

# Pa. Food Safety Conference Lays Groundwork For Alliance

**UNIVERSITY PARK** (Centre Co.) — With food safety continuing to be an important public health issue, a coalition of food-related organizations is laying the groundwork for the Pennsylvania Food Safety and Quality Alliance, a statewide council dedicated to promoting and improving food safety.

Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Samuel Hayes joined about 30 food safety advocates from agriculture, government, industry, and education at a recent conference at Penn State to assess and prioritize the state's food safety issues, and to form a standing advisory committee to address them.

"The alliance participants realize that food safety must be their top priority," said Penn State food safety specialist Dana McElroy, who coordinated the two-day event.

## Food, Land, People Training

**CHAMBERSBURG** (Franklin Co.) — A Food, Land, and People Training for primary educators in Franklin and Fulton counties will be offered July 19 here at the Franklin County extension office.

Certified facilitators Jennifer Reed, district manager, Fulton County Conservation District, and Donna Hays, environmental education coordinator, Franklin County Conservation District, will conduct this workshop sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

This training session will be for primary educators only (K-4 grades). Other sessions for middle and secondary educators will be scheduled later. This training is limited for 20 teachers on a first-come, first-serve basis.

A registration fee of \$25 must be sent to the Franklin County Conservation District, 218 North Second Street, Chambersburg, PA 17201, on or before July 10.

The training session begins at 8 a.m. with registration and end by 5 p.m. Casual dress is suggested.

The Food, Land, and People Training qualifies for the continuing education credit under Act 48 Relating to Professional Education, Section 1205.2 — Program of Continuing Profession Education. A total of eight hours will be credited for successful completion of this daylong training.

Any questions or a copy of the registration form should be referred to Donna Hays, (717) 264-8074, ext. 5 or Jennifer Reed, (717) 485-3547.

"By working cooperatively, members from all sectors of the food system — including production, processing, food service, retail and consumer — can develop more effective and consistent food safety programs."

Candace Jacobs, assistant director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture, discussed how that state formed its Food Safety Enhancement Advisory Committee, which may serve as a prototype for the Pennsylvania initiative.

Linda Frelka, vice president of quality assurance for Odwalla Inc., spoke on her company's efforts to implement stringent food safety and quality programs in the aftermath of deaths resulting from contaminated Odwalla apple juice in 1996.

Computer-assisted strategy sessions helped participants identify Pennsylvania's immediate food safety issues and discuss the potential structure and function of a food safety advisory committee to address them. McElroy said the strategy sessions yielded valuable information that will be distilled into policies and practices.

"The group identified several priority areas for improvement,

including increased education and training, regulatory uniformity, and increased communication and coordination between sectors," she said. "By August, an advisory committee, comprised of representatives of government, industry, and academia will be established to prioritize and implement strategies to deal with the identified issues."

In support of a team approach to food safety, Hayes cites the Pennsylvania Egg Quality Assurance Program (PEQAP) as an outstanding example of a cooperative effort that has resulted in increased value for producers and processors.

"We're very pleased that we have what's probably the nation's leading egg quality assurance program," Hayes said. "Now, we want to use a similar approach with other vulnerable commodities. For instance, we're embarking on a dairy quality assurance program where we will apply the PEQAP principles. We want to continue supplying the best possible food for our citizens."

## Hardwood Forest Facts

MICHELLE RANCK  
Lancaster Farming Staff

- Forests cover nearly 60 percent or 17 million acres of Pennsylvania as the predominant land cover. Farmland covers about 24 percent with developed land at about 15 percent.
- Nearly 80 percent of the forest in the state is owned by an estimated 512,000 private, non-industrial owners, who own an average of 23 acres each or a total of nearly 12 million acres. About 75 percent of the raw materials used in Pennsylvania wood manufacturing come from these landowners.
- The average American uses enough wood products equal to a 100-foot tree each year.
- About 75 percent of the wood used is softwood, such as pine, which is used for home construction or furniture.
- Pennsylvania produces nearly \$5 billion worth of wood products each year.
- Pennsylvania processes enough board feet (one foot by one foot by one inch) to circle the globe more than seven times.
- There's trees in your cheese - some parmesan cheese uses cellulose, found in trees, to keep it from getting lumpy.
- The state has the largest wood-related work force in the nation - about 100,000 workers in 700 job categories or about 10 percent of the state's manufacturing jobs.
- Pennsylvania ranks first in the nation for hardwood growing stock and in export grade hardwood. Cherry wood from the northwest part of the state is world-renowned.

## Weaber Mill

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regulate so much that they take options away for commercial forestry, so the landowners have

to sell for development," said Tom Buzby.

"It's OK to pave it but not to thin it out," noted Robie.

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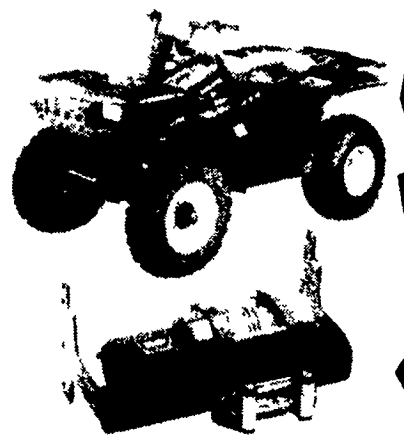
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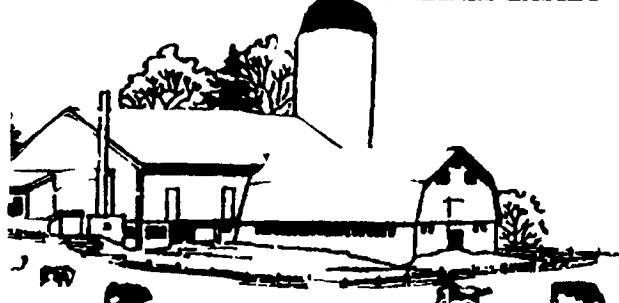
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