

# Berks Teachers Tour Trout Farm, Quarry

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**NEWMANSTOWN** (Lebanon Co.) — Drought and heavy rains could have taken their toll on the "Home of the Rainbow."

Fortunately, the water flowed cool, the trout didn't escape, and for those who operate the 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-per-week job in caring for Arrowhead Springs Trout Hatchery near Newmanstown, the past year was business as usual.

"We're a fish and water business," said Mike Ludwig, son of the founder, Ed. "We rely on both of them."

Mike spoke to more than a dozen Berks County teachers Tuesday afternoon at the Berks County Ag In The Classroom Teacher Seminar.

The teachers toured the 400-acre fresh water spring that houses a rainbow trout hatchery.

Mike was quick to inform the group that Arrowhead boasts a "bona fide spring." Excess water from the spring is used in rearing pools to grow trout.

There are six major springs at the hatchery. The water sold, according to Ed Ludwig, is under contract with Crystal Springs, with a plant in Lancaster.

Flow from the springs is between 1,800-2,000 gallons per minute. The flow is at ground temperature of 51 degrees year-round.

The main spring, circular and measuring 25 feet across and about three feet deep, supplies water to two four-inch pipelines that fill the pools. The spring supplies water at a rate of 600 gallons per minute.

The main spring is enclosed in a stainless steel roof, and the water is "tested every day," said Ludwig. The surface flow during a good year is about 550 gallons per minute. During last summer's drought, flow was maintained at 400 gallons.

The spring, noted Mike Ludwig, is the "main thrust of the east branch of the Mill Creek, which feeds to the Tulpehocken."

Ludwig said that, despite Hurricane Floyd in the fall, the hatchery didn't suffer.

"We had nine inches of rain in 36 hours," he said. The rainfall amount was "welcome," he said. "The way we're set up, we can handle it all."

The bona fide sandstone spring is always monitored, he said, providing perfectly clear water for Crystal Springs.

At the hatchery (last profiled in *Lancaster Farming* on Dec. 11, 1982), Ludwig raises some fingerlings. The site maintains a hatch house and nursery and they can strip eggs. However, the work is labor-intensive, noted Mike, with an average of 70 hours per person work week.

To feed the trout, they have to "teach" the fish to eat.

Many fingerlings are purchased from local hatcheries.

Ludwig pointed to some recent news about PCB contamination of fish out of two state hatcheries. The news "hurt our business," said Mike. He handled many phone calls.

But the water is tested by federal and state agencies at the hatcheries "all the time." There are no PCBs in the water or the trout, he said.

Trout ranging in size from 8-11 inches are started in the headwaters. At 11 inches, they

are moved into the fee-fishing lake.

Full-time help on the farm is provided by Ed and Darlene Ludwig and their son Mike with his wife, Tammy. Full-time help is also provided by David Dennis.

The farm's history dates back to the 1700s, as a commercial gun barrel factory. The farm became a ladle and grist mill. Though it was a dairy farm in the past, in 1941, with help from Ed's friend, Lee Eck, it became a trout hatchery, noted Mike.

## Prescott Quarry

"If you can't grow it, you have to mine it," said Russ Witmer, eastern area manager for Pennsy Supply, Harrisburg.

Pennsy is a construction aggregate provider that operates the Prescott quarry near Lebanon.

Witmer manages quarries and other operations east of the Susquehanna, including four stone quarries and three asphalt and two concrete providers.

Witmer provided a tour of the plant at Prescott to the Berks teachers.

A long while ago, Prescott used to sell much ag lime, but most of its business now is construction-related, including products such as crushed stone, kiln feed, asphalt, blacktop, and other products.

Some of their material, he told the group, goes to the state acid mine creeks to neutralize the water.

The company produces under a million tons of crushed stone, 200,000 tons of blacktop, and 60,000 yards of concrete.

The Prescott facility employs 35 full-time. They own their own fleet of 10 mixer trucks and six dump trucks, and do truck contracting.

The Prescott mine, permitted at 456 acres, was founded in the early 1900s. Recently a plant constructed in 1926 was torn down and replaced.

Witmer told the group, which toured the Prescott mine pit, that in everything they do, every day, "your lives are touched by agriculture or mining." He pointed out the vast array of products that use limestone, from paints, pigments, and plastics to floor products and the many aggregate materials in all sorts of road and building construction.

"Limestone is used in everything we do, every day," Witmer said.

Crop managers and field crop suppliers often buy by-product material from the asphalt plant bag house operated by Pennsy Supply to create their own ag lime.

The mine allows tours regularly at the facility.

