

## Berks County School Superintendents Tour

(Continued from Page A28)

packaged accordingly, including citrus punch, lemonade, ice tea, and others. One drink packaged includes the Foodservice Resource Health Shake. Clover also packages milk for GAF Seelig from New York City.

The group also toured the refrigerator units which keep all products at 38 degrees.

Afterward, superintendents were allowed to tour a couple of dairies.

After the tour, Myers spoke about the size of Berks farming, ranked fourth in the state in dairy cows and milk production, with 221,511 acres in farms making up 40 percent of the county.

Market value of ag products sold in the county in 1997 totaled \$247.78 million.

Of 1,586 farms in the county, 386 are dairy, 119 are swine, 89 sheep, 170 are poultry, and 212 are horse, according to the 1997 Census of Agriculture.

Most agriculture is located in a sort of "half-moon" around Reading, said Myers. The comprehensive plan being put in place in the county is going to be "critical to all of us," and district superintendents should be part of a say in how much will remain agriculture.

Municipalities need more effective ag zoning to meet these crucial changes. The challenges of living next to farms will occupy development planners in decades to come.

Tami Hildebrand, land preservation technician with the Berks County Ag Preservation Board, spoke about ag easement purchases in the county. With the state's help, in the next five years, \$50 million can be spent on preservation.

Including state and county funds, there will be \$4 million to spend on preservation for 1999, Hildebrand noted. Last year, 198 farms applied for preservation in the county and 23 easements of land were purchased. With the additional money, another 20 or more farms on the list, established newly each year, could be preserved into perpetuity.

The list is not a waiting list, she cautioned. Applications must be sent in on a yearly basis for farms wanting to obtain an easement. To date, 13,000 acres representing 106 farms have been preserved, but we "have a way to go," said Hildebrand.

"We need to update ourselves from a planning aspect," she said, "with more emphasis on it that on a local municipality basis."

Said Clyde Myers, extension agent, "We all need a total agribusiness system in place for us to stay in business. That includes multi-municipal planning."

Dr. Larry Schmidt, Conrad Weiser Area School District superintendent, visited the farm operated by Dennis and Betsy Sattazahn, Womelsdorf. Zahncroft Farm is home to about 55 milking stock and about 50 young stock, all registered Holsteins. The farm, on DHIA test, milks about 22,000 pounds on the rolling herd average, 3.5f, 3.2p, using "no BST or synthetics," said Dennis Sattazahn. The farm records a low SCC.

A high producer, Zahncroft Thor Sandra, 87 VG, milks about 28,000 pounds per year. Milking is to pipeline twice a day, 5 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Above each stall for the cows are pedigree signs to track the sire, blood lines, and score.

Herd health is important to Zahncroft. Dennis spoke about a time when he lost a 7-year-old cow, who was "dead, dead as a doornail," he said. That time, "I rally cried." It was the result of calcium deficiency.

Since then, herd health has been tops. Zahncroft noted that the cows are regularly checked for a variety of potential diseases, including IBR, leptospirosis, leukosis, and others.

The cows are fed a TMR of alfalfa haylage, high moisture shelled corn, hay, minerals, and soybeans.

The farm is home to 140 acres, 110 of which are tillable.

The farm was preserved in 1996. Ray, father of Dennis, purchased the farm in 1934.

Dennis noted that the cows are



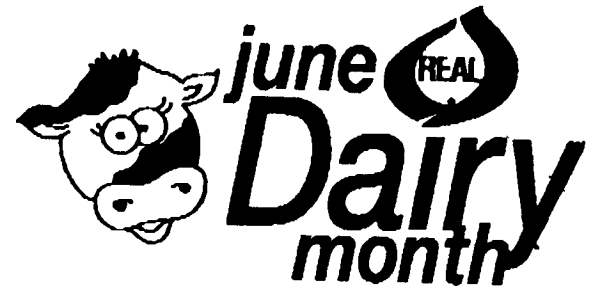
Dennis Sattazahn checks information on each cow. Above each stall for the cows are pedigree signs to track the sire, blood lines, and score.



This Samsung robot stacks juice and a health shake product simultaneously at the plant.

replaced either by their own stock or by purchasing. He's paid as much as \$4,000 for a cow.

The Sattazahns recently purchased a combine which they use with Clarence Sattazahn who farms next door.



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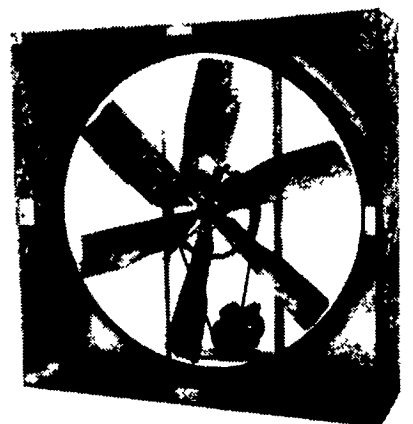
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