

# Learn, Discover and Explore at Ag Progress Days

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with their skills," said. The couple's home farm hosts more than 100 sheep.

"A Border Collie can replace five people on a sheep operation," said Allan. "Out West, it's not unusual to see four or five

dogs working a flock together." Dogs may be as young as 1 or as old as 13 to be in training or work the flock.

While the couple works together on the farm, their dogs show a loyalty for either Allan or Peg.

"The dogs will listen to both

of us, but my dogs won't work for him (Allan) when I'm in sight," said Peg. "That's the bond that you have. You have to earn that trust and respect. Once you gain that, they just won't quit working."

### In The Horse Ring

A forum showcasing agriculture would not be complete without a horse ring, a prominent place at Ag Progress Days. Brian Egan, horse program assistant for Penn State Cooperative Extension, conducted a horse-handling demonstration.

The audience had the opportunity to watch training techniques in action as Egan put a skittish 2-year-old through its paces. According to Egan, who spent his free time during his college years watching horses play, there exists a strong social order among horses. He applied his own observations by ensuring that his horses know that he is the dominant member of the social order. "A horse is not a lap animal," emphasized Egan.

As Egan backed the horse quickly across the ring, he explained that he uses the technique for "major sin" such as biting and kicking. "Backing is

hard to do for horses," said Egan, which makes the skill is useful in teaching horses what behavior is unacceptable.

"Knowing how a horse is basically made helps us to know how to handle them. They're basically lazy," said Egan. Pointing out the glimmer of sweat on the horse, Egan said, "Right now he's more concerned about his next breath than the saddle, or how he's going to misbehave."

"We work with them an awful lot to get them to the point that they follow our feet," said Egan, who also demonstrated how pressure on a particular part of a horse's body will get the animal to move, enabling the handler to easily direct the movement of the horse.

The young horses are ridden first in a 12 by 12 foot box stall with high ceilings, then in a hallway before going to the arena. According to Egan a confined space limits a horse's action and tends to keep them calmer.

### Classic Carriage Horses

"They're extremely strict about what Friesans are allowed

to breed," said Joe Myers of Joe-kar's Hilltop Farm during the Friesan breed clinic. The animals are ridden, jumped, and driven during a 50-day performance test, explained Myers. Recently, out of 806 horses put through the test, 6 were approved for Friesan breeding purposes. Disposition is also key to acceptance to the registry. If a horse exhibits bad temper during the test it is excluded from breeding.

"They're a kind, gentle, giving animal that is easily broken," said Myers. "They're very much a people horse. This isn't a horse you can just leave in the barn and go see once a week."

Basically a carriage horse, the breed is also used for dressage. The horses are shown natural and untrimmed. "If a European judges see that the horse is trimmed they think the exhibitor is trying to hide something and they become extremely critical," said Myers. For example, "They'll make the exhibitor pull shoes so they (the judges) can examine and measure the hooves."



Stacy Cromer, watershed circuit rider, demonstrates to Zech Hoffman, 9, and Michelle and Noah Hoffman, 2, from Port Matilda how soil erosion in response to human activities. Crushed walnut shells act as soil for the exhibit, which is complete with vegetation and riprap, or stones, on the bank which illustrate protection.

"The stream naturally meanders," said Cromer. When bulldozers get in and try to straight it out, it causes erosion as the speed of the water increases when the natural curves are eliminated. Cromer also builds debris jams and dams with sticks to illustrate their impact on stream move-

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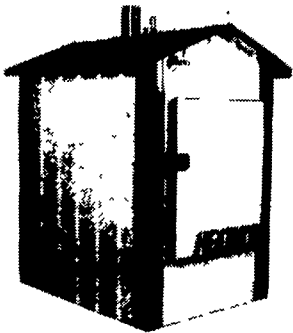
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