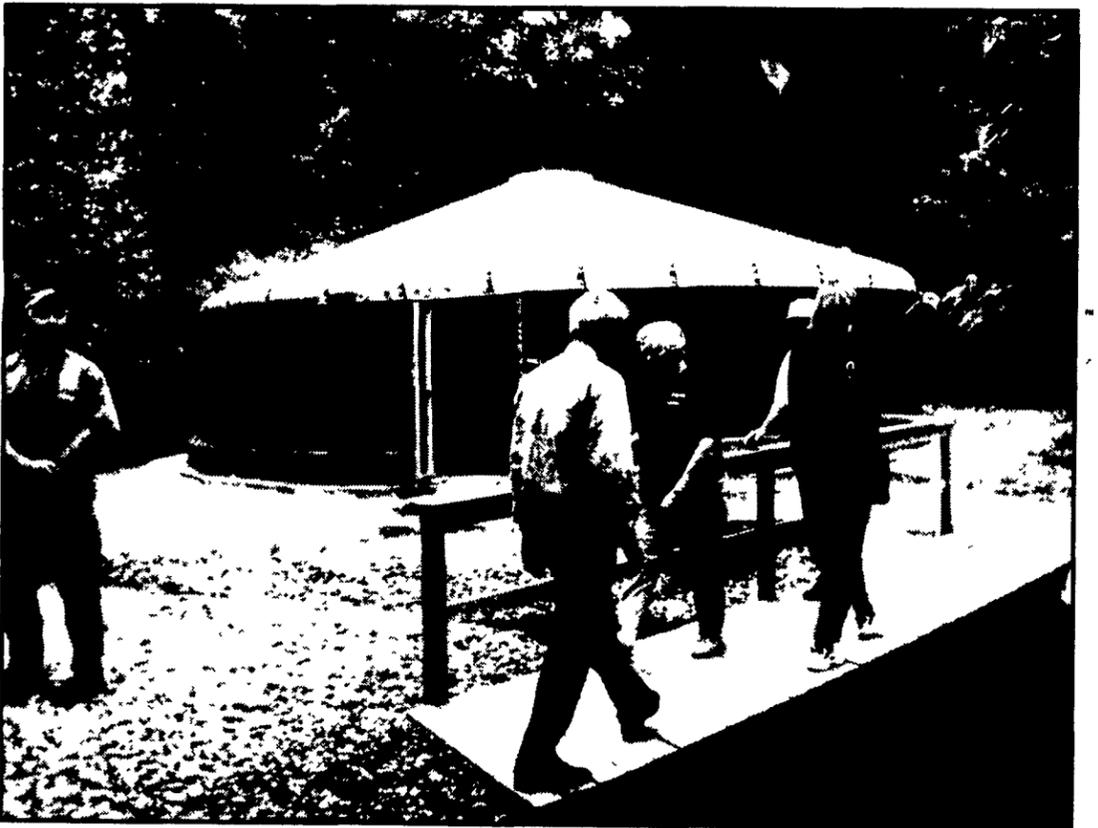
Clyde Myers, Berks County extension agent, noted that the Berks teacher tour is provided by financial support from the Berks county Farm Bureau, the Ag In The Classroom Teacher Seminar Program, and through Penn State Berks County Extension. In addition, support is provided by the Berks County Farm-City Council and Berks County Agribusiness Committee.

Myers said the program educates teachers about the agribusiness system and the system's environmental and supply industries.



Berks teachers toured Arrowhead Hatchery. From left, Tom McIlhenny, Northeast; Ruth Karper, Daniel Boone; Bob Adam, Hamburg; Charles Harley, Boyertown; Linnette Harley, Antietam; Mike Sova, Boyertown; Priscilla Laeben, Boyertown; Bob Allison, Brandywine Heights; Neil Fisher, Schuylkill Valley; Kathy Fisher, Antietam; Ron Haag, Tulpehocken; Mike Boltz, Tulpehocken; and Mike Ludwig, Arrowhead.

Photo by Andy Andrews



There are six major springs at the hatchery. The water sold, according to Ed Ludwig, is under contract with Crystal Springs, with a plant in Lancaster. Here, Berks teachers tour the enclosed spring at Arrowhead.

## Meeting To Focus On Pork Cooperative

**HARRISBURG** (Dauphin Co.) — Pork producers are invited to attend a board of directors meeting of the Pennsylvania Pork Producers Council Monday, May 22, at 7 p.m. in room 202 here at the Department of Ag Building (near the Farm Show Complex).

The purpose of the meeting is to explore possible participation in the newly formed Pork America Cooperative. John Adams from Pork America will be at the meeting to make a brief presentation and to answer questions.

Many Pennsylvania producers have been following the activities of the Pork America closely, but are unsure how this organization might benefit producers in the Northeast. The cooperative was formed recently with assistance from the Na-

tional Pork Producers Council in response to the low hog prices of 1997-1998.

Membership fees are \$500 per person, plus 10 cents per head for registering hogs. Registering hogs does not commit a producer to selling those hogs through the cooperative, but it does give the producer first priority in participating in any Pork America projects.

According to information from the Pork America office, potential opportunities for

members vary from facilitating marketing arrangements with existing packing plants to delivering hogs to a packing plant to generate specialty products for a retail grocery chain.

This still leaves open the question about the possibility for producers in the Northeast to participate. Producers are encouraged to attend and take part in the discussion.

For more information, contact Ken Kephart, (814) 863-3671.

