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Tastier Forage, Bigger Bite Highlight Grazing Research

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff
GRANTVILLE (Dauphin Co.)

— At the crest of grazing research, scientists examine the following:

- How cows that take a "bigger bite" of forage can produce more pounds of milk per day.

- How to provide tastier, higher quality plant material that reaches high off the ground, where animals prefer to take their meals.

- How to make more efficient use of those harvesting machines — essentially, the cows that bring home the milk check.

Researchers summarized ways to increase the economic strength of grazing operations Wednesday during the first of a two-day Pennsylvania Grazing and Forage Conference. The conference,

sponsored by the Penn State Grazing Research and Education Center and the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council (PFGC), continued Thursday and was attended by approximately 150 graziers and agri-industry representatives at the Grantville Holiday Inn.

The key to increasing the milking capability of that harvest machine is to "allow that cow to take a big mouthful of grass," said Dr. Sinclair Mayne, a scientist at the Agricultural Research Institute of Northern Ireland, at the conference.

Mayne, who spoke about the forage productivity and utilization by ruminants, works out of the Institute based in Hillsborough.

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"Oliver, can I tempt you with a piece of candy?" That's what little Kyle Walmer, age 5, seems to be asking. Kyle the boy, and Oliver the home bred Percheron/Thoroughbred which measures 17.2 hands, belong to Susan and Sidney Walmer of Foxfield Farm in Reinholds, Lancaster County. At Foxfield they have been working with the Percheron/Thoroughbred cross to gain a combination of athletic ability along with good bone structure and calmness of disposition.

This farm is on the Pennsylvania Horse Farms tour later this month, and Kyle and Oliver posed for the camera to call attention to the event. (See story page A26.)

The huge horse towered over the little boy. But that caused no fear. The scary part was getting up and looking down from on top of that rail fence. Until you get accustomed to such heights, you must hang on for dear life. But in the end, confidence returned. And a fun time was had by everyone involved in taking the picture, including the photographer. Photo by Everett Newswanger, managing editor.

Upcoming Tobacco Referendum Vote

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The USDA Farm Service Agency this week announced that tobacco growers in various parts of the country will be given an opportunity to vote for tobacco support programs to be in effect for the next three years.

In Lancaster County, the leading tobacco producing county in

Pennsylvania, a referendum will be conducted at the Farm Service Agency on March 23-27 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. The Farm Service Agency office in Lancaster is located at 1383 Arcadia Road.

Only farmers who grew tobacco in 1997 are eligible to vote in the referendum. Eligibility can be determined by reporting tobacco

acres through the time of voting.

If more than two thirds of the growers who vote in Pennsylvania favor the program for the state, then USDA will set quotas for the state and growers will be able to obtain price sup-

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Avian Influenza Confirmed At Two Lancaster Farms

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The state Department of Agriculture this week confirmed finding on two Lancaster County farms the same avian influenza variety that has continued to appear in the area for more than a year.

Site quarantines have been imposed on both farms, one of which had the disease last May, but went through depopulation and cleaning and disinfection prescribed by the state.

According to state Secretary of

Agriculture Samuel Hayes Jr., "We are disappointed and concerned that the virus has appeared again. This stresses the need for maintaining the strictest biosecurity. We must maintain our vigilance."

Both flocks again consisted of laying chickens, as were most of the previous flocks. The flock that had a return visit of the disease consisted of 100,000 birds, while the second flock consisted of 92,000 birds.

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Corn Talk This Issue

Jeff Mitchell was recently honored as the champion of the 3-year average awards, shelled corn regular harvest size, from the Five-Acre Corn Club Contest at the Pennsylvania Corn and Soybean Conference. Jeff farms in Reinholds, Lancaster County and in Chester County with his wife Susie and son Matt, 3. Read about his award-winning practices in the special section of *Corn Talk* this issue. Photo by Andy Andrews