

Extension Fraternity To Hold National Meeting in Annapolis

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Exactly 165 Cooperative Extension Service educators associated with land-grant universities across the nation are expected in Annapolis the weekend of December 5-7 for the annual meeting of Epsilon Sigma Phi, the national honorary fraternity for Cooperative Extension Service workers in all subject areas, both at state and county levels.

Conference sessions will be held at the Annapolis Marriott Waterfront Hotel. The opening workshop on Thursday will feature a nationwide live, interactive videoconference uplinked from the conference site, 1:30-4:30 p.m. EST. Craig Pace, senior consultant with the Covey Leadership Center, based in Colorado, will be the presenter. His topic is "Moving Forward ... Keeping Pace With Change."

Epsilon Sigma Phi's traditional Ruby Award luncheon is set for

Friday. It will feature an address by Henry A. Wadsworth, director of the Indiana Cooperative Extension Service, based at Purdue University. Dr. Wadsworth is this year's recipient of the Ruby Award - the highest, most prestigious national distinguished service award presented by Epsilon Sigma Phi. The Ruby Award is designed to recognize truly outstanding thinking, performance and leadership in the Cooperative Extension Service.

Born in Cortland, N.Y., Wadsworth holds B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in agricultural economics from Cornell University. He has served in academic and administrative positions at Cornell, Oregon State and Purdue.

Wadsworth also has held several positions of leadership with the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, affiliated with the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant colleges. He is described as "an

effective, efficient visionary who has propelled Indiana's Extension programs into high regard."

One or more National Friend of Extension award winners will be recognized at a Saturday evening awards dinner. This is the highest award offered by Epsilon Sigma Phi to a non-Extension person for outstanding support and personal

involvement in Extension education efforts. Louis L. Goldstein, Maryland state comptroller, received this award in 1994.

Awards for outstanding accomplishments by professional Extension educators also will be made at the Saturday banquet.

Maryland's Tau chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi, established in

1928, is the host organization for this year's national conference. Ellen Varley, a Cooperative Extension Service state specialist at the University of Maryland at College Park, is chairperson for local arrangements. Ms. Varley is Extension coordinator for distance education and outreach communications.

Turkey Farmers Prepare Store

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the late '50s.

"Some customers say that our turkeys are more white in color," said Strock, which he attributes to more exposure to sunlight in a naturally ventilated house with a dirt/sawdust floor.

In the first four weeks of age, Strock feeds the birds a commercial starter. At four weeks the birds are fed a specialty mix prepared by Strock consisting of corn and bean meal and a mineral supplement.

Strock said he uses no growth promotants or hormones. The birds are not vaccinated for any programs — mainly because the birds are cleaned out at the end of

the holiday season, the houses are completely disinfected, and the house is empty until the next growout.

The birds sold at retail end up as employer gifts at the holiday table. For Thanksgiving, Strock estimates that of the 1,000 birds the store will sell, 300 will be gift turkeys, hens weighing between 16-18 pounds. Toms will weigh about 23-28 pounds.

Mostly family members are involved in the dressing process, which occurs at certain times before the start of the holidays.

The turkeys are processed and wrapped in cream-colored plastic shrinkwrap packaging and placed in boxes with the Strock Farm

logo.

Customers also rely on the Strock turkeys at other times of the year. Every year in October Strock sells about 300 birds to the Carlisle Fish and Game Club for turkey shoots and block parties.

Most birds finish from 16-17 weeks of age. Some birds are killed at a younger age, about 15 weeks at 12-14 pounds.

Strock noted that keeping a loyal customer base is critical to success.

"People that buy our turkeys are like family — you see them every Thanksgiving," said Strock. "We have an extremely loyal clientele. They're in the second generation, some of (our customers) here."

Kent said that when she ran the business, his mother "knew every customer by their first name, could tell the family history, who was sick and where they worked. Customers really appreciate when you get to know them, they don't feel like they're just another number standing in line at the counter."

The turkeys are individually hand-picked by weight for customers at the on-site 8-foot by 48-foot cooler trailer. The challenges remaining for the Strock family are to develop and maintain customer loyalty.

Strock also manages his hog roasting business, Scent-Sational Pignic, begun in 1982. What started as one roaster grew into 12 roasters, which has experienced "14 consecutive years of growth," he said. Now, Strock helps conduct about 150 roasts during the summer.

At the roasts, Strock said that "75 percent of the time they make you feel like you're part of the party." The swine roaster business makes up a large percentage of the entire farm's gross sales receipts.

(Strock's swine operation and his leadership of the state pork producers council was the first-page featured story in the Feb. 15, 1992 issue of *Lancaster Farming*.)

The biggest challenge at "turkey time" according to Strock is keeping things from backing up during the hectic sales season.

"Although we can't take care of everybody at once," said Strock, "we treat each customer as personally and personally as we possibly can."



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