

Tioga County Celebrates 10th Annual Farm City Day

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insurance Assistance Program. "I want everyone to know that in the Mid-Atlantic states and New England, where we had this disastrous drought, no state legislature or governor has dedicated more assistance dollars to agriculture than has been the case here in Pennsylvania," said Hayes.

The secretary also brought greetings from Gov. Ridge as he read a prepared statement.

"Agriculture is the commonwealth's leading industry, providing jobs for about 20 percent of our state's residents and making the link between our rural and urban dwellers vital to the success of our state's economy. Partnerships must be forged between rural and urban residents to ensure a better quality of life for generations. Because without our farms and farm families, city and urban families lose their valuable supply of local food sources, and without our cities and towns, farmers lose both market centers and processing facilities for their products."

The theme of farm families and urban dwellers working together was reiterated by event chair Sherri Butters, who made it her goal to talk to as many visitors as possible. With more than 2,500 people milling about the farm and taking advantage of the scheduled activities, that job kept her busy for most of the day.

"I tried to stop people as they were walking along and I had lots of good comments. I spoke to one couple from Corning, New York who had two kids. She said this is the kind of event she had been looking for for her kids. She said she felt so safe!" said Butters.

Wagon tours of the farm

fields were packed throughout the day. On the tour, families learned about the history of the farm and formed a captive audience for Natural Resources Conservation Service worker Howard Rutledge, who talked about conservation practices and strip cropping.

People were also on hand to explain the uses for many old-time tools that were displayed at the event. Kids and adults even got to try their hand at shelling corn the old-fashioned way, with an old corn sheller. Although he admitted that this method is much slower than the machines of today, Art Shumway was quick to point out that this contraption was a lot faster than shelling it by hand.

Children's activities were the highlight of the day for many visitors. One hundred twenty-six youngsters participated in a pedal tractor pulling contest and many others tried their hand at an ice cream eating contest. Many more children thought that a maze constructed with bales of hay was nothing but fun.

One of the most popular spots for kids and parents alike was the petting zoo, sponsored by the Mountaineers 4-H Club, where emus, bunnies, chicks, ducks, pigs, goats, and other animals got plenty of attention.

The day will be recorded as another successful Farm City Day event in the annals of Tioga County, according to Butters. Part of the emphasis this year was to better the relationships with the civic organizations.

"We hosted the auction with the Wellsboro Rotary. We said that we would provide the place and the advertisements if they would solicit the items for the auction. We ended up making

\$3,600 at the auction, which will be divided between the Farm City Day Committee and the Rotary Club," she said.

The Farm City Day portion of the money will be used to cover necessary items such as insurance, tent rental, and other expenses. This helps ensure that families can enjoy the day's activities free of charge. This year the committee also sold T-shirts to help raise money for the event.

Besides enjoying the day's featured activities, those who attended this year's event had the opportunity to register for free ice cream for a year, donated by Schwan's Sales and \$520 worth of Exxon gasoline from Acorn Markets. Jill Marple, Covington, was the lucky ice cream certificate winner, and Megan Zuchowski, Wellsboro, took home the free gasoline certificates.

Even Mother Nature cooperated to make the day's events run smoothly.

"Overall the weather was one of the nicest days we had," said Butters. "It was a good family fun day!"



Tyler Wood, Pottstown, makes his way through the hay maze that was constructed in a corner of a field.



Secretary of Agriculture Samuel Hayes, Rep. Matt Baker, and Sen. Roger Madigan present a mock check to Tioga County Farmers, represented by Carl Kroeck, to show that Tioga County farmers received more than \$1 million in disaster assistance for 1999.



Doug Wright, left, takes a moment to speak with Jenny and Doug Lawton during the day's events.



Richard Lee, right, feeds a spoonful of ice cream to Dean Lee during the first Farm City ice cream eating contest. Both Richard and Dean are from Sabinsville.

Capitol Region Agronomy Team Report

BUY A NET AND USE IT
POTATO LEAFHOPPERS
DEVOUR ALFALFA

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Here in Pennsylvania we have adopted a system of dairy production that relies heavily on producing high quality alfalfa haylage and hay. Our climate and soils are suited very well to alfalfa. And alfalfa has the potential to make the dairy producer a lot of money by providing relatively cheap homegrown protein for the herd. Good management is required to produce high quality alfalfa.

In my book, good management means having a plan then doing the right thing at the right time. Without the plan, one never knows what to do when the time comes. In fact, without a plan, we miss the boat. This article is to encourage you to get an integrated pest management plan for alfalfa, then follow it.

Potato leafhoppers migrate into Pennsylvania every spring and are a major pest to alfalfa. Entomologists and agronomists have studied leafhopper movement and pattern of damage. This is a predictable pest and integrated pest management (IPM) threshold data is readily available.

We know how to scout for it and we know how to control it. (See "A Pest Management Program for Alfalfa in Pennsylva-

nia" Special Circular 284 from Penn State Cooperative Extension). It is often a damaging pest in second cutting and almost always in third cutting alfalfa.

Leafhoppers damage alfalfa in four ways, according to M. Curtis Wilson, professor of entomology at Purdue University:

1. Stunting of plants. Growth is greatly reduced, sometimes more than half that of a normal plant.

2. Loss of quality. Protein is reduced. Leafhopper feeding injects a toxin into plants that reduces protein production. Data indicates that protein loss occurs very quickly with relatively low insect populations. Five percent loss in protein occurred at a population level commonly attained when leafhoppers have not been controlled.

3. Loss in yield. Yesterday, I measured seven-inches more in height where leafhoppers had been controlled vs. no control in the same field.

4. Loss in plant vigor. Leafhoppers drain alfalfa of its vigor, resulting in serious carryover effects in later cuttings. These effects are reflected in:

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