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# 'Cookery' Holds Fond Memories For Berks Outstanding Farm Family

**ANDY ANDREWS**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
READING (Berks Co.) — Walter and Linda Ernst have fond memories of the Reading Fair when it was located at the Fairgrounds Mall north of the city. They remember the taste of homemade ham sandwiches, lamb kebab, and the wonderful aroma of fresh-baked apple dumplings coming from what is affectionately known as the "Cookery."

The Cookery, a tent featuring the homemade treats of the nearby Grange families, is long gone. So is the location at the Fairgrounds Mall, site of a department store. The Reading Fair now, temporarily at least, is located at the Kutztown Fairgrounds until permits are granted to build the new Reading Fair pole barn near the Berks County Ag Center, Leesport.

Despite all that, the Ernst family still helps out where they can with the youth shows at the Reading Fair, still the site of some of the area's best home-cooked meals at several Grange buildings (including Virginville and Kutztown) at the Kutztown Fairgrounds.

For decades of service to the fair, the Ernst family — including Walter D., Linda, and their child-

ren David, Valerie, and Steven and their children — were honored Wednesday evening as the Berks County Agricultural and Horticultural Association (Reading Fair) Farm Family of the Year at the Fleetwood Grange Hall in Fleetwood.

Walter and Linda Ernst rent land from Walter's father, Walter H. Ernst, and operate 12 greenhouses on about four acres south of Reading. This year the greenhouses are home to about 24,000 poinsettias for the upcoming holiday season encompassing about 28,000 square feet, noted Ernst.

Walter D.'s pride and joy are the ready-for-show purebred Suffolk sheep, including about 20 ewes and four rams, boarded at the site. Walter raises lambs for sale to youth at several regional shows. Walter himself has shown at the Schuylkill County Fair (Walter sold one sheep to Kori Morgan at the fair, a purebred Suffolk that was named champion, he noted.) Walter himself has shown offspring of his herd and the herdstock itself at Kimberton, Goshen, Schuylkill, and Allentown fairs.

But most times the greenhouse growing business for wholesale to

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For decades of service to the fair, the Ernst family — including Walter D. and Linda, pictured here, and their children David, Valerie, and Steven and their children — were honored Wednesday evening as the Berks County Agricultural and Horticultural Association (Reading Fair) Farm Family of the Year at the Fleetwood Grange Hall in Fleetwood. Photo by Andy Andrews



Secretary of Agriculture Samuel Hayes Jr., left, and Bill Hughes of Boscov's, right, congratulate Berks County's outstanding youth award winners, from left, Anita Manbeck, Brandon Treichler, and Lynette Heffner.

## Berks County Applauds Outstanding Farm Family, Youth

**LOU ANN GOOD**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
FLEETWOOD (Berks Co.) — Large problems will always loom before us, but they have and will continue to be solved by good men and women, said Secretary of Agriculture Samuel Hayes Jr.

Some of these good men and women who are building a strong agricultural base that in turn builds a strong America were lauded at the Berks County Outstanding Farm Family Awards Banquet, Wednesday night.

Held at the Fleetwood Grange Hall, the 42nd annual banquet was a gathering of those who work together to make The Reading Fair a successful attraction to both the agricultural and the non-farming community.

Each year a farm family is named Outstanding Farm Family of the Year. Qualifications require that the family must be Grange members and earn at least 85 percent of income from the farm. Scoring is based on Grange participation, other farm organization

participation, civic and community involvement, and the farm operation records.

This year, for the first time ever, the farm family selected was not the traditional dairy or crop farmer. Instead, Walter and Linda Ernst who operate a horticulture business were named as the outstanding family for their dedication in helping at the fair. (See Ernst feature story on page A1).

After accepting the award, Linda said that some in attendance

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## PAADS Exhibitors First To Use New Tie-Stalls

**VERNON ACHENBACH JR.**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The state Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg is continuing to be improved and its latest improvement is expected to especially please those who exhibit livestock and depend on tie-stalls.

About 350 letters were to have been mailed out Friday to those who registered to exhibit animals at the 35th annual Pennsylvania All-American Dairy Show (Sept. 21-24) to inform them that they are

to be the first to use a new system of livestock stalls in the state Farm Show Complex.

According to Dennis Grumbine, Farm Show director, and state Secretary of Agriculture Samuel Hayes Jr., many of the approximately 1,800 pieces of stalls are to be assembled, and set up in the Farm Show Complex in time to be used by exhibitors at the annual PAADS.

It is the first time the Farm Show Complex has received new stalls,

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## National Young Farmers To Meet

OMAHA, Neb. — December provides a convenient time to get away from home and learn about how other young farmer organizations work, collect your thoughts,

and gather new ideas for next year. The 32nd National Young Farmer Educational Institute may be just the thing.

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