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Lancaster Farming

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Chester County Farm-City Tour Orchard: Unscathed By Drought, Challenged By Floyd

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Lancaster Farming Staff
AVONDALE (Chester Co.) —

Early in the pumpkin growing season, the Rosazza family saw a good thing coming. Though the conditions were excessively droughty, the farm had enough water to keep the vines healthy and vibrant and disease pressure low.

The fall season looked promising.

Along came Hurricane Floyd. In one day, 11 inches of rain fell. The Rosazzas feared the worst: molds and rots could spoil the established five acres and five varieties of the Halloween favorite.

Tom Rosazza saw what tolls heavy rains could take on the vine plants: about a 30 percent loss in the fields, but with the balance surprisingly harvestable.

Yet the Rosazza's Glen Willow Orchards, located in the White Clay Watershed, have survived natural disasters in the past. The past growing season is behind them and it's time to press apples into cider — something they will be doing when visitors visit their orchard on Saturday, Nov. 6 as part of the Chester County Farm-City Tour, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Glen Willow Orchards will be one of five sites, including a sheep farm, a dairy, and a mushroom

farm, as part of the Farm-City Tour "open house."

Glen Willow Orchards, founded in 1955, was one of the Farm-City sites years ago. The family has participated several times in the event, noted Tom Rosazza.

This week the Rosazza family was busily preparing for the busiest time of the farm market season: the week before Halloween. The farm market had about five tons of pumpkins on display, arranged near the farm lane, noted Steve Rosazza.

The pumpkins are selling for about 95 cents a piece and more, or about 25 cents a pound. Pumpkins can weigh up to 150 pounds.

The farm, home to about five acres of pumpkins (including about an acre of pick your own), employs family and additional three full-time, noted Tom. Part-time employees number about 10.

The pumpkin acres are rotated from sweet corn to control diseases and are planted the first three weeks in June. Harvest starts mid-September and continues until Halloween, Steve said.

This year the devastating effects of Hurricane Floyd have been felt not only in North Carolina, claiming huge crop and agribusiness losses, but also in Avondale. With the

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The 4-H Lancaster County Meats Judging Team is heading for national competition in November. Coach Jeff Craig is surrounded by team members, from left, Derick Bollinger, Radell Peters, Ryan Donough, and Jimmy Zimmerman. Turn to page A28. Photo by Lou Ann Good.



Continuing the Boyd family legacy, Sarah Boyd, front left, receives the Superior Achievement Award at the annual Lancaster County 4-H Recognition Night. Turn to page B6 for more about Sarah, pictured here with father Kerry, behind her, mother Deb, and brother Gerald, in back. Photo by Lou Ann Good.