

USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research Focuses On Alternatives To Agri-Chemicals On Apples

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Research into apple production funded by USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program shows that growers who adopt new orchard management practices can control tough apple pests with fewer agri-chemicals.

A team of SARE-funded University of Massachusetts researchers are developing ecologically sound orchard management practices to control plum curculio, European red mites, apple maggot and flyspeck disease. Along with apple scab, these pests account for more than 90 percent of pesticide use on apples in the northeast. In commercial orchards, scientists and farmers are collaborating to evaluate a combination of practices and biological controls. For example, careful pruning can reduce the risk of flyspeck infection. Releasing predatory mites that prey on European red mites provides near-perfect control. And red spheres coated with an odor bait and sticky capturing substance controlled apple maggots without any need to spray. Contact Dr. Ron Prokopy, (413) 545-1057.

Research into alternatives to synthetic fungicides in apple production has shown real promise. SARE-sponsored research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison indicates that an inexpensive spray mix of amino acids and vitamins, or even a solution of potassium bicarbonate, can effectively

reduce certain apple diseases such as sooty blotch and flyspeck under local conditions. Left untreated, the fungi responsible for those diseases cause unsightly blemishes on the apple surface, reducing or eliminating the fruit's market value.

When applied instead of conventional synthetic fungicides, those sprays provided levels of disease control comparable to the fungicide sulfur. Use of such environmentally benign compounds reduces the risk that potentially harmful chemicals will enter ground water, nearby streams, or the food chain. Contact Dr. John Andrews or Dr. Patty McManus, (608) 263-9642.

Building on the natural resistance certain apple varieties exhibit to some of the most plaguing pests and diseases, a team of SARE-funded researchers from Pennsylvania's Rodale Institute, Cornell University, Rutgers University and the University of Massachusetts studied more than 30 types of apple trees over eight years.

They found that growers can reduce fungicide use by 50 to 100 percent using scab-resistant cultivars, or types, they developed. They also found that encouraging the presence of beneficial insects or bacteria that prey on unwanted pests and scouting for pest insects before spraying can save growers up to \$200 per acre in pesticide costs. Contact Lorraine Berkett, (802) 656-0972.

Northeast DBQA Program Unveiled

MIDDLETOWN (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Beef Council Board of Directors received a preview of the new Northeast Regional Dairy Beef Quality Assurance (DBQA) trailer exhibit and educational materials during their board meeting here on Wednesday, April 25.

The three piece exhibit, producer booklet and accompanying videos are available for educational meetings and for display at producer group functions, trade shows, sale barns, cooperative extension events, or any

place producers meet.

"The current climate of concern about food safety and animal health issues here and abroad makes this DBQA education program timely and informative," said Paul Slayton, executive director of the Pennsylvania Beef Council. "It also demonstrates the beef and dairy industries' commitment to consumers."

The Northeast Regional Center for Dairy Beef Quality Assurance is dedicated to raising producer awareness of the

and bull beef and increase the value of market cows and bulls.

The Audit process included interviews with packers, processors, retailers, consumers and producer affiliated organizations.

The center also gleaned timely information about related dairy herd management areas such as bio-security, health maintenance, goal-setting and record-keeping, profitable culling, cow comfort, and the safe and proper administration of animal health products to present a comprehensive education package for dairy producers.

The most important message of the program is that dairy animals are also beef animals and that dairy producers are significant contributors of valued beef products.

Dairy ground beef, mixed with fed beef trimmings, represents 43 percent of all beef consumed in this country. And today, about half of the beef from dairy cull cows is processed and merchandised as higher-value, whole-muscle cuts for food favorites like fajitas, Philly steaks, deli and fast-food roast beef, and tenderized steaks for economy steak houses.

Quality defects such as poor condition, bruising, abscesses, inflammation and condemnation have a negative effect on the price that beef processors can pay for dairy cows. The 1999 Audit demonstrated much progress since the 1994 Audit; however, more progress is needed.

This Dairy Beef Quality Assurance program provides dairy producers with tools to improve in key areas, which also have a significant favorable impact on the profitability of their farms.

For more information about the DBQA exhibit and materials, or to schedule a DBQA education program or exhibit display, contact the Northeast Regional Center for Dairy Beef Quality Assurance at 717-939-7000.

Producers can also contact the Center for materials or information about scheduled programs. The Center is located at the Pennsylvania Beef Council office at 1500 Fulling Mill Road, Middletown, PA 17057.



Viewing one section of the recently completed Northeast Regional Center for Dairy Beef Quality Assurance education exhibit and materials are several PA Beef Council directors during a pre-meeting orientation: Standing from left: Bob Livingston, York County beef producer; John Terefenko, livestock market representative from Selinsgrove; James Work, Uniontown beef producer; and Kenneth Teel, Meshoppen dairy producer. Seated from left: Steve Holland, Holland Bros. Meats, Duncansville; Randy Meabon, Erie County dairy producer; Kathy Allen, board chair and western Pennsylvania beef producer; Eugene Wingert, central Pennsylvania beef producer; Tom Croner, Berlin dairy producer and representative to the Cattlemen's Beef Board.

monitoring, management and marketing practices, which impact food safety, consumer confidence, beef quality and dairy profitability.

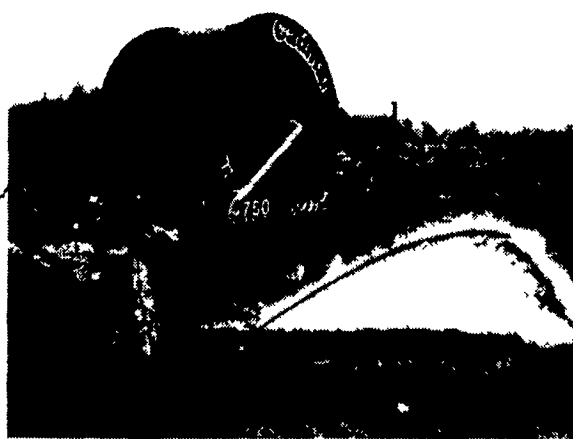
In developing the display elements and materials, the Center used data from the 1999 National Market Cow and Bull Quality Audit. The purpose of the Audit, conducted by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, is to improve the consistency and competitiveness of market cow

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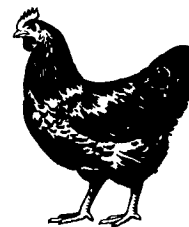
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7th Annual Golf Tournament

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No metal spikes
- When: June 12, 2001 (Rain or Shine)
- Cost: \$60.00 per person (includes green fee, cart, range balls, refreshments, prizes and Chicken Barbecue meal after play)
- Time: Registration and Lunch at 11:00 A.M.
Shotgun Start at 1:00 P.M.
- Type of Play: Scramble
- Registration Deadline: May 31, 2001 (Tournament is limited to first 144 golfers)
- Registration: Everyone is welcome, contact:
Dennis Herr,
3057 Harvest Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022
Phone: 717-367-6670

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