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some are more user-specific than others.

For example, under development by the St. Joseph's University Center for Food Marketing, Dr. Nancy Childs gave an overview of a project, "Pennsylvania Feeds The World: An Export Guide To International Markets."

Childs is an associate professor of food marketing, and she discussed the goal of the project — to provide vastly increased opportunities for export marketing for all sizes of operations.

Started in October 1998, according to Childs the project is to provide three tangibles: a hard-copy reference guide that is to serve as an export primer; an interactive Website on the world wide web to link producers and buyers; and an advisory board to maintain direction and focus for the program.

"This project will provide assistance and guidance to make the export process easier and to identify new and expanded value-added export opportunities," she said.

She said the web site is to provide access to information according to export opportunity, geography, and commodity.

In more common terms, an "export opportunity" is essentially

notice of a request for information about suppliers of services and commodities, or notice of a pending export sale; "geography" relates to location of production facilities to shipping ports as well as other producers; and "commodity" is self-explanatory.

In a nutshell, the project is designed to bring together as much information as possible, in as easy to use a format as possible, to allow those seeking or contemplating exporting opportunities to "identify, evaluate, and access markets for existing products."

The concept is that through the interaction, it should be feasible for agricultural, forest product and food processing businesses to work together to seek out and fill orders for export.

In effect, it is to serve as a catalyst for trade, because it is to serve as a high-tech meeting place for those wanting to buy, sell, and perhaps coordinate sales efforts.

Coordinating sales efforts could include such scenarios as a group of cattle breeders meeting through the web page to discover a buyer for cattle and through cooperation provide enough animals to meet the order.

Given the right introductions and the luck to discover a market (buyer), it should be possible for different producers of the same product to share in production

strength and to coordinate efforts on meeting needs for a sale.

As well, associated businesses not necessarily associated with the main sale, may be able to become involved through "value-added" types of business deals.

A "risk assessment matrix" has been created as well.

This "matrix" uses a number of indicators of conditions that could affect exporting success, and that could suggest high risk — such as the existence of armed conflict, terrorism, economic stability, the form of government and the regulations of the country where the buyer is based, as well as any pertinent and available history on solvency of the buyer and past dealings.

The matrix also includes assessments of existing market competitors, so that those contemplating exporting to certain markets can know what they are up against.

For example, a small corn syrup manufacturer may not want to compete against Archer-Daniels Midland, but depending on strategies and abilities to work around perceived weaknesses in ADM's market supply operation, a small business could very well take over as supplier, or supplement it by offering something slightly more desirable to that market.

According to Childs, "The advisory board's role is to keep the

program on track, to understand insights into practical, technical, and regulatory impediments to exporting."

The project involves a number of people and disciplines, and its \$325,600 cost has the potential for a 15:1 return on investment, according to Childs.

As it is, the amount invested in the project, compared to the gross receipts of 1997 Pennsylvania forestry and food exports, represents .03 percent.

A chart supplied by Childs shows the projected timeline for accomplishment. The goal is to have the hardcopy export manual and web site ready for use in June 2000.

A market risk assessment, and a competitor assessment is to be completed in December.

PDA provided synopses of the other presentations:

• **Economic Impact of Pennsylvania agriculture** —

According to Dr. Charles Abdalla, growth of Pennsylvania's rural population is creating change and placing pressure on agriculture. The rapidity of this change may find local communities without sufficient informational resources about the economic impact of agriculture on the community when making decisions that affect the industry. Dr. Abdalla's research is designed to develop an economic

model that will increase the body of facts about the role of agriculture in rural communities and lend to improved decisions by community officials.

• **Alternative Dispute Resolution** — Conducted by Dr. John Becker with the Penn State University Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. As suburban development and traditional production agricultural zones come into contact, it has become all too common for conflict to develop between two communities. Becker has been developing model strategies that communities can use to help resolve disputes.

• **Abatement of Agriculture Odors** — Conducted by Dr. Charles Wysocki, of the Monell Chemical Senses Center. Odors from agricultural activities is a common source of conflict. Ongoing research is designed to develop a practical and economic program to ameliorate the odors.

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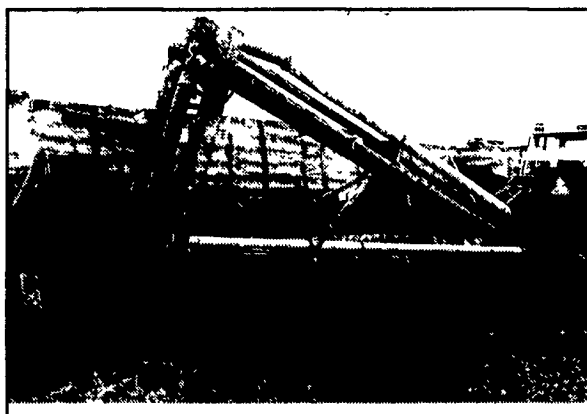
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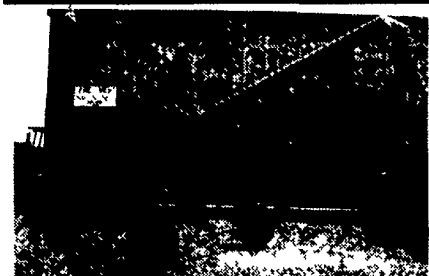
#### MISCELLANEOUS

- AgriMetal Mdl 5500, Full Hyd., Rd Bale Chopper... \$12,900
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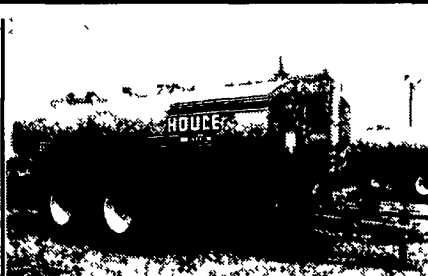
### This Week's Special



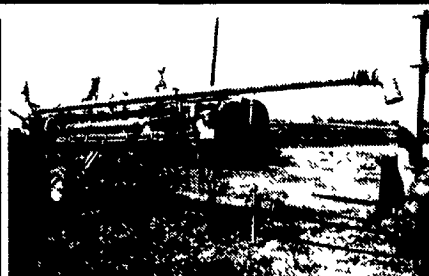
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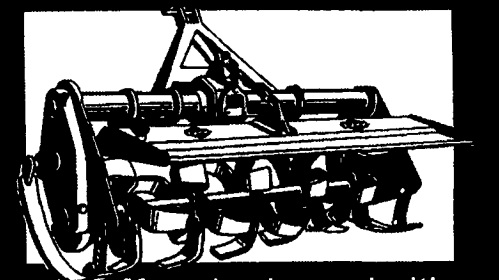
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