

Lancaster Farming

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Berks County teachers visited Dutch Valley Food Distributors near Myerstown Tuesday evening. From front, bottom to top, are Joanna Fryer, St. Ignatius Elementary; Clyde Myers, Berks County extension agent; Neil Fisher, Schuylkill Valley High School; Kathy Fisher, Mount Penn Elementary; Kay Frantz, Brandywine Heights High School; Cindy Jarozenski, St. Ignatius Elementary; Wes Siegrist, Dutch Valley Food Distributors; Joan Crossan, Cumru Elementary; Bob Allison, Brandywine Heights High School; Jeannine Campbell, Wilson Southern Junior High; Sally Koch, Wilson School District; Irene Straw, Northeast Middle School; and Donna Meloy, intern at the Wyomissing School District. Photo by Andy Andrews

Berks Teachers Learn Y2K Worries Translate Into Business Boom For Food Company

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff

MYERSTOWN (Lebanon Co.) — Wes Siegrist of Dutch Valley Food Distributors remembers the items delivered last year to customers worried about potential Year 2000 problems.

Out the doors went bags of rice, beans, soups — all sorts of items from the rush of people who wanted to stock up for fear that stores, for whatever reason, would run out of them.

The year's rush to purchase bulk food items "just happened," Siegrist, sales manager, told more than a dozen Berks County grade and high school teachers Tuesday evening at the annual Berks County Ag In The Classroom Teacher Seminar.

The teachers visited Dutch Valley as part of the seminar.

Siegrist said that last year, to stock up for any Y2K emergency that would occur, many people did their own canning. For Dutch Valley Food Distributors, sugar demand was up. "It was a tremendous year," said Siegrist. "It was crazy. What you expected customers to take, they didn't. And what you didn't expect customers to take, they took."

Dutch Valley Food Distributors, which specializes in bulk foods, was founded by the Melvin Burkholder family, Manheim, in 1974. The com-

pany began in the "back end of a butcher shop" about two miles from where the company's headquarters is, north of Myerstown.

Because sugars are essential in the meat process, the shop bulked up on them. Neighbors purchased sugars and other

items in the ensuing years. Finally, a distribution site was set up at the current location, once part of the Burkholder farm, in 1978.

The company is operated by Mel Burkholder and his three

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Business Plan Grant Helps Dairyman Evaluate Options

JAYNE SEBRIGHT
Lancaster Farming Staff
WHITE HORSE (Lancaster Co.) — Gordon Hoover of Lancaster County knows a good opportunity when he sees it. That's why he took advantage of the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders' business planning assistance program.

The Stakeholders' group is providing grants to farmers who want to develop business plans for their dairy operations. The goal of the program is to encourage dairy farmers to develop business strategies for their op-

erations. Farmers who apply can receive a grant for up to 75 percent of the cost to work with a consultant and develop a business plan. The grant is limited to \$1,500, so if a plan costs more than \$2,000 to develop, the farmer would only receive \$1,500.

Currently 11 farmers have completed their business plans with the provided grant monies. Another 10 have been through the approval process and are working on plans. Three are cur-

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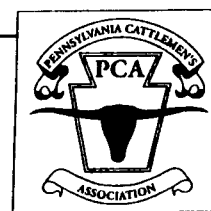
Gordon Hoover utilized a business planning grant from the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders to evaluate his 120-cow dairy operation and plan for the future. Photo by Jayne Sebright

Special Farm And Home Section

The special features that usually appear in Section B can be found in our special *Farm and Home Section* again this week. Look for regular features such as: *Home on the Range*, *You Ask, You Answer*, *Cooks Question Corner*, and *Homestead Notes*. In addition, *MailBox Markets* are also in the *Farm and Home Section*.



The Pennsylvania Beef Expo is scheduled next week. In this photo, junior exhibitors at the 1999 show get ready to enter their beef animals.



March 30 to April 2, 2000
At The Penn State Ag Arena

Excitement Abounds Over Expo

The Pennsylvania Junior Cattleman's Association will conduct its 10th annual Junior Steer and Heifer Preview Show at the 11th annual Pennsylvania Beef Expo, scheduled March 31-April 2 at the Penn State Ag Arena, State College.

The Expo is an excellent opportunity for Pennsylvania Cattleman's Association junior members to exhibit animals and partake in a weekend of fun and learning.

Since its creation in 1989, the Pennsylvania Beef Expo has expanded over the years to include

various activities aimed at both junior and senior PCA members.

This year's Expo begins with the annual Pennsylvania Cattleman's Awards Banquet and Meeting, scheduled Thursday, March 30, at Celebration Hall, State College. The festivities will begin with a social hour at 6 p.m. followed by a prime rib buffet at 7 p.m.

Cattle producers will be recognized this special evening for several awards including the Industry Service Award, Commer-

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