

Latest Farming Technology Demonstrated At Ag Progress Days

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.) — Penn State's Ag Progress Days — Aug. 14-16 — annually presents state-of-the-art technology for farmers and other agricultural producers.

This year's edition of one of Pennsylvania's largest outdoor agricultural exposition has the potential to top last year's record participation from commercial vendors, according to Bob Oberheim, manager of the event.

"To date, we have more than 30 new commercial exhibitors coming to the show, with the potential for up to 40 new companies," Oberheim said. "I feel confident that we'll have more than last year's 342 exhibitors, and possibly set a record."

In addition to equipment displays, exhibitors will offer 'show-and-tell' demonstrations, a skid steer rodeo and a farm equipment highway safety workshop. Field demonstrations will feature hay mowing, baling, bale handling, haylage chopping and bagging, and rakes and tedders. In addition, three specialty line equipment companies will demonstrate a variety of equipment, such as planters, forage mixers, loaders, bale processors and forage platforms, plus other equipment.

"Each of the specialty line equipment companies will have more than a half-acre of active demonstration area to showcase items that are unique, state-of-the-art or in demand in the industry," Oberheim said. "They'll demonstrate a wide range of equipment throughout the day. The potential buyer can talk to a company representative, see the equipment features and watch it in action."

Vegetable producers can see the latest in high tunnels during an expanded demonstration tour through the horticulture research farm. High tunnels are simple, garage-sized structures

covered with clear plastic sheeting to manipulate soil and air temperatures using the energy of the sun to support year-round growing seasons. Penn State researchers are conducting growing trials for a variety of crops, including tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, spinach, lettuce, okra, ornamental gourds, cauliflower, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries and cut flowers.

"Since last year, they've added more high tunnel models and two large full-sized models to show what commercial production would be," Oberheim said. "We're growing a lot of crops, and our researchers have another year of experience with this technology under their belts. High tunnels can work for the home gardening enthusiast or the commercial grower, and this tour will show how it can work for you."

Many visitors will appreciate another new feature: "new products" posters developed by Ag Progress Days staff to help visitors find new or innovative products at the exposition.

"Our research center covers 55 acres — that's a pretty big area," Oberheim said. "Thanks to the new-products posters, our audience can focus immediately on what's new. This will help them use their time wisely."

Because of concerns over the possible transmission of foot-and-mouth disease and other foreign animal diseases, visitors who have been overseas within two weeks of attending Ag Progress Days are asked not to visit the event's live-animal exhibit areas.

Penn State's Ag Progress Days is conducted at the Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center at Rockspring, nine miles southwest of State College on Rt. 45. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday. Admis-

sion and parking are free.

For more information, call (800) PSU-1010 toll-free from July 9 to Aug. 16 or visit the Ag Progress Days Website at <http://apd.cas.psu.edu>.

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