

# 'New' PennAg Industries Poultry Council To Celebrate At Spring Banquet April 20

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LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)

— Tuesday evening, April 20, denotes history in the making — the first spring banquet of the PennAg Industries Association Poultry Council as its members enjoy an evening of fun and camaraderie here at the Lancaster Host Resort. More than 1,000 members, family, and friends of the association, comprising poultry producers and agribusiness associates, will gather for a social at 5:30 p.m. followed by a dinner at 7:15 p.m. The banquet marks an evening of "fun and frivolity," said Walter N. Peechatka, PennAg Industries Association executive vice president. Peechatka spoke to more than 100 producers and agri-industry

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(Turn to Page A36)

## Industrial Hemp Growing

(Continued from Page A29)

The movement away from using hemp for fabrics and textiles was the result of the push to use petroleum-based products after the 1940s.

For processors in the U.S., hemp has been imported for many years from Canada, England, France, and Germany, in addition to China and South America. According to a quote from a preliminary version of the brochure for the informational day, the Kentucky Hemp Growers Co-Op noted, "It is absurd to think the U.S. cannot regulate industrial hemp as it is

regulated in Canada, England, France, Germany, and other democratic countries. To claim otherwise is an affront to the intelligence of law enforcement, the American people, and a slap in the face to the integrity of the American farmers." House, a member of the National Hemp Industry Association, with 700 members, noted he has received several calls from farmers who are "looking for leadership," said House. House said that farmers have been interested in this opportunity for years and were grateful for the meeting.

Robert Rex, also speaking at the meeting, is the ag fiber sales specialist with Crane & Company, a paper manufacturer based in Dal-

ton, Mass. For the past 120 years, Rex said, the company has been providing currency paper to the U.S. Treasury.

The company anticipates processing about one million pounds of hemp and another million pounds of kenaf this year. For almost 200 years the company has produced cotton rag.

Rex said that some new paper lines will contain a hemp/kenaf and hemp/cotton blends for commercial papers.

Most of the hemp they receive comes from western Europe. They are working on acquiring Canadian sources of hemp and want to be involved in developing markets in the U.S.

Hemp, which can be a significant rotational crop and does well to suppress Johnsongrass and nematode populations in the soil, can be grown in Pennsylvania. But more industry and educational efforts need to be in place to determine the right types of seed, harvest technologies, and initial processing in the state.

"It's a tough plant to harvest — a real tough plant," said Rex, which requires European-type technologies. Also, to be profitable, hundreds of acres would have to be devoted over several years' time. The crop would be grown similar to corn in this area, harvested once per year.

The stalk dry matter value of hemp equals about \$400 per ton. The price paid to growers for its pulp paper value, after some initial processing, would range from 20-35 cents per pound.

For growers in Pennsylvania, a viable market would be hemp grown for food value. The seed, noted Rex, would net a premium for its higher value-added use.

Developing a hemp co-op "would be a great way to go," said Rex, to develop the seed, planting, harvesting, and initial processing technologies to provide hemp for various types of industries.

The meeting also addressed the formation of a possible grower co-op in the state. Also scheduled to speak was Jane Balmer, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau representative and farmer. Balmer was set to give a talk about the possibilities of an alternative crop such as hemp.

Disorderly Conduct, with "serious slapstick," will entertain at this year's spring banquet.

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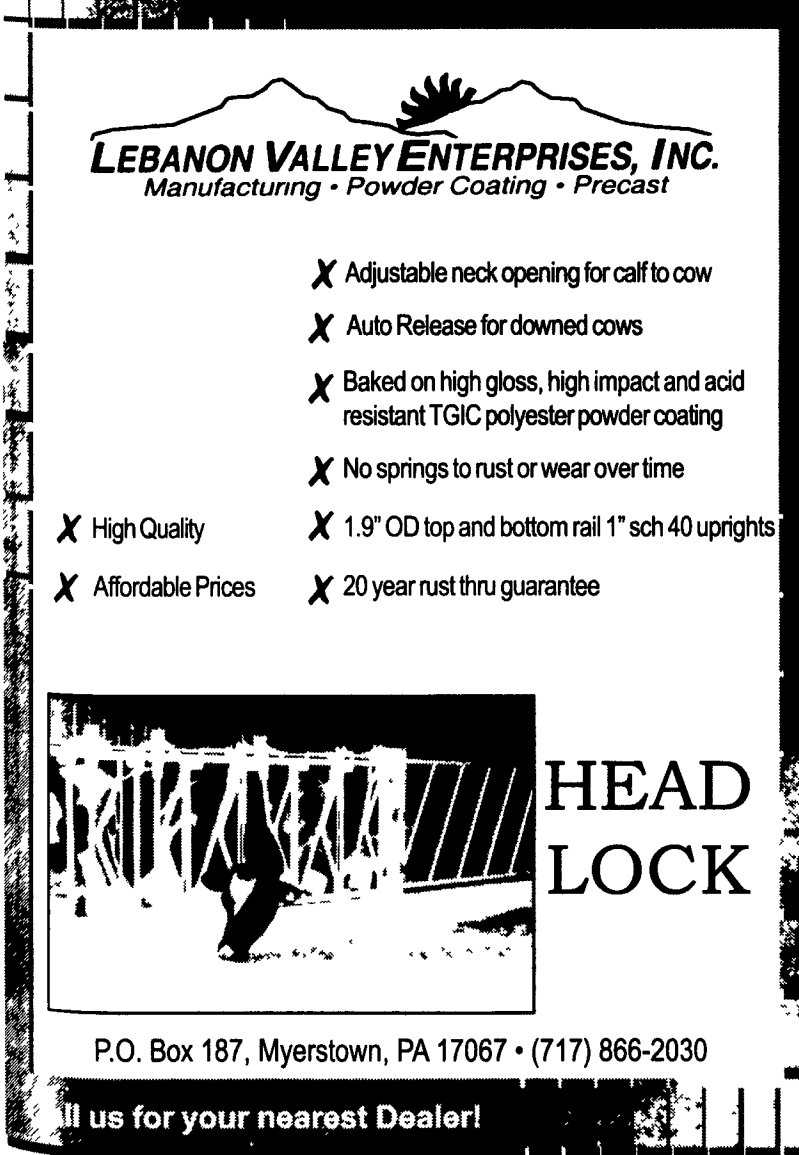
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