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Nonpathogenic Avian Virus Found, Industry Quick To Control

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Managing Editor

MANHEIM-MT. JOY (Lancaster Co.) — The continuing efforts of the allied poultry industry in Pennsylvania and the scientific research into how the avian influenza virus operates will keep the latest outbreak of the dreaded disease at the nonpathogenic level.

That's the hope of industry leaders as they moved swiftly on Tuesday to depopulate 154,000 hens in three houses on a farm in the Manheim-Mt. Joy area. A non pathogen strain of the virus was discovered in the birds exhibiting symptoms of the disease. The virus was confirmed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and all flocks within a five mile radius are being

tested.

While a flock in Lebanon County was depopulated in February after a nonpathogen strain of the virus was discovered, this is the first time a commercial flock has been found to have the virus in Lancaster County since the disease devastated the state's poultry industry 14 years ago. This time both the Lebanon flock and now the Lancaster flock were depopulated as a precautionary measure because the earlier episode also started as a nonpathogen strain. Later as the nonpathogenic strain passed through a number of flocks it mutated into a highly pathogenic strain that affected nearly every flock in the state.

John Hoffman of the Pennsylvania Poultry Federation said that because of Pennsylvania's experience with avian influenza years ago, the state's poultry industry doesn't hesitate to take immediate action once a flock is diagnosed.

"Like now, at that time the birds were not highly affected," Hoffman said. "We thought with sum-

mer coming the virus would disappear on its own, so we didn't get alarmed. But it continued and by October it turned pathogenic. Once that happened, it spread quickly through the county, and the state mandated the slaughter of 17 million birds over a year's time to eradicate the disease at a cost of more than \$100 million.

"Because of our experience, we don't make the mistakes of the past. We are doing everything possible to not allow an epidemic to occur again," Hoffman said.

Of course, the loss to individual poultry farmers is dramatic. The family this week lost \$100,000 from the destroyed birds, and
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Dairy Cooperatives Agree To Discuss Consolidation

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Four of the nation's largest dairy marketing cooperatives have signed a memorandum of understanding to continue discussions that could lead to the formation of a new dairy marketing cooperative that would market about 25 percent of the nation's milk. The decision follows a joint meeting of the four organizations' boards of directors, in which the main topic of discussion was the consolidation of assets and operations to form an, as

yet unnamed, consolidated organization. The two-day meeting follows nearly five months of analysis and discussion among the four organizations' leadership to reach agreement on key issues involved in such a consolidation.

Cooperatives involved in the consolidation discussions are: Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI) of Arlington, Texas; Mid-America Dairymen Inc. (Mid-Am) of Springfield, Missouri;

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Farm Show Director Notes Economic Impact Of Fairs

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
BLUE BALL (Lancaster Co.) — A recent study on the economic importance of fairs conducted by Penn State for the Pennsylvania Farm Show Commission came up with some interesting figures.

For one thing, the Farm Show in Harrisburg generates \$70 million in economic activity in the capitol region, said Dennis Grumbine, Pennsylvania Farm Show director.

Grumbine spoke Wednesday night at the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs (PSACF) Zone 4 meeting to 156 people at the Shady Maple Smorgasbord in Blue Ball.

Grumbine, who farms 300 acres in Lebanon County and owns several ag businesses, challenged the members of local fair boards to "take a look at what the economic vitality is of the fair when it comes to the local area," he said, as com-

pared with how the Farm Show affects the ag industry throughout the commonwealth.

He urged the many fair committee volunteers and those who help organize fairs to use some "crystal ball gazing" tactics and come up with some numbers. These numbers relate to the people needed by exhibitors at the fairs, including veterinarian services, trucking, food suppliers, as well as local

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Richard and Sandra Wizar stand next to their farm business sign. Richard said that using the principles of business learned at Bell Atlantic — know where you spend your money — helped him develop a successful retirement farming business. He said that now he has the best of both worlds.

Retired Couple Establishes Agricultural Business

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff
WEST CORNWALL (Lebanon Co.) — Catering to an agricultural niche market, Richard and Sandra Wizar, owners of Wizar's Country Nursery, said they have found their post-early retirement Shangri-la in an old farmstead they turned into a country nursery.

The nursery is located in West Cornwall Township, near Richard's boyhood home in Cornwall.

Starting with a more than 165-year-old farmstead in need of repair, over the past 12 years, especially the past five, they built a

family home-business that now employs six people full time, including Richard and Sandra, and three part-time people.

They started out with a Christmas tree operation on the farm's 40 acres, after renting out some of the land for crops to others for a couple of years while they were fixing up the house for themselves.

At the time they were both employed by Bell Atlantic.

Since they retired (Richard five years ago, Sandra last year), their side business has quickly blossomed into a three-part, full-time business — landscaping and

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The state Farm Show generates \$70 million in economic activity in the capitol region, said Dennis Grumbine, Pennsylvania Farm Show director, center. Grumbine spoke Wednesday night at the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs (PSACF) Zone 4 meeting to 156 people at the Shady Maple Smorgasbord in Blue Ball. From left, Beverly Gruber, Zone 4 secretary; Grumbine; and Sally Nolt, Zone 4 chairman.