livestock agent, as well as being in charge of safety, recycling, computer work and "anything high-tech," Watts said.

Agriculture has been part of her life even before she got her job with the county, she said. She graduated from Penn State University with a degree in animal production, then worked in a Berks County feed mill before attaining her Cumberland position.

Watts, whose hobbies include embroidery—she is a member of the Embroidery Guild—and horses, has been involved with the agents association for quite a few years.

Partly because of her interest and skill with computers, she was asked to run for election as the association's membership secretary in 1987.



Laura Watts

Her next step, in 1991, was to run for and win the office of the group's treasurer, a job she said she liked because she enjoys working with figures and keeping

records.

Watts admitted that she had to think hard before deciding to run for the vice-president post.

"It was a major decision to decide to run for this office. It is a four-year commitment," Watts said.

In the end, encouragement from her husband, Randy, and her boss, Cumberland County's chief agricultural agent Duane Duncan, convinced her to take the step.

Now that she has the office, Watts said her main goal will be to promote professionalism among Pennsylvania's agricultural agents.

The association is well suited

for that purpose because of the opportunities it provides agents for networking, in-service training and sharing ideas, she said.

Watts said she intends to help make sure the association is able to meet the needs of her fellow agents as they move into a future where the demands on them will change fast.

"Extension's role is changing," she said. "We have to keep moving into the future and always provide unbiased information to the public. This organization can help with that."

No More Morning Sickness

HONESDALE (Wayne Co.)—Oh, dear! It's morning again! A dreaded time for pregnant women. In the early stages,

one out of three pregnant women feels nauseated after she wakes up. By midday, she usually feels fine.

The morning malady is due to changes in the body as it adjusts to pregnancy. One of these is an increased need for vitamin B-6.

One symptom of B-6 deficiency is low blood sugar. This in turn can produce dizziness and nausea, both symptoms associated with morning sickness.

Most women need at least two milligrams of B-6 daily. The recommended daily allowance for pregnant women is 2.6 milligrams. Those who took birth control pills are especially vulnerable to B-6 deficiency because oral contraceptives sometimes deplete the body's B-6 supply.

To make sure they get enough of the important nutrient, it is recommended that pregnant women follow a balanced diet that includes foods rich in B-6, such as bananas, avocados, potatoes, beef, fish, chicken, dark green vegetables and whole-grain cereals.

Use as little water as possible when cooking foods containing B-6. The nutrient is water soluble and cooking food in water will reduce its B-6 content.

Some doctors prescribe vitamin supplements or morning sickness medication containing B-6 in order to relieve the symptoms.

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