

## FARM TO TABLE FOOD SAFETY

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.)—Should they or shouldn't they? Some Pennsylvania dairy farmers, trying to stay solvent during the current spate of record low milk prices, are wrestling with the pros and cons of a special assistance program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), according to a dairy economist in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"Pennsylvania's dairy farmers are eligible for government payments under the Dairy Market Loss Assistance (DMLA) II program recently announced by the USDA," says Bob Parsons, senior research assistant in agricultural economics and rural sociology.

"The program provides cash payments to help farmers weather the recent drastic drop in milk prices, while government milk market support is being phased out." But some farmers are unsure about this temporary effort, Parsons explains.

"Dairy farmers can participate in the program or stay on the sidelines," he says. "Some are concerned that participation will obligate them in some way, or will not be worth the trouble. But any income assistance can help during the current period of depressed prices, which is expected to last until May or June."

"Unfortunately, this program alone will not save financially distressed farmers," says Parsons. "They will have to control their costs by monitoring every expense. But this assistance can be one component that will help

farmers hang on until milk prices rebound."

The DMLA II program is an extension of the 1999 DMLA I program in which participating dairy farmers received approximately 22 cents per hundredweight (or 100 pounds of milk) to an upper limit of 2.6 million pounds per farm in 1998. But, Parsons explains, this year's rules and the final payment level are somewhat different.

"First," Parsons says, "if you enrolled last year by meeting the requirements of producing milk during 1998, presenting your marketing receipts at your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office, and receiving a payment, you are enrolled automatically in the 2000 program."

"Second, if you started dairy production, you are eligible for this round based on your 1999 production. If you took over an established dairy farm that was in operation during 1998, you will be eligible for the program based on the farm's historic production."

"Third, dairy farmers who did not participate in the 1999 program are eligible for a late sign-up for the 1999 program and also can participate in the 2000 program," he adds.

"So you can sign up and receive a delayed payment for milk produced in 1998. This also will enter you automatically for a payment for milk produced in 1999. To receive the payment, you must present your 1998 milk marketing receipts at your local FSA office."

The final 2000 payment level

will be determined after the sign-up period, with payments going first to producers who were eligible but did not participate in the 1999 program. Then, the payments will be calculated and sent to farmers eligible for the 2000 program.

Under last year's program, the typical Pennsylvania farmer—with 65 cows producing 17,000 pounds of milk per cow—received \$2,319, with a maximum payment of \$5,700 per farm. Parsons says this year's payment may be less and will depend on the final sign up. Farmers should contact their local FSA office for eligibility deadlines and more

## Environmental Stewardship

PARK RIDGE, Ill. — The Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) will announce its Core 4 Conservation report card during a national celebration on April 13 — the week before Earth Day.

The report on U.S. agriculture's progress toward the Core 4 Conservation goals of better soil, cleaner water, greater profits, and brighter future will show the environmental stewardship gains in American agriculture.

"The Core 4 Conservation report card shows the ag community's commitment to balancing environmental protection

with economic needs," said CTIC Chairman Bruno Alesii. "It also shows there is much more to do. In many cases the technology exists, but the cost or understanding of how to use this technology is seen as an increased risk."

Core 4 Conservation is a CTIC-directed initiative that helps farmers increase profits while protecting natural resources. The practices, such as conservation tillage, crop nutrient management, pest management, conservation buffers and others, are combined appropriately to match local conditions, individual farm size, management capabilities, and financial conditions of the producer.

Scientists estimate that the use of this approach can reduce polluted runoff from cropland by as much as 80 percent. For example, no-till reduces soil erosion by 90 percent when compared to an intensive tillage system. And conservation buffers remove 50 percent or more of nutrients and pesticides and 75 percent or more of soil in runoff.

CTIC, as a member of the Ag-Earth Partnership, will participate in Earth Day activities on the National Mall, April 13-14 and April 22.

More information about the Ag-Earth Partnership and Earth Day events is available on the partnership's web site at: [www.nasda-hq.org/nasda/earth/index.html](http://www.nasda-hq.org/nasda/earth/index.html). For more information about CTIC go to [www.ctic-purdue.edu](http://www.ctic-purdue.edu).

### Lancaster Farming



Check Out Our  
Web site

[www.lancasterfarming.com](http://www.lancasterfarming.com)

## TRACTOR & TRUCK *PULL*

Carroll County Agricultural Center • Westminster, MD

9:00 a.m. - Farm Stock	6,000, 8,000, 13,000, 16,000	S U N
12:00 Noon - A pedal pull for kids ages 4 to 8		<div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">APRIL 30</div> <div style="font-size: 0.8em;">2000</div>
1:00 p.m. - Point Pull - Featuring Two-Wheel and Four-Wheel, Modified and Super and Pro-Stock Tractors		Rain Date Sun. May 7

\*An exhibition pull by "Canned Heat" - of New Alexandria, Pa.  
The only pulling dragster in the U.S.!

Breakfast starts at 9 a.m.      Pit beef, BBQ Chicken Platters  
SERVED ALL DAY

For Information or Directions      Admission \$10  
Call 410-848-6704      Under 7 FREE

This is the biggest fund raiser of the year for the Carroll County Ag Center.



Quality Service - Reasonably Priced

**SALES • SERVICE • MFG. • INSTALLATIONS**





















Wholesale - Retail (Dealer Inquiries Invited)

MOTORS • CONTROLS • WELDERS • GENERATORS  
HOISTS • PUMPS • PRESSURE WASHERS  
• PHASE CONVERTORS - STATIC & ROTARY •

24 Hour Emergency Service  
Shop/On-Site Available

(717) 684-5050 ♦ (717) 684-3940

146 Penn St., Washington Boro  
LANCASTER COUNTY, PA









# Out standing in your field.



The Agri-specialists from Farmers First aren't a bunch of deskbound bankers waiting around for the phone to ring. We get involved with you. Right where you live and work. We lend the money farmers need to keep growing. And, we can help your business in a lot of other ways, too. We talk the talk. And we walk the walk. (wherever that might lead us).



ANDY TERRELL  
(717) 626-4735  
EXT 264

The Agri-specialists

FARMERS  
FIRST BANK

A SUSQUEHANNA BANC      Member FDIC



JAY HERSHEY  
(717) 768-8256

In the Bedford/Blair county area, contact Rodney Clapper  
at our affiliate, First American National Bank of Pennsylvania, **(814)-652-2131**