

# Young Farmer



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## News



Melinda Tercha

### NYFEA ESSAY CONTEST WINNER

The National Young Farmers Educational Association (NYFEA) has announced that Melinda Tercha placed 2nd in the national essay contest held in Charleston, S.C. recently.

Melinda and her husband Robert live in Mertztown, and they belong to the Kutztown YF chapter. They farm in partnership with Robert's parents managing of 500 acres, owned and rented. They grow corn, soybeans, hay, and wheat, and raise some beef and hogs for market.

Melinda teaches preschoolers nine months out of the year. Her hobbies include photography, sewing, crafts, and writing poetry.

The Tercha belong to many farm organizations including young farmers, Grange, church, Berks extension board, and Christ UCC Church in Bowers, where Melinda sings on the choir.

The following is Melinda Tercha's winning essay.

#### Farmers Are Also Consumers

Consumers in the '90s, as they drive through the countryside, view us simply as "the farmer down the road."

These consumers are giving us more than a compliment. They are speaking about a diverse minority of people that have come about through generations of hard work,

tilling the soil, and those same people harvesting a crop.

As we near the turn of the century, it is a task we farmers will have to undertake as we update our consumer neighbors to just what it is we do on the farm. Farmers can now inform these people that our farming practices of today not only are adding yields, but are adding quality and safety to the nation's food supply.

Farmers are able to do this with the assistance of extension agents, help from agronomy consultants, and attending young farmers workshops.

Safety plays a big part in today's farming schedule. Pesticides and herbicides are being used at lesser rates and with safer application practices and equipment. Consumers should be made aware that government regulates and restricts the use of chemicals on the farm. We all need to be aware that chemicals used properly at recommended rates are a needed tool that help us to provide consumers with quality food at economical prices.

There are research-based extension education programs on integrated pest management that help farmers to reduce the use of pesticides. Also, researchers have developed soil nitrogen tests that allow us to reduce the amount of fertilizer that we as farmers need to apply to our fields.

Through continued use of soil conservation practices, consumers should note that soil erosion is kept at a minimum. Farmers are as serious about solving soil erosion problems as many consumers are. Many farmers plant waterways to help control washing and runoff in fields. Contour planting and terraces also aid in prevention of water damage to sloping or hillside fields.

One out of every five jobs in America is related to some form of agriculture. That is one large reason that farmers need to continue with some form of agriculture education. Young farmer conventions and local young farmer chapters provide workshops and seminars on current issues involving the farm.

I wonder how many consumers realize that computers play a big part in many dairy operations in many different capacities. There is a great need in rural economics in Pennsylvania today for the dairy industry. So, in effect, farmers have to make better management decisions to keep costs on the farm down. These same farmers also have to improve herd health status and emphasize problem solving on the farm. More important key

words we are looking for are "prevention of problems." Along with all the things I have mentioned, we need to look for labor saving practices.

There are many different and diverse farming operations out there in the '90s. As a dwindling minority, we need to continue to

educate ourselves as well as the consumer. We can and do strive to work for a safe and efficient way to provide consumers with our products.

Farmers are also consumers, and along with our consumer neighbors we deserve quality products at an economical and fair price.

## Water Law, Rights Meeting Set

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — In May, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission approved changes to water use regulations. Some of these changes will impact agriculture, especially those who irrigate.

As a result, a meeting has been scheduled to update the agriculture community on Jan. 3 in the basement meeting room of the Farm and Home Center in Lancaster from 8:30 a.m. until noon.

All new surface water withdrawals greater than 100,000 gallons per day must be approved by the SRBC and all surface and groundwater withdrawals greater than 10,000 gallons per day must be registered with the SRBC upon the consent of the SRBC member states. The registration period for current users runs until March 31, 1997. Pennsylvania and Maryland support the registration program.

At the meeting, topics will include benefits of registering water use for the agriculture community, consumptive water use in agriculture, and managing irrigation systems to conserve water.

To register, contact Leon Ressler, Penn State Cooperative Extension at (717) 394-6851.

## Santorum To Address Republicans

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Senator Rick Santorum will be the keynote speaker at the 1996 annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Ag Republicans. The meeting is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 8th in Room C of the Farm Show building in Harrisburg. The entire membership is encouraged to attend this meeting. Agenda items for the meeting include upcoming dates, event announcements, and committee reports on membership, public relations, legislation, and state committee, given by the various chairpersons. See you at the Farm Show.—Bev Gruber.

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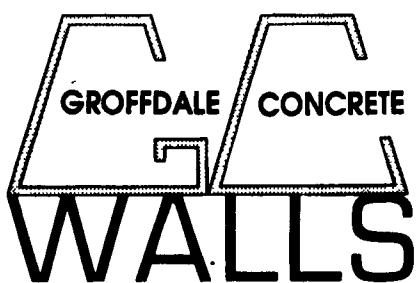
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