

# Lancaster Farming

Vol. 42 No. 20 Five Sections Lancaster Farming, Saturday, March 22, 1997 \$27.50 Per Year 60¢ Per Copy

## Employee-Farmer Puts Special Emphasis On Conserving Soil, Wildlife



There are a total of 131 acres in wildlife upland habitat management, wildlife refuge tree plots (consisting of Norway Spruce, juniper, and barberry), managed meadows, brush management, fencing (the farm is completely bordered), stream crossing, heavy use area protection, hedgerow planting, and prescribed burnings on the conservation farm. Here, John Hicks checks out the switchgrass plots used in the dog draining.

**ANDY ANDREWS**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
NEWTOWN SQUARE (Delaware Co.) — Years ago, Chester County conservation farmer John Hicks saw what he believes were the “damaging effects of large farming” to the soil on his dairy in West Chester.

On his own farm and on subsequent farms that he has since managed, Hicks worked hard to prevent water and soil from leaving his farm.

Along the way, he picked up many clues about how important it is not only to preserve the soil but to preserve nature’s habitat on the land. And in the two decades since he left dairying, he has been able to mesh the best of both worlds — farming for a living and farming to preserve the environment.

For his efforts as manager of the Double-D Farm owned by Gwynne McDevitt just inside the Chester County border, Hicks was honored with the 1996 Conservation Innovation Award by the Chester County Conservation District, presented to the farm in January at the county crops day.

Hicks manages a farm that is comprised of a little more than 150 acres on which Gordon Highland Setters are trained. The farm is used to train the field trial dogs and prepare them for nationwide contests, of which McDevitt has won several.

Bill Wolter, a conservationist and farmer from Greenwood, Del., is instrumental with McDevitt in the training of the dogs. Wolter also brought the VA-70 Lespedeza to be used as border.

At the McDevitt Farm, Hicks has installed a wide variety of best management practices with the training of the dogs (14 in all) in mind — as well as the preservation of the environment.

“I was a dairy farmer before this — an intense dairy farmer at that,” Hicks told *Lancaster Farming* at the McDevitt Farm last week. Hicks operated a 600-acre dairy farm with his father and uncle in West Chester for a number of years and took over the farm when he was graduated from Wilmington College in Wilmington, Ohio with an ag degree in 1964.

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## Maryland Holstein Association Celebrates 33rd Convention

STEVENSVILLE, Md. — The 33rd annual convention of the Maryland Holstein Association brought together over 400 Holstein breeders and enthusiasts from across the state.

“The Eastern Shore, where the sun rises first in Maryland,” was the theme for the convention, sponsored by the Queen Anne’s Holstein and the Kent Dairy clubs.

The two-day convention was held March 14-15 at the American Legion in Stevensville and the sale held at the Queen Anne’s County 4-H Park.

A welcome to the Eastern Shore was extended to all by Donny Skinner.

Jason Myers, president of the

Maryland Holstein Association, called the meeting to order. He encouraged everyone to keep a positive attitude. He said, “It’s not what we get out of it — it’s what we get out of it by giving.”

Jason thanked the five retiring directors, Ken Holland, Delvin Mast, Tom Remsberg, Steve Wilson, and Kevin Leaverton, for their service to the association.

Committees, finance and membership activities were discussed. The summer picnic is to be held the third Sunday in June at Savage-Leigh Farm.

National Holstein Association representatives Clarence Stauffer and Tom Dum gave a program on the herd book proposal for a com-

prehensive, fully disclosed ID program.

This generated a lively discussion from the audience. Opinions of association members should be given to the state delegates going

to the National Holstein Convention in Grand Rapids, Mich., in June.

Ed Fry Jr. gave a report on a proposed dairy price support bill. He encouraged everyone to call

their federal representative and ask them to support the bill.

The current officers — Jason Myers, president; Carl Bender, vice president; and Anita Hill,

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## Longacre’s Modern Dairy Refits For Organic Processing

(Second in a series)

**VERNON ACHENBACH JR.**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
BARTO (Berks Co.) — The “organic” milk market is beginning to grow in southeastern Pennsylvania and its development offers a glimpse into entrepreneurial accomplishment.

