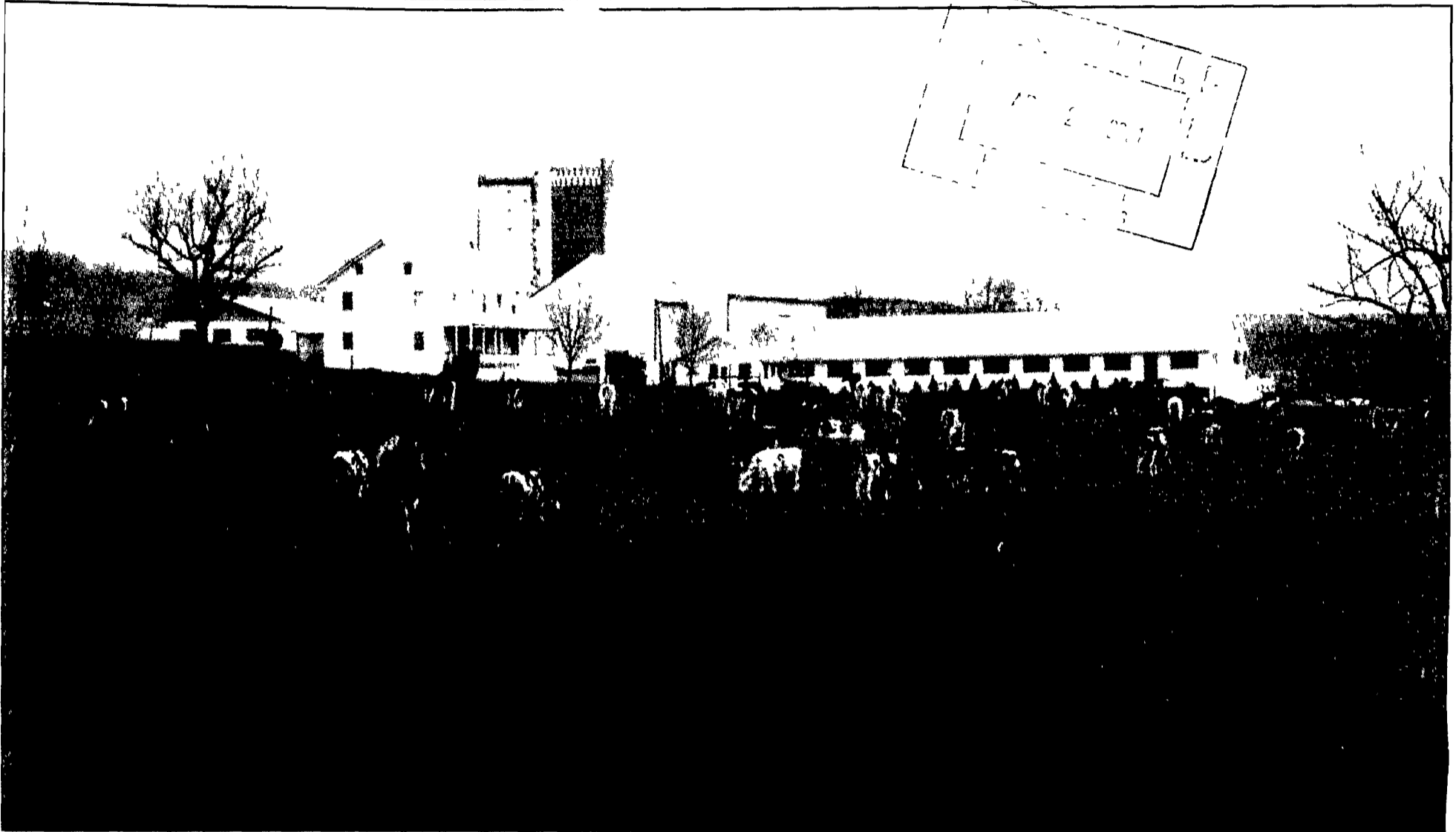


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Lancaster Farming

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CHURCHTOWN (Lancaster Co.) — Cows enjoy some fresh pasture as warmer temperatures settle in. Rain also pushes lush spring grazing growth. The milking herd of Galen Martin near Churchtown is making the most of a ryegrass/clover mix along with some orchardgrass. Martin milks about 65 cows.

According to the Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service (PASS), for the week ending April 15, conditions were poor for fieldwork. Soil moisture was rated 49 percent adequate and 51 percent surplus for the

state, with spring plowing, planting oats and other crops, fixing fences, applying lime and fertilizer, and other work under way.

PASS reports that pasture growth is very slow, and some farmers are still bringing stored feed to livestock. Thirty-eight percent of the pasture land is rated good to excellent compared to 29 percent the previous week.

The grazing season has begun. And The spring issue of *Foraging Around* is included this issue. *Photo by Stan Hall*

Lefever Joins Lancaster Farming

EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — Dave Lefever recently joined *Lancaster Farming* as the new dairy staff writer.

Lefever's agricultural experience began on the farm where he grew up in northern Lebanon

County, helping his father, Abe, tend a herd of about 45 Holsteins.

Most recently, Lefever helped to manage a sheep, hay, and organic vegetable farm in Freder-

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'Boot Camp' Teaches Ag Conservation Basics

MICHELLE RANCK
Lancaster Farming Staff

FORT INDIANTOWN GAP (Lebanon Co.) — Pennsylvania agriculture conservation technicians (ACTs) took advantage of a training opportunity to attend a weeklong "boot camp" and learn the basics of agronomy or engineering in agriculture.

The participants, from organizations spanning Pennsylvania, are part of a program exclusive to the commonwealth.

In its second year, the program added 25-30 new positions when a special appropriation of more than \$1 million was allotted to aid production farmers.

The majority of the appropriation dollars are going into the agriculture conservation technician program, said Agriculture Secretary Samuel Hayes, who opened the week. Hayes noted that the funds are tagged for farmers and the conservation commission.

He pointed out the importance of "infrastructure at the service point of the program,"

which is the one-on-one work of the technicians.

According to training coordinator Bill Bowers, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Harrisburg, individual attention to the producer is the hallmark of the program.

Technicians give advice on soil erosion, soil health, water runoff, manure handling, or wildlife habitat. "The whole program is targeted to one-on-one assistance," he said.

Bowers said that participants are studying "what those of us in this business see as basic needs." The training is designed to dovetail with other training given by other organizations.

Noting the drop in the numbers of NRC employees, Bowers said that the program helps to fill that gap and move from fewer federal to more local employees.

The week was part of several training sessions conducted to help the ACTs further their education. A boot camp was conducted in March for ACTs with less on-the-job experience.

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Pa. Dairies Benefit From DMLA Program

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Dairy farmers eligible for new relief funds from the federal government must sign up through their county USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) office by April 30 in order to receive payment.

The additional payments offered through the new Dairy Market Loss Assistance Program (DMLA III) are for farmers with new dairy operations or farmers who received payments under DMLA II for less than 12 months of milk production.

Dauphin County dairyman Bill Capp Jr. said he signed up for the new program when it was first announced in late February of this year.

Along with his family and another hired couple, Capp manages 210 Holsteins with a rolling herd average of 26,000 pounds near Hershey.

Capp said it took him a few minutes to fill out the application and it was time well spent.

Within a week after applying for the funds, he received a

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Dave Lefever has joined the *Lancaster Farming* staff as dairy writer.