

Close Contests Highlight Pa. 4-H Achievement Days

(Continued from Page C6)



April Coberly, Somerset County, textile science.



Horse judging seniors, from left, Autumn Bankes, Ashley Bolen, Johanna Rehkamp and Gwen Soult, all from Perry County.



Livestock judging seniors, from left, John Hess, Kevin Pfautz, Geoffrey Rohrer and Jessica Schmidt, all from Lancaster County.



Canine Superbowl, from left, Tracy Dolan, Julie Zimmerman, Stephanie Ahlbom and Mindy Tomlinson, all from Chester County.



Livestock judging juniors, from left, Kelly Jo Bankert, Travis Flory, Herman Hake and Lindsay Jones, all from York County.

4H

Crouse To Serve RULE

BY JINNY WILT
Adams County
Correspondent

GETTYSBURG (Adams Co.) — Adams County resident Richard Crouse finds his election to the Pennsylvania Rural Leadership (RULE) Program's Advisory Board "an honor and a privilege."

Crouse, employed by the USDA/Farm Service Agency as an agricultural loan officer in Lancaster County, was elected to a one-year term beginning July 1 as vice-president of the board.

The RULE program is designed to develop community leaders who have the skills and resources necessary to meet the challenges of a changing community. The program runs over the course of two years.

The first year focuses on resolving local, regional and state issues. Participants attend four three-day weekend institutes in December, January and February in rural Pennsylvania.

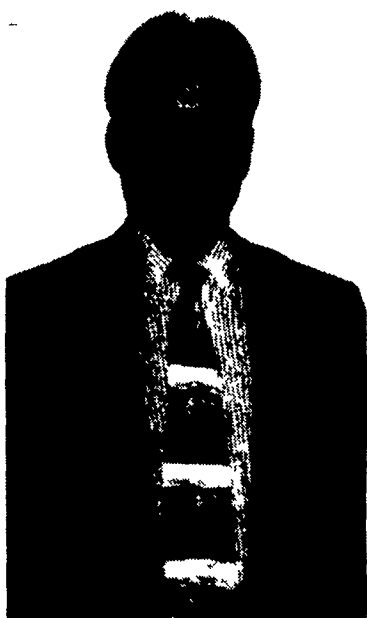
In March, participants attend an urban/rural institute in either Philadelphia or Pittsburgh and in April there is a four-day legislative session in Harrisburg.

The second year the program focuses on national and international topics. Three study institutes are scheduled for rural Pennsylvania. A five-day institute is conducted in Washington in April and commencement exercises are in May of the second year.

A new class will begin this fall. Individuals interested in learning more about the RULE program should call (814) 863-4679.

Crouse said, "It is an honor and privilege to be elected to this position by fellow RULE leaders across Pennsylvania. I look at it as another challenging opportunity to utilize my leadership and group process skills learned through the RULE program. I am very excited about being a part of the team and look forward to taking my place on the board."

Active in the Adams County



Richard Crouse

area, Crouse serves as treasurer on the Cooperative Extension Service Board of Adams County, Adams County Land Conservancy Board, secretary on the Pennsylvania Council of Cooperative Extension Association Capital Region Board, Upper Adams Lions board of directors, member of Adams County Farm Bureau and Fruit Growers Association, Pennsylvania Banker's Planning Board, Biglerville Historical Society, instructor for Northeast Lenders School at Cornell University, and certified instructor in Hunter Safety Education.

He serves on the St. Francis Xavier Parish Council in Gettysburg and has been a graduate assistant the past four years for the Dale Carnegie Course in Hanover. He formerly served on the Upper Adams Jaycees Board, Oakside Community Park Board, and the National Apple Harvest Board.

"We are so fortunate to have a leader of Richard Crouse's caliber on the Advisory Board," said J. D. Dunbar, RULE CEO. "Richard humanizes the concept of rural leadership through his passionate commitment."

Farm Groups Unite On Behalf Of Agriculture

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.) — The three major state farm organizations gathered during Ag Progress Days to call for unified action that would rebuild a deteriorating farm economy across the nation.

The presidents of the State Grange, Farmers Union and Farm Bureau, along with farmers, legislators and other interested parties, conducted a press conference to rally support for agriculture and rural America and bring an end to the farm crisis.

State Master Bill Steel spoke about the Northeast Dairy Compact and the concentration of agriculture in large meat and grain companies. Also participating in the event were a number of state and elected officials who are also concerned about the issue.

U.S. Congressman Ron Klink, D-Jeannette, said not only must farmers be united, but that the federal government must also come together — especially during these difficult times compounded by the drought of 1999.

"This is a natural disaster of a huge magnitude," Klink said. "We need a bipartisan effort in Washington to bring about relief for farmers."

Klink said there is a law that authorizes the President of the United States to provide grants to those affected by natural disasters.

He cited such examples as tornadoes and hurricanes and said the drought has caused its own brand of devastation across Pennsylvania and other northeastern states.

State Senators Michael O'Pake, D-Reading, and Sara Steelman, D-Indiana, and Rep. Sheila Miller, R-Reading, all spoke and assured the groups that a package of bills are expected to be introduced this fall that will seek financial relief caused by the drought.

In fact, in a press release dated Aug. 23 (one week after Ag

Progress Days), Miller announced that a bill called the "Agriculture Disaster Prevention Act" will be introduced to help protect Pennsylvania's agricultural community from future natural disasters.

The bill calls for the state Department of Agriculture to pick up 50 percent of the cost of federal crop insurance for commonwealth farmers.

"Disasters like this year's drought threaten our food supply, as well as the stability of the agricultural industry," Miller said. "Crop insurance ensures that our farmers will receive at least some level of return if their crops are wiped out by events such as droughts or floods."

At the press conference, O'Pake said Harrisburg legislators have a responsibility to protect the state's number one industry, agriculture.

"Agriculture is difficult enough in good weather, but is downright near impossible with the kind of summer and winters we have been experiencing the past couple of years."

O'Pake said funds were distributed after the Agnes Flood, and added that there is more than \$1 billion in the federal government's Rainy Day Fund.

State Secretary of Agriculture Sam Hayes Jr. said he appreciates the efforts of the farm groups to "take care of

their members during these troubling times."

Hayes placed estimates on damage from the drought at least \$500 million across the state.

"Agriculture is taken for granted, but agriculture subsidizes our way of life here in Pennsylvania," Hayes said. "We must care for and nurture it."

Recovering from the financial hardships caused by the drought is one of five points that the farm groups seek to have addressed.

The five points are:

- Immediate passage of adequate emergency funding to address the short-term needs in rural America, and especially those caused by severe drought in Pennsylvania.

- Long-term changes to the structure of the nation's farm programs to reinforce the safety net for crop, livestock and dairy producers to keep family farms thriving into the next century.

- Stepped-up investigations of anti-competitive practices in agricultural markets.

- Improvements to the nation's crop insurance program to make coverage more affordable and to provide protection to farmers during times of reduced production and low prices.

- Sensible trade policies and trade agreements that level the playing field for U.S. producers.



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