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Grower Grooms Christmas Tree For White House

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff

AUBURN (Schuylkill Co.) —

It's not so far from selling a tree for dinner table food to shipping one to the White House.

Fifty-five years ago, as Paul Alan Shealer remembers it, his father and grandfather began selling trees simply to get a "Christmas turkey."

Recently, U.S. White House representatives ventured to the Shealer Evergreen Acres Farm to select a tree for the President's family.

For two years back in the mid-1940s, cashing in on Christmas trees looked like the right thing to do.

Eventually, Paul Alan's father, Paul Alexander, and Paul Alan's grandfather, Harry Williams, planted trees to cut and sale.

Now, Paul Alan's wife Sharon and their kids Paul Anthony, 16, and Briana, 18, help run a small retail and a wholesale Christmas tree selling operation.

This year, an 18.5-foot tall carefully prepared and groomed Douglas fir (Lincoln variety) planted as a 3-year-old seedling in 1980 was chosen in a national contest to be the Christmas tree for the White House.

"This tree caught my eye,"

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Jim and Gail Crooke, Bucks County, along with their children and employees, harvest more than 2,000 acres of hay a year from fields of 50 different landowners. The hay comes from an area encompassing approximately 30 miles. "I actually think of the county in terms of the ridges, hills, creeks — the lay of the land — almost more than roads," said Jim Crooke. Photo by Michelle Ranck

Make Hay While The Sun Shines . . . All Year

MICHELLE RANCK

Lancaster Farming Staff

DUBLIN (Bucks Co.) —

Tucked behind busy highways, framed by the city of Philadelphia, and nestled next to the Delaware River lie patches of green, the stretches of grass and farmland that produces hay for Jim and Gail Crooke's Windybush Hay Farms.

"This is definitely farming in the suburbs," said Gail. "Most of our fields are not close. The fields are scattered. We farm all

over but we try to get them (the fields) close together in the central part of the county."

The Crookes, who are joined by children Nathan, 16; Jacob, 13; and Natalie, 11, harvest hay from fields in Bucks and Montgomery counties in addition to fields in New Jersey.

The various hayfields yield 6,000 half-ton square bales a year and 10,000 small bales from more than 2,000 acres. In addition to hay the Crookes rotate

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First Woman Named National Ag Secretary

EVERETT NEWSWANGER

Editor

WASHINGTON, D.C. —

The first woman to hold the post of national secretary of agriculture has been named to take over the 110-year-old USDA in

the new administration being formed by President-elect George W. Bush.

Ann M. Veneman from Sacramento, California, has deep

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At left is the 18.5-foot tall Christmas tree that Paul Shealer, center, has groomed specifically to go this year to the White House. Photo by Andy Andrews

To You, Sincere Good Wishes
 For A Blessed Christmas
 And A Prosperous New Year
 From Everyone At Lancaster Farming