In terms of success, it is an apparent winner because it has found its way into the retail market place, it is providing a working cash flow, not running up debt, and it seems to have more potential for growth than not.

And perhaps most importantly, those involved in the business say they believe in its merits.

This series of articles looks at that organic offspring of the mainstream dairy industry and began last week with Ned and Susan MacArthur of West Grove, in Chester County, who along with Ned’s father Norman, and business partner Gary Comstock created Natural Dairy Products Corp.

Natural Dairy Products Corp. was formed as a management company that is currently involved with eight producers who are certified organic dairy producers under the Organic Crop Improvement

Association certification rules.

A local chapter of OCIA was formed to oversee the certification process. The local board of review consists of dairy producers, a dairy processor, and a retailer of organic

dairy product. Determination of an applicant for designation as an organic farm depends upon approval from the board. The board also sets conditions for con-

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## Poultry Progress Day Highlights Research

**LOU ANN GOOD**

Lancaster Farming Staff  
LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Making a comfortable living for poultry farmers is stifled by flies, bird diseases, zoning interferences, and bouncing prices. But the annual Poultry Progress Day held on Thursday addressed all these problems and offered bright expectations for producers and industry marketing poultry products.

The all-day seminar held at the Farm and Home Center demonstrated the year-round research that Penn State scientists and extension personnel conduct for the poultry industry’s benefit.

Dr. William Weaver gave an overall review of the recently completed research facilities at Penn

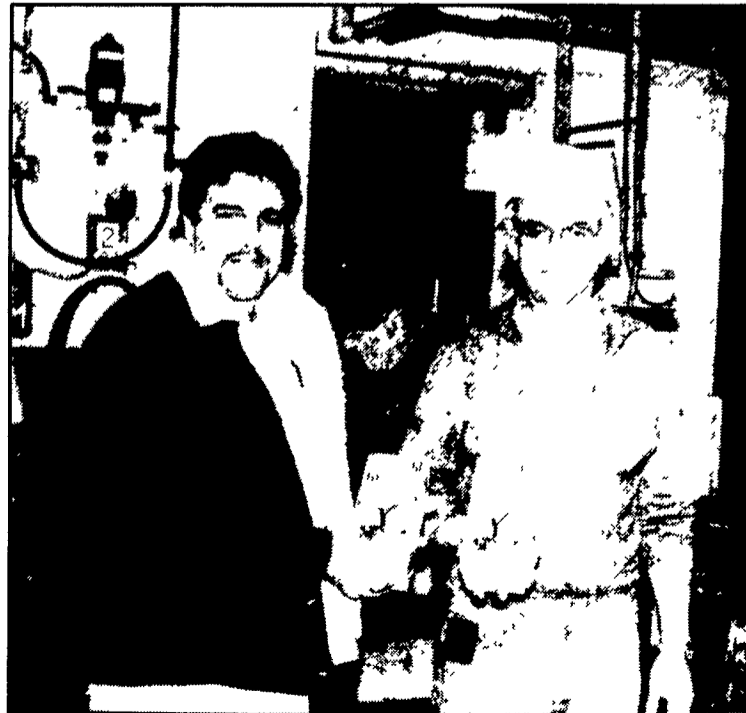
State’s main campus. The six buildings housing incubators, environmental chambers, floor pens, batteries, and cages, and a processing facility were designed to enable research and collect data from the studies.

Weaver profiled five research programs.

“We are attempting to build a better bird with lean muscle and less fat,” he said. This is being done through research on piquing the chicken growth hormone so that birds will produce it naturally in larger amounts rather than being added to feed, by injection or by other means.

Ordinarily broilers that undergo a 12-hour period of feed withdrawal will lose 12 percent of body

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Ned MacArthur and Dan Longacre show two of the organic milk products processed at the Longacre’s Modern Dairy.