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Blue Mountain High School Team Is National Envirothon Champion



In the front row, from the left, the national Envirothon team is Pennsylvania's Blue Mountain High School team, from the left is Aaron Clauser, Phil McDonald, Tami Smerlick, and Caroline Watral. In the second row, from the left, is head advisor Glenn Luckenbill, and assistant advisors Chris Brommer, Bob Bylone Jr., and Richard Eckert. Not shown is team member Jeremy Johnson.

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff
SCHUYLKILL HAVEN (Schuylkill Co.) — A team of five just-graduates from Blue Mountain High School in Schuylkill County recently were named the national Envirothon champions at the national event held at the Johnstown campus of the University of Pittsburgh.

The team was recognized at the Schuylkill County agriculture center in Schuylkill Haven on Monday, during the annual awards luncheon of the county Conservation District.

Other awards made Monday included the county conservation award winners.

The win is perhaps more significant since this year's event marked the 10th year that the national Envirothon has been held, starting with the first national event held in Pennsylvania.

The sixth national championship by a Pennsylvania Envirothon team, it is the fourth national championship won by Blue Mountain High School.

The members of the team were Aaron Clauser of Schuylkill

Haven, Phil McDonald of Orwigsburg, Tami Smerlick of Adamsdale, Caroline Watral of Schuylkill Haven, and Jeremy Johnson of Schuylkill Haven. All but Johnson, who is employed full time as a carpenter, were able to attend Monday's awards ceremony.

Nearly 200 students on 37 teams, representing 34 states and three Canadian provinces competed for the honors during the five-day Envirothon.

The winners each receive a \$2,500 scholarship from corporate sponsor Cannon Corp. The second place team receives \$1,500 scholarships, while the third place team receives \$1,000 scholarships.

All of the Pennsylvania team, except Johnson, are planning to begin pursuing environmental or science-related college degrees this year.

According to Glenn Luckenbill, team coach and 28-year science teacher with the Blue Mountain school system, not to take anything away from the winning teams of the past, but the level of competition has increased over the decade of competitions started with Pen-

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Pennsylvania State Hay Show Winners Named

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.) — The 1997 Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council-sponsored Hay Show at Ag Progress Days was held last week.

Returning judge was Dr. Lester Vough, crop specialist for University of Maryland. Dr. Marvin Hall, Penn State researcher and extension specialist, coordinates the show.

There is no entry fee and all entries are automatically entered into the next Pennsylvania Farm Show hay show.

Hay entries are first judged based on visual appearances, and then on tested content.

The show is organized by recognizing three different treatments of hay.

Section I includes hay that is field cured, or partially field cured, but definitely mow finished (no heat or preservatives).

Section II is for partially field cured hay with preservatives. Section III is for partially field cured and heat dried (but no preservatives).

Each section is then divided into 10 classes of hay — two classes each, reflecting first cuttings or a later cutting (except for mixed hay, which is rated according to the percentage of legumes and grass), of five different hay types: alfalfa, alfalfa-grass, clover, grass, and mixed hay.

The grand champion of the Section I entries was an entry by Tra-

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Midwest Expert Looks At Dairy Situation

ROBERT CROPP
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MADISON, Wis. — Milk production for the month of July for 20 reporting states was released on August 14. Milk production was up 4.8% from a year ago, the strongest monthly increase this year. This was somewhat surprising because there were reports of hot weather in parts of California and elsewhere that reduced milk per cow. But July numbers don't verify this. In fact,

milk per cow was up 5.7% from a year ago.

Milk cow numbers were down just .9% which shows that the nation's milk cow herd is not declining like it was a year ago when grain prices were much higher. Cumulative milk production for January through July for the U.S. is estimated to be 1.6% higher than for the same period last year. Milk production has not declined seasonally. July milk production was .5% more than June and down just 3.3% from the peak in May.

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Lancaster County tobacco farmers have begun harvesting their \$20 million cash crop a little behind schedule. Eugene Rohrer, Strasburg, said they started last Thursday and had about 3,000 lath done by the time the photographer caught up with the operation Tuesday afternoon. This was only about half the number Rohrer usually has done by the middle of August. But cool weather early and then dry weather made the crop mature later this year. But quality is expected to be good. Last year the extra wet weather made the stalks heavy and leaves of lower quality. This season the stalks are lighter because of the dry weather, but the late rains put quality into the leaves. Rohrer has 23 acres of Type 41 tobacco and reports that demand for this type of tobacco is expected to be rather good this year. Increased world market demand is expected to influence local demand.

John Yocum, head of Penn State's research farm at Landisville, agreed the price this year may make the crop value exceed the average. But he said the remaining effects of blue mold and curing in the barns will determine the final outcome. Yocum said after the heavy rains several weeks ago, farmers should have gone in and sprayed right away. But many farmers didn't spray for the disease, and now they are in a situation where they need to decide if they are losing more from blue mold or from cutting early.

One characteristic of the disease works in the farmers' favor. After the tobacco is topped, the disease seems to not spread as fast. Yocum said scientists are not sure why the plant seems to have more natural defenses at this time. The dry weather certainly did help the blue mold disease problem and made the leaves thicker and of better quality. Good growing and curing weather the next several weeks will help to determine the final outcome of this year's tobacco crop. In the photo, Rohrer is driving the tractor with son Mike and Chris Beller loading. Photo by Everett Newswanger, managing editor.