

Penn State Uses 'Zero Waste' Composting At Ag Progress

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.) — Everyone knows how messy it can be cleaning up after a catered lunch. Researchers at Penn State's Ag Progress Days, Aug. 15-17, will be composting every bit of waste — including tableware, cups and trashbags — from two special event luncheons during the first two days of the event.

The composting project is part of a demonstration by the Organic Materials Processing and Education Center (OMPEC), a collaborative effort between the College of Agricultural Sciences, the Office of Physical Plant and Housing, and Food Services. All waste, including biodegradable place settings, napkins, cups and plastic bags, will be collected after each luncheon and brought to a composting demonstration site near the Conservation Tent.

"We call this 'Zero Waste' composting because absolutely nothing goes to the landfill," said Gina Rao, OMPEC coordinator for the project. "The biodegradable table settings and plastic products all are manufactured by Biocorp Inc., which will demonstrate that communities can use these type of products to reduce institutional and household waste."

Rao said the Ag Progress Days demonstration is part of a larger year-round composting project that uses food wastes from Penn State dining halls, leaf litter from University Park's 12,000 trees and manure from College of Agricultural Sciences livestock to create a value-added product that can be used on the university's landscape plantings.

"Right now we are composting kitchen waste from seven dining halls, the Nittany Lion Inn, and the Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center at a three-quarter-acre site on University farmland," Rao said. "By next year, we hope to

expand operations to a six acre site and compost waste from all the dining halls and the HUB."

Visitors to Ag Progress Days can see the "OMPEC Lounge," located in a tent next to the Headquarters farmhouse. The rest area will feature flowers planted in OMPEC compost, benches, visual displays of the project, and composting literature.

At 11 a.m., visitors can take a compost demonstration tour at the Conservation Education

area and see how compost piles are mechanically turned over. A demonstration of how compost is screened to remove other wastes also is part of the tour.

Rao said the compost produced by the OMPEC project has been used to renovate flower beds at the Penn State Trial Gardens and to rejuvenate compacted soil around construction sites on campus. The compost also is used in a research project on soil renovation at the Penn State Living Filter fields.



Farm Safety On Farm And Highway

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — When you're stuck behind slow-moving farm machinery on a busy rural highway, it's easy to forget that the driver is working with complex — and sometimes hazardous — equipment. That's exactly the point of a special presentation on farm equipment safety to be held at Penn State's Ag Progress Days.

Representatives of the Northern York County Regional Police Department, based in Dover, Pa., will present "Farm Equipment on the Highway: How It Applies To You," which looks at important aspects of farm vehicle safety, both on and off the farm. Officer Thomas McCune, who created and conducts the presentation, says the purpose of the training is to help farmers and others appreciate that combines and tractors are very powerful equipment that must be handled with skill and great care.

"We want to give farmers and non-farmers insight into how farm vehicles should be used on the highway, and the regulations and restrictions that apply to the vehicles," McCune says. "Also, we offer safety tips for operating trucks, tractors and other special-purpose vehicles on the farm."

McCune will review traffic laws pertaining to farm tractors, trucks and other farming implements. For instance, the fee for farm truck registration is less than that for standard vehicles, but the truck has to be used exclusively on the farm or for produce or commodities dealing with the farm. "You can't take your family down to the beach in a truck with a farmtruck license," he says. The presenta-

tion updates farmers on rules that have changed over time and clarifies some gray areas.

Robert Oberheim, manager of Ag Progress Days, says he learned of the farm equipment safety program through the enthusiastic endorsements of commercial equipment exhibitors. "We're always looking for new and interesting topics for Ag Progress Days," he says. "I'm

pleased about their participation."

The presentation will be held at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday in the College of Agricultural Sciences Exhibits Building Theater on Main Street, between West 9th and West 10th Streets (near the farmhouse), and on Thursday at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the adjacent College Building Tent.

Land O'Lakes Showcases Services for Dairy Producers at Ag Progress Days

CARLISLE (Cumberland Co.) — Land O'Lakes, Inc., a farmer-owned cooperative, will participate in the 32nd annual Ag Progress Days held at Rock Springs, Pa., on August 15 through 17.

Land O'Lakes will showcase its System Service and Dairy Business Service programs for dairy producers. Both of these programs are designed to help Land O'Lakes member-owners and other dairy farmers be more progressive and efficient in their dairy operations.

Land O'Lakes System Service provides farmers with milking equipment analysis, individual

component testing, milking time evaluation, and environmental analysis. Through Systems Service, farmers can take advantage of a milking technician school and other programs offered by Land O'Lakes.

Land O'Lakes Dairy Business Service offers farmers assistance in three areas — Dairy Pro Services, Dairy Development, and Dairy Accounting & Financial Monitoring. Dairy Pro Services

help producers improve efficiency, increase profitability, and lower financial risk. The Dairy Development Services are ideal for producers who are expanding.

The Land O'Lakes exhibit will be part of more than \$20 million worth of agricultural machinery, equipment, supplies and services that will be displayed during the three-day event.

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