

## York DHIA Honors Retiring Technician

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York Co. Correspondent

THOMASVILLE (York Co.) — Marianne Walter, retiring after 20 years of service to York County dairy farmers as a technician, was honored during the annual DHIA honors program Nov. 19. She will officially retire on Dec. 31.

For her years of accomplished

service, Marianne was presented with a lead crystal bowl and a York County shaped plaque commemorating her two decades with the DHIA program.

"I've often watched others receive these special plaques," she said of the county-shaped design in polished wood, "and it's really nice to be honored with one of them."

The veteran technician began

her circuit of herd testing following the Walter family exiting the dairy farming business in 1978. She and her husband, Donald, had operated their dairy herd for 18 months, until the facility they were renting was leveled in a barn fire early in 1978.

"I needed something to do, so I started testing," she recalled.

Marianne took on a rigorous schedule, handling 27 herds on test monthly, nearly of them two-times testing.

"Now, most of them have gone to A.M.-P.M. testing," she said, explaining that it has resulted in a somewhat more flexible schedule for her more than two-dozen clients than during those first years of her DHIA career.

However, with herds testing at different times, and somewhat larger herds than in those earlier years, she still has had to plan carefully to keep her herd visits within their scheduled test-day time frame.

Through those two decades, she has rarely been late, frequently been honored by the state DHIA for her performance, and remained ever mindful of weather forecasts during the winter.

And, due to her watchful planning, while she occasionally became snowed-in at the family's Airville farm, she was never "snowed out."

One of her more humorous memories of the visits with her test herds came more than 10 years ago, when she entered the milkhouse of dairy producers Gary and Gail Thoman and found their little daughter being bathed

in the wash vat. The youngster had taken a tumble into the gutter, her dad had fished her out and plunked her into the handiest "bathtub" for a cleanup.

On another memorable occasion, Marianne came to the rescue of another dairy farm youngster. The toddler, about 18 months old, had backed up without realizing where he was. He, too, promptly took a tumble - backwards - into the gutter. Marianne quickly retrieved the little fellow from his messy landing. While his feelings were hurt, he was none the worse for the mishap, thanks to her quick retrieval.

While she said she will miss the friends she has made on her tech-

nician circuit, Marianne plans to become a more available assistant to Donald on their beef and crops farm, much of which is cropped to hay put up in small bales for marketing.

"And I plan to spend all summer in my garden," said the green-thumbed gardening enthusiast, smiling.

In fact, she is such a gardening enthusiast that she has been spotted pulling weeds out of clients' flower beds for them while waiting for the milking to begin.

The Walters have five children and five grandchildren. Marianne also looks forward in her retirement to having more time to enjoy with their family.



In recognition of 20 years service as a DHIA technician in York County, Marianne Walter receives a lead crystal bowl and a commemorative plaque.

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## Environmental Programs

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implement this strategy," Goodlander said.

Furthermore, he said there were serious concerns from the SCC about a lack of "... technical assistance resources provided to the federal, state and local level."

Another problem is that the Unified Strategy is too vague in the details about what it would require of farmers.

"We are concerned that this strategy strongly relies on a proposed NRCS (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service) comprehensive nutrient management plan standard or guidance document which has yet to be provided.

"We reviewed a draft of this

proposed NRCS nutrient management standard several months ago and it raised numerous concern in our minds related to its practical application in Pennsylvania," Goodlander said.

"It is difficult for us to determine the feasibility of the proposed AFO strategy without seeing the technical criteria that are being proposed by the program to the NRCS comprehensive nutrient management standard or guidance document."

Goodlander said the commission is also concerned about whom will interpret the Strategy and determine which farms are to fall under federal comprehensive mandatory nutrient mandatory planning.

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