

Lancaster Extension Buffet Is Celebration Of Service

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Lancaster Farming Staff
LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)
— While the entire extension service of Penn State strengthens its own outreach programs, the Lancaster County Extension has already made big strides. In the past year alone the county office assisted 26,638 people, according to John Schwartz, extension director.

Extension service family and friends were invited to celebrate the efforts of the local extension office Thursday evening at the Lancaster County Cooperative Extension Association Annual Meeting and Social Event, of which more than 100 attended at the Farm and Home Center.

A highlight of the celebration was the annual "taste testing" that went on shortly before the start of the meeting. There, people stood in line to feast on the many products offered by producer commodity groups in the county.

Represented at the event were the Lancaster County beef producers, fruit growers, poultry producers, dairy producers, swine producers, and potato growers. The tasty treats included dishes served up by various producers, including omelettes with a variety of ingredients by the Lancaster County Poultry Association with "Sauder's Gold" eggs donated by R.W. Sauder, pork barbecue and ham loaf meatballs provided by Gene Wenger's Meats, beef sandwiches donated by Hess Barbecue, apples donated by Cherry Hill Orchards, potatoes from the Paul Mast Farm

in Morgantown, and other commodities donated by Herr's Chips and Sharon's Flower Design.

"During the past year," Schwartz told those who attended the buffet banquet meeting, "we distributed 190,277 newsletters and publications." In addition, 698 volunteers assisted in the county continuing education program. Overall, 3,998 4-H members carried out 5,146 county projects.

During this "very challenging and interesting year," the director noted, "avian influenza, dry weather, and fluctuating dairy prices were some of the major challenges we had to face here in Lancaster County." He said that technical assistance was provided in dead bird disposal in order to protect groundwater quality. "We also looked for ways to explore alternative methods to depopulation as a method to control the disease."

By using tight biosecurity, birds were not depopulated and eggs were allowed to move to market under special procedures. Losses were drastically reduced to the farmer, Schwartz indicated.

Also, a newsletter was developed by the staff to help farmers consider options to increase feed production during last year's drought. Educational workshops have been developed to help dairy farmers "develop new business strategies to deal with fluctuating dairy prices," said Schwartz.

Schwartz pointed out that "we continue to have strong master gardener" and "strong 4-H" programs. A total of 81 active master



Omelettes in all flavors were made courtesy of the Lancaster County Poultry Association. From left, Kendra Weaver, poultry ambassador, Paul Wolgemuth, Guy Martin, and Karen Wolgemuth.

gardeners are serving the county. The gardeners donated 3,889 hours with more than 6,600 contacts, including answering home horticultural questions in the office, running a plant diagnosis clinic, and coordinated a "Meet The Plants" Program for the youth. With all those hours put in by the gardeners, Schwartz indicated, it was equivalent to having two full-time employees working in the extension system.

The Lancaster 4-H program numbers 175 4-H clubs. Embryology continues to be a very popular in-school program, acquainting youth with biology and ag science, Schwartz noted.

The past year marked several changes in the 4-H program. In June, Dr. Zoann Parker was selected by the state secretary of agriculture to be the deputy secretary for administration. As a result,



Serving up sundaes of all flavors at the extension buffet meeting, from left, Brenda Hershey, Shirley Shaub, and Liz Smith, county dairy princess.



Dairy royalty wait in the wings to serve up tasty sundaes of any kind of topping. From left, Liz Smith, dairy princess, with dairy darlings Karen Shaub and Katie Hershey. At right, Leon Ressler, honored for 10 years of service, gets extra helpings of strawberries.



New directors of the Lancaster County Extension. From left, Richard Rohrer, Virginia Ranck, and Larry Baum.

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