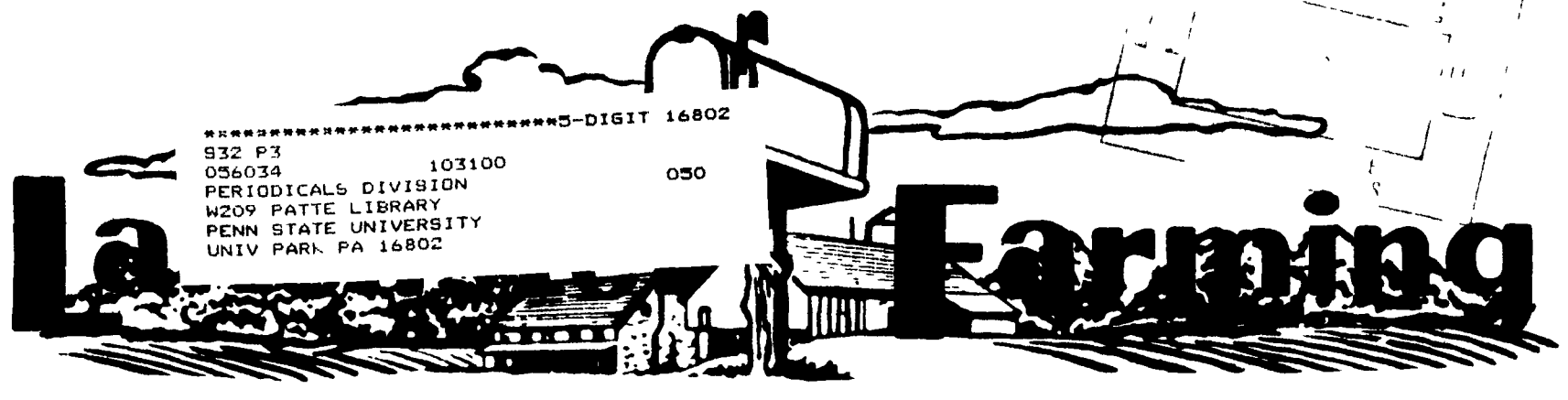


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Turkey Farming The Right Fit For Eckert Family

MICHELLE RANCK
Lancaster Farming Staff
MOUNT ZION (Lebanon Co.) — While America is busy thinking about Indians and Pilgrims, football games and harvest decorations, the Eckert family is busy providing the centerpiece of many heavily-laden Thanksgiving tables — the turkey.
Kelly and Heidi Eckert, along with children Katie, 10, Kevin, 3, and Keith, 2, have 32,000 turkeys in their six-barn operation.
Bird-raising is a high-maintenance business. One batch of 16,000 turkeys consumes 450,000 pounds of feed delivered 20 tons at a time to the farm, and requires 6,000 to 8,000 gallons of gas, mostly to maintain the 80-degree temperature necessary when the birds are poults.
Kelly drives his own truck, hauling spring water five days a week. Heidi is a nurse at Lancaster General Hospital. "We're

busy, but we enjoy it," said Heidi. "We don't sit around. It's more a way of life, if anything."
The Eckerts also utilize the help of neighbor Brian Weaver, who works six days a week at the farm.
Thirty acres of hay and 100 feeder-to-finish pigs round out the Eckert's operation. Kelly's father owns the adjacent 16-acre farm that houses the pigs.
Kelly, who grew up on a six-acre farmette, learned about the business and gained an appreciation for agriculture as he helped his neighbors farm.
The Eckerts researched different avenues to farm for two and a half years before settling on turkey farming. "We looked at all the different kinds of farms," said Kelly. "It's hard to get a farm to pay for itself."
The search included which farm "would be right for us," said Heidi.

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More Than 700 Attend Ag Industry Banquet

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — With its theme, "With Vision There Is Hope," the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry conducted its 24th annual ag industry banquet Tuesday evening here at the Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center.
Donald E. Horn, chairman of Pennfield Corporation, was honored with the George C.

Delp Award, presented by Mark Price, chairman of the chamber's Agriculture Committee.
Price said that "the recipient's heart beats for agriculture in Lancaster."
The Delp Award honors individuals who have provided "significant and outstanding contributions to agriculture in Lancaster County," said Price.
Horn, who lives in Lancaster,

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Kelly and Heidi Eckert, along with children Kevin, 3, Katie, 10, Keith, 2, and neighbor Brian Weaver have 32,000 turkeys in their six-barn operation in Lebanon. These 9-week-old turkeys will leave as finished birds at 13 weeks old. Photo by Michelle Ranck



Thanksgiving Day is every day for Terry and Susan Fisher and their daughters, Tara, 7, and Katelyn, 20 months. Turn to page B14 to read about the Fishers' journey to China to adopt Katelyn, abandoned on the steps of an orphanage. Photo by Lou Ann Good



Donald E. Horn, chairman of Pennfield Corporation, center, was honored with the George C. Delp Award for lifelong contributions to Lancaster County agriculture. From left, Brent Landis, the Chamber's agriculture services coordinator; Horn; and Mark Price, chairman of the Chamber's Agriculture Committee. Photo by Andy Andrews

Land Benefactors, Award Winners Named At Farmland Trust Annual Dinner

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Editor
MILLERSVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — For the Lancaster Farmland Trust, last week's annual meeting again recognized land benefactors and farmland preservation supporters. In his report on the state of the Trust, Thomas Stouffer, president, was enthusiastic about this year's accomplishments.
"Farmland preservation has

moved into the mainstream of both agriculture and good local and county planning," Stouffer said. "We have preserved 14 farms and over 1,100 acres in the last 12 months — bringing the Trust's total to 117 farms, double the number preserved just five years ago."
Stouffer said the Trust does more than preserve farms. They also follow and respond to important issues that affect the

county's best farmland and therefore the lives of all the citizens. They take a pro-agriculture, common-sense approach to good county planning.
The annual meeting also highlighted a new book called "Lancaster County Farm Life" written by Sara Barton that features photographs by Gini Woy.

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