

Gov. Tom Ridge Keynotes Banquet, Opens Farm Show

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bridge, Lancaster County, three silver, four bronze and "Best American";

— The Winery at Wilcox, Wilcox, Elk County, one silver and three bronze; and

— Franklin Hill Vineyards, Bangor, Northampton County, one bronze.

The Pennsylvania Farm-City Council also recognized this year's winners as part of the dinner program. Ag Secretary Samuel Hayes Jr. presented plaques to representatives of the Altoona-Blair County Chamber of Commerce and the Franklin County Farm-City Council for conducting successful programs in 1997.

"The Farm-City program works to create a better quality of life for future generations," says Hayes. "Pennsylvania's citizens need to recognize that farm-city partnerships are essential. Without our farms and farm families, city and urban families would have no food, and without businesses from our cities and towns, farmers would not have markets and processing facilities for their products."

"Farm-City activities present a unique opportunity to increase public awareness of the tremendous contributions made by Pennsylvania's 50,000 farm families and 2,300 food processors and the challenges involved in meeting the world's increasing needs for agricultural products."

The Altoona-Blair County Chamber of Commerce carried out a variety of activities, including a "Buy Local" campaign; an old-fashioned pig roast; school visits; "Dairy Day;" and the 27th annual Farm-City Dinner.

Franklin County's Farm-City Council sponsored more than a dozen activities, including an agricultural exposition at a local mall; farm tours and open houses; job exchange and the 28th annual Farm-City Dinner.

The Agriculture Department held a Farm-City Day celebration on Nov. 18, just prior to National Farm-City Week, which is celebrated during the seven days leading up to and including Thanksgiving Day.

Thriving Farm-City committees sponsor a variety of events throughout the year, working with farm organizations, government

agencies and local businesses. They work to promote the diversity and economic importance of agriculture within their county, and a greater appreciation between the farm and business community as well as rural and urban residents.

To promote the farm-city concept, Gov. Tom Ridge issued a proclamation declaring Nov. 21-27, 1997, as Farm-City Week in Pennsylvania, and urged all residents to celebrate the interdependence between urban and rural communities. He plans to issue a similar proclamation this year.

The following individuals were introduced at the banquet.

The Pennsylvania Apple Queen - Ashlee Semelka, 18, is the daughter of Robert and Linda Semelka of North East, Erie County. Her father and grandfather own and operate the Semelka Fruit Farm. Pennsylvania currently ranks fifth nationally in apple production, yielding an annual crop of 391,000,000 lbs., valued at \$50.5 million.

Pennsylvania Cattleman's Queen - Twenty-one-year-old Melissa Leiden, daughter of Gerald F. and Bernadette Leiden of St. Lawrence, Cambria County is the current Pennsylvania Cattleman's Queen. She attends Indiana University of Pennsylvania where she is active in field hockey, track and field and the residence life council. The gross income from beef production on 33,000 farms in the state during 1996 was \$352.7 million.

Pennsylvania Dairy Princess - Nichole R. Meabon, 17, daughter of Randy and Paula Meabon of Wattsburg, Erie County, is a senior at Seneca High School. Nicole is planning for a career in broadcast communications. On behalf of the state's 10,500 dairy farms with \$1.67 billion in revenues, she works to educate the public about the need to consume milk and dairy products. Pennsylvania currently ranks fourth nationally in milk production 10.6 billion pounds.

Pennsylvania Dairy Goat Association Youth Representative - Sixteen-year-old Derrick Carpenter, Newville, Cumberland County is a junior at Big Spring High School where he participates in FFA (he is currently president of his chapter) and wrestling. He

is an eight year member of the Cumberland County 4-H Goat Club.

Delaware Valley College Ambassadors for Food and Agriculture - Stephanie Kauffman, Reinholds, Berks County is the twenty-year-old daughter of Ray and Shirley Kauffman. She is a junior horticulture major at Delaware Valley College. Grant E. Campbell, 23, son of Earl and Tamie Campbell, was raised on the family dairy farm in Gratz, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. He is a senior at Delaware Valley College majoring in Large Animal Science.

Pennsylvania Draft Horse and Mule Queen - Sarah Lang, 19, is the daughter of Rodney and Cindy Lang of Saxonburg, Butler County. She attends Butler Community College. She is the founding member and past president of the "Young Drafters" 4-H Club. During her reign she has encouraged children to develop their interest in draft horses.

Queen Evergreen XXXIV - Christina Lynn Schroth is the 19-year-old daughter of Betsy and Kenneth Schroth, Jr. of Indiana, Indiana County. She is a sophomore at Indiana University of Pennsylvania majoring in business management. Queen Evergreen represents Indiana County's tourism and Christmas tree industries. Pennsylvania currently ranks fifth nationally in the production of Christmas trees, with 2.5 million trees valued at \$32 million.

Pennsylvania State Fair Queen - April Bryington, 18, is the daughter of Clifford and Connie Bryington, Bradford, McKean County. She attends the Niagara University studying psychology. After college, April would like to pursue a career counseling children and families. Pennsylvania's 113 agricultural fairs are part of a time honored tradition that dates back to the early days of the Commonwealth. They showcase the joys, achievements and great foods of rural Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Flying Farmers Queen - Mary Hawbaker and her husband, David reside on their 300 acre corn, soybeans, alfalfa, wheat and barley farm in Mercersburg, Franklin County. Mary's favorite hobbies include gardening, cooking, needlepoint and collecting china.

Pennsylvania Grape Queen - Karen Simpson, the 18-year-old daughter of Don and Judy Simpson, is a lifetime resident of Erie County, heart of Pennsylvania's bountiful grape belt. As Grape Queen, Karen appears at public functions and promotional activities, informing and educating consumers about the many benefits and uses of grape products. The largest grape juice processing plant in the world is located in Pennsylvania along with approximately 50 wineries. Pennsylvania ranks fourth among all states in the country in grape production, with 79,000 tons annually harvested on some 11,000 acres.

Pennsylvania Honey Queen - Jamie Fisher, 18, is the daughter of Paul and Sandra Fisher of

Stoudsburg, Monroe County. She is a sophomore at the Pennsylvania State University majoring in microbiology. Honeybees are used to pollinate over \$1 billion worth of crops each year in the United States. It takes 556 worker bees flying 35,854 miles to produce one pound of honey.

Pennsylvania Lamb and Wool Queen - Heidi Svonavec is the 17-year-old daughter of Dave and Betty Lou Svonavec of Rockwood, Somerset County. She has been a 4-Her for nine years exhibiting carcass, market and breeding sheep projects. Heidi is also involved with FFA and is a member of the National Suffolk and Hampshire Associations. Pennsyl-

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Amanda Miller gives a crash course in shearing sheep to Gov. Ridge. The governor proves himself a quick learner and willing to get involved.



These young beef showmen share a moment with Gov. Tom Ridge. From left, Tim Koslerek, Jameson Walker, Ridge, and Alex Mattocks. Koslerek is from Erie County, Walker and Mattocks from Crawford County.