

Ag Research Leader Speaks At Northeast Grazing Workshop

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Lancaster Farming Staff
CAMP HILL (Cumberland Co.)

Thanks to the work of the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the threat of the introduction of animal diseases to the U.S. from other countries is reduced every day.

"There are those who wouldn't mind disrupting U.S. agriculture" in such a way, said Floyd P. Horn, acting deputy undersecretary for USDA Research, Education, and Economics.

Horn spoke to more than 100 producers, educators, and ag-industry representatives on Wednesday afternoon during the first of a two-day Grazing In The Northeast Workshop sponsored by the Northeast Pasture Research Extension Consortium at the Radisson Penn Harris Hotel and Convention Center in Camp Hill.

Horn, administrator for the entire USDA ag research program, was born and raised in New England. He noted that the Northeast is thought by many "not to have a big role in agriculture."

However, the land devoted to agriculture makes up 8 percent of the total land area in the country. Thirty percent of the land is in agricultural use and 30 percent of the U.S. population lives in the Northeast.

Agriculture is in close proximity to big markets, according to the USDA administrator.

Ag is in the top three of the main industries making up the bulk of the income in the Northeast. And despite notions to the contrary, large, commercial farms aren't pushing away the small farms in the eyes of USDA research.

USDA is working to make the family farm "viable" and to pass along to the children. "The small family farm has a place in this country," said Horn.

Maximum production off of conventional farming is not necessarily optimum productivity. More so, grazing research will benefit farmers to who seek new ways to



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be productive.

Fortunately, the federal budget passed down to the USDA, Horn told those at the workshop, shows no reduction in grazing and animal science research.

But challenges exist. "Agriculture is the Rodney Dangerfield of Washington, D.C.," Horn said. It achieves "little respect," he said, gaining only 2 percent of the overall research and development budget, a "pittance" compared to the importance of food export markets to many ag-related industries in the country.

One national focus is to ensure the efficacy of APHIS, which monitors products that come into the country to keep out pathogens harmful to the domestic ag industries. Another is the concentrated research into removing pathogens in the food system through food safety guidelines. Another focus is the role of animal agriculture in the nation's surface and groundwater supplies.

Horn pointed out the advances that are working to benefit ag and consumers. He pointed to a new product that is used in chicken feed to kill Salmonella. He also emphasized the low-phytate corn (phytate denotes the amount of "unavailable" phosphorous in corn), to help control the amount of phosphorous that ends up in poultry manure.

"A lot of ingenious things will come out of research programs in years to come," he said.

Recently, the House and Senate ag committees approved another \$600 million to be available for ag research. That's comparable to the \$780 million for the Agricultural

Research Service program under the USDA.

Horn praised the effectiveness of the Cooperative Research and Development Agreement programs run through the USDA ARS. The license agreements to companies are in effect for 17 years.

Also at the workshop, James B. Cropper of USDA/NRCS spoke about pasture resource assessments in the Northeast. And Edward B. Rayburn, extension forage agronomist with West Virginia University, Morgantown, spoke about elements of pasture production. These and other items from the workshop will be included in the next issue of the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council's

Foraging Around newsletter to be published by Lancaster Farming April 18.

The workshop is sponsored by the Northeast Pasture Research and Extension Consortium, a public-private partnership of land grant university research and extension faculty and staff, USDA/ARS and USDA/NRCS representatives, livestock producers, and other agribusiness people from the northeast region of the country, and affiliated members. The workshop is also sponsored by the Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service (NRAES). NRAES is sponsored by cooperative extension in the 13 Northeast land-grant universities.

Spring Dairy Expo '98-- April 2-4

Columbus, Ohio - Jam-packed with all kinds of activity, the 1998 Spring Dairy Expo is less than a month away! Starting Thursday, April 2nd, the event opens with the Ohio PDCA Judging Conference at 10:30 AM. This year's conference will be marked with prizes for the top judges. At 3:30 PM on Thursday, the Trade show will open just prior to the ADADC Mid-East Bar-B-Que/Annual Meeting. The first evening is rounded out with the Ohio Spring Ayrshire and Midwest Revue Brown Swiss Sales.

Bright and early Friday, April 3rd, the events start again. The Holstein heifers, dry cows and bulls will fill the show ring to be judged by Callum McKinven of Canada. The Jerseys will show at 11:00 AM under the evaluation of Mike Stiles of VA. Guernseys and Brown Swiss will show at 7 PM for judge Stiles while McKinven will judge the Ayrshires. There will be two Holstein sales, 12:30 PM, sponsored by the Ohio Holstein Association and at 4:00 PM is the Buckeye Classic, put on by the OSU Buckeye Dairy Club. The Buckeye Dairy Club has

also organized a Jersey sale slated for 6:00 PM.

Dr. Norman St. Pierre of The Ohio State University will present a seminar at 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM on "Factors in Farm Profitability--Where To Go From Here". Information that he provides should help to make your operation more profitable and competitive in the future. A lunch, compliments of Countrymark Co-op/Gromark Inc., will be available for all seminars attendees.

To coincide with all the activity on Friday, the trade show will be open from noon until 8:00 PM. The Silent Auction with many great items will run concurrently with the trade show

Saturday, April 4th is the

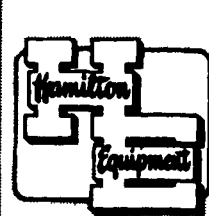
final day of the Spring Dairy Expo. It begins with the All Youth, 4-H and Open FFA Judging contest. No other spring contest can boast such a high quality of cattle. If this isn't your official contest, it's a great place to practice! The trade show and silent auction will be open from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The Holstein show begins at noon with the milking cow and champion classes. Things will climax in the show ring with the selection of Supreme Champion at 3 PM.

Jam-packed with action and events, the 1998 Spring Dairy Expo is the Total Dairy Experience--you won't want to miss it

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