

Take The Kids To The Country At Penn State's Ag Progress Days

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.)
— From megatractors to wild raptors, there's plenty for kids to do at Penn State's Ag Progress Days, Aug. 14-16.

Whether you're three or 103, you can learn about the life of an arborist — up in the trees. The "Kid's Climb" will have ropes and all of the necessary equipment to safely climb two white oaks. With help from professional arborists, amateur climbers can climb to 25 feet — or to their comfort level — whichever comes first. "Anyone who has a little coordination can try," said Jim Savage, research assistant in Penn State's Environmental Resources Research Institute.

At the Natural Resource Conservation Partnership area, adults can relax in the "backyard garden," while kids enjoy the fish tank, daily fly-casting exhibitions, invertebrates, worm tubes and touch boxes, or get tattoos and make fish print shirts. The younger crowd also may enjoy "A Maze N Corn," a corn maze that's accessible for wheelchairs and baby strollers. The maze is located next to the Crops and Soils Tent on East 5th Street.

The Family Learning Hub, near the food vendors on Main Street, between West 8th and West 9th, will interest kids whether they live on a farm or in the city. The Hub includes:

- **ImAGination Station.** Little visitors can learn about rocketry, race balloons, play with chicks and slip their smiling faces into a stand-up astronaut or Nittany Lion for a take-home photo. They also can meet The Waterlion, the star of a brand-new book, and do "The Big Drip" to learn how much water is wasted from a leaky faucet.

At one particularly tasty exhibit, visitors will receive a passport and try to guess — using a world map and table filled with ingredients for chocolate (cocoa beans, cocoa trees, sugar cane, sugar beets, almonds and milk) — which country each ingredient came from. At another interactive, tasty exhibit, you can learn how much color influences perception of flavor.

Ag in the Classroom will feature an interactive game that tests kids knowledge of basic facts related to Pennsylvania agriculture. So, how many stomachs does a cow have?

If they want to get small, kids can peer through a microscope at the hidden life of soils. Also, food-related bacteria will be featured in "The Good, The Bad and The Necessary."

- **Shaver's Creek Environmental Center.** Here, visitors can get "up close and personal" with native Pennsylvania wildlife. Shaver's Creek will introduce visitors to live birds-of-prey, snakes, turtles and frogs, share stories and answer questions. Interpretive programs will be held on various wildlife. Hands-on exhibits will include natural artifacts, such as skulls,

pelts and antlers.

- **Farm Animal Learning Center.** This is the place to learn about farm animal welfare, such as animal care, biosecurity, and use issues. Visit with dairy and beef calves, goats, lambs, rabbits, pigs, miniature horses, chickens, retired greyhounds and other farm and companion animals, and learn about the myths and facts of farm animal production. New information this year focuses on precautions that should be taken by farm and non-farm people when working with and enjoying farm animals to prevent the spread of

disease. More than 50 handouts, mostly for grades 3-8, will cover almost every aspect of animal agriculture.

- **Family Room Building.** Here, visitors can go on a treasure hunt or relax at the "Kids Corner," a special area where children and parents can do art activities, enjoy water play and read stories together. Families also will find a variety of informative exhibits, games and demonstrations on cooking, youth sports, food safety, financial issues, children and elders, and more.

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.

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



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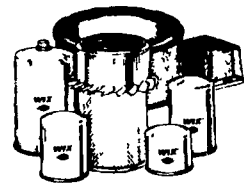


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