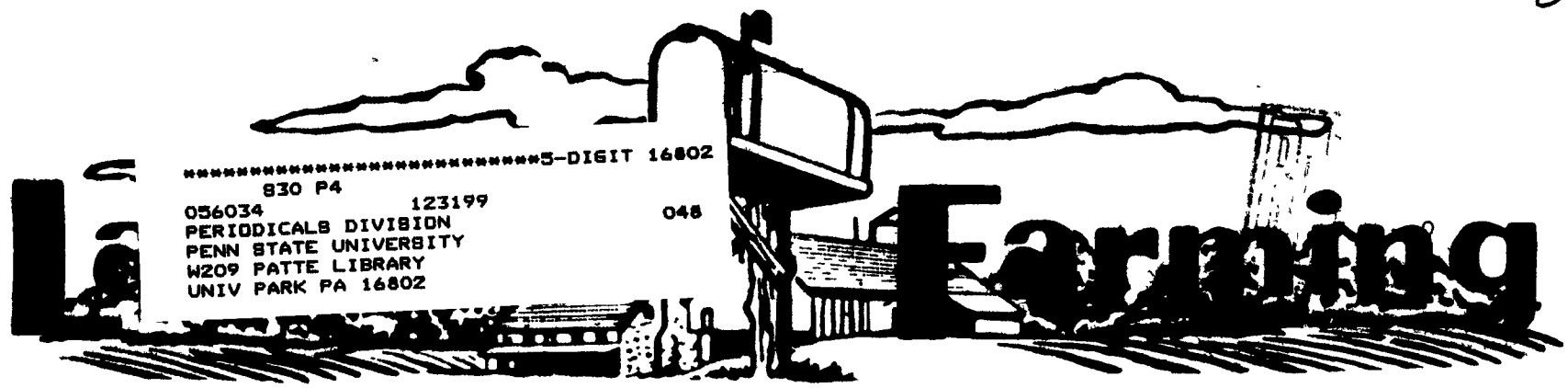


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The 1999 Pennsylvania Fair Queen Julie Sechler congratulates newly-crowned state fair royalty, Pennsylvania Fair Queen Jana Duttry from Clearfield County Fair and First Runner-Up Katie Cornish from Dayton Fair. See story on page B14. Photo by Jayne Sebright

## Extended-Season Produce Key To Keeping Customer Relations

ANDY ANDREWS  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
HERSHEY (Dauphin Co.) —

While interest in organic farming and growing fruits and vegetables for the "niche" market increases, growers need to listen to the manager of a successful south central growers' cooperative.

"Our growth has not come in finding more customers, but supplying existing customers with what they want over a long

period of time," said Chris Fullerton, Tuscarora Organic Growers Cooperative, Hustontown.

Fullerton spoke Wednesday afternoon during a special session on farmers' markets, auctions, and cooperatives at the 2000 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center.

Fullerton noted that the cooperative, founded in 1988, has

grown to include 20 grower-members who work with 25 farmers to supply restaurant managers and retailers in the Washington, D.C. area.

The cooperative, with growers on both sides of the Tuscarora Mountain in south central Pennsylvania, began with the help of grower Jim Crawford. All the family farms are small, with the largest grower comprising less than 100 acres, and most in the

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Recent inclement weather held attendance down the day the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention opened Tuesday in Hershey. But by Wednesday more growers and agri-industry representatives were on hand to tour the exhibits. Photo by Andy Andrews

## Mt. Joy Dairy Co-op Increases Milk Handled

EVERETT NEWSWANGER  
Editor

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) - After several postponements early in the week because of the snow storm, Mt. Joy Farmers Cooperative members held their one annual meeting on Thursday at Yoder's, and were scheduled to hold the second annual meeting at the Gathering Place in Mt. Joy, Friday after publication of this issue of *Lancaster Farming*.

Officials again reported a good year for the cooperative. At the meeting last year, milk

prices were at an all-time high, this year at a 20-year low. And the outlook is for low prices for the next several months with hope for improvement later in the year.

Overall, the average gross milk price paid to Mt. Joy patrons for 1999 was \$15.50 per hundredweight, the highest in the history of the Cooperative. Net price to patrons was \$14.75, the highest in the last four years. Management was able to keep the operating costs to 59 cents per hundredweight, the same as

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Russell Shopp of York County has donated a Dunloggin dispersal catalog to be auctioned off during the upcoming Pennsylvania Holstein Convention. The Junior Holstein Convention is Feb. 4-6, and the annual Convention and Sale will be held Feb. 17-18. See story on page B12. Photo by Jayne Sebright

## Dairy Of Distinction Is Public Relations Tool For Farm And Industry

JAYNE SEBRIGHT  
Lancaster Farming Staff

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Perception is reality. For the urban public, what they see when they drive by neighboring farms affects what they think about the foods they eat.

Since 1983, the Dairy of Distinction program has honored dairy farmers for keeping their farms neat and clean. Non-farmers who drive by these pristine-looking farms are left with a positive message about dairy products.

"It's an excellent way to promote milk," said Janet Hileman, District 14 Coordinator. "When urban people come and see these attractive farms, they think, 'Gee, drinking milk from that farm would be a delight.'"

Hileman and her committee made up of one person from each of the six counties in Dis-

trict 14 actually visit attractive-looking farms and encourage the farmers to apply. Last year District 14 had 15 applicants and nine winners in the program.

"It's an incentive for the farmer to keep the farm nice," said Hileman. "We acknowledge the farmer for their hard work because it can be costly and time-consuming. But it's worth it."

Brenda Zimmerman agrees. She and her husband, Paul, were awarded Dairy of Distinction in District 19 last year. They own a 83-acre dairy farm in Lititz and milk around 90 cows.

"I saw the Dairy of Distinction signs at other places, and I always thought that those people were going over and beyond what the average farmer

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## Corn Talk Includes Hybrid Reports, Conference Preview

This week's *Lancaster Farming* includes *Corn Talk*, the newsletter of the Pennsylvania Master Corn Growers Association (PMCGA). The issue features a preview of the upcoming corn and soybean conference, the 1999 Pennsylvania hybrid corn reports, an upcoming list of corn grower meetings and activities, and other news of interest to the grower. Also scheduled are comments from the PMCGA and advertising messages.