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Lancaster Farming

Vol. 46 No. 45 www.lancasterfarming.com Four Sections Saturday, September 8, 2001 \$34.00 Per Year 75¢ Per Copy

Producers: Consider These Questions Before Merger Decision

Ken Bailey and Jim Dunn
Penn State University
STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Members of Maryland & Virginia, Land O'Lakes, and a Texas- and Arkansas-based dairy cooperative recently received a letter of intent to merge their dairy operations. The proposal is to form a new entity called the Advantage Dairy Group, which would become a fluid division under Land O'Lakes.

This is the latest of many mergers among agricultural cooperatives.

Dairy producers who are members of these four coopera-

tives have the responsibility of deciding whether or not the merger is a good idea. A number of fall informational meetings have been arranged to allow members to study the proposed merger. But what thought process should members go through before casting their vote concerning the proposed merger?

Mergers are common in the U.S. economy. Publicly-traded companies go through a formal process and are required to provide lots of information. They have to deal with individual investors, Wall Street analysts, editors of financial magazines, and others in the news media.

For example, on April 5, Suiza Foods Corporation (NYSE: SZA) and Dean Foods Company (NYSE: DF) announced they have signed a definitive

agreement under which the two companies will merge to form a national dairy and specialty foods company with \$10 billion in revenue. At the time of the

announcement, both companies released financial data on their separate companies, as well as the proposed entity. Then, on

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PMMB Grants Emergency Hearing

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff
HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board (PMMB) has agreed to conduct an emergency hearing to reconsider the over-order premium paid to Pennsylvania milk producers.

Dairy Cooperative Inc. and Dairy Farmers of America Northeast Council petitioned the board Wednesday for the

hearing, which they hope will result in an increase in the premium from its current \$1.10 per hundredweight plus \$.25 per hundredweight for high fuel costs.

This June, after hearing testimony from various representatives of the dairy industry, the three-member board had lowered the premium from \$1.40 to \$1.10, while maintaining the

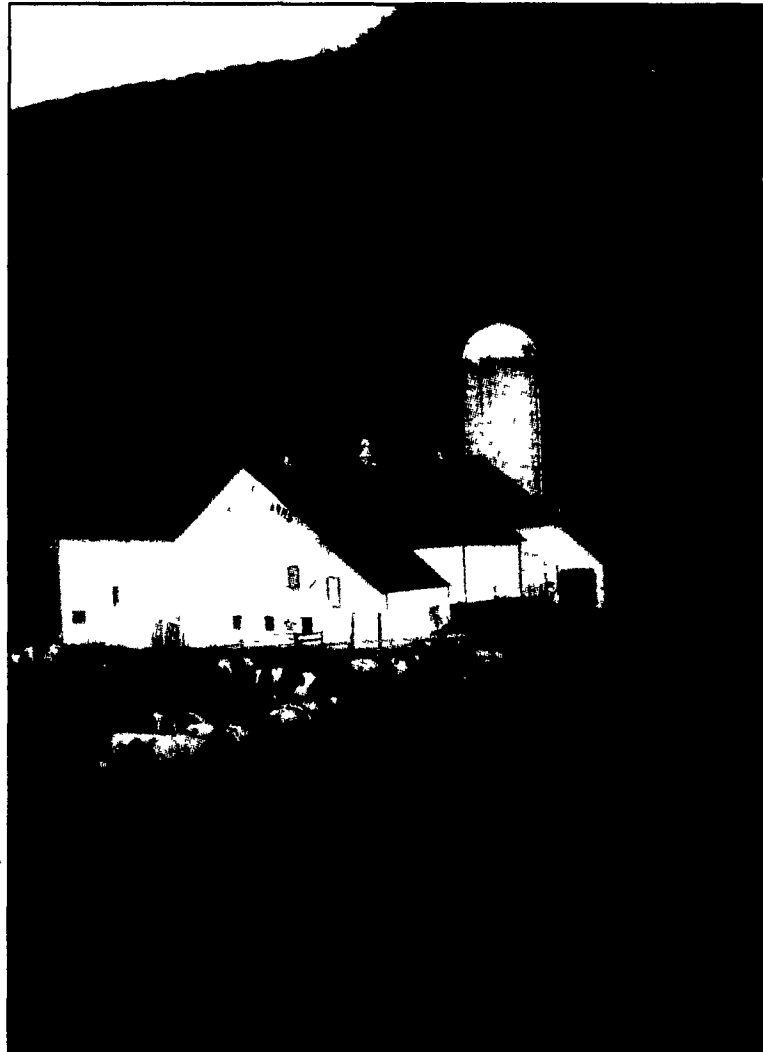
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A Maze In The Making



WARRINGTON (Bucks Co.) — The past month has been especially busy for Bill Garges, at left, his son Bob, and Kevin Kinney, who are joined by Bob's son Gavin, 5, a fifth generation farmer. They milk 100 cows and farm 900 acres of "Winding Brook Farm," the host of a corn maze that opened to the public on Friday. Despite this year's drought, corn stands tall enough to provide a challenge for visitors weaving their way across the six acres of cornfield. The design is in the shape of a cow and calf in addition to the large "Got Milk?" question traced into the field. Other educational exhibits, a hay maze, and hay rides provide a chance for schoolchildren and other visitors to learn about farming. According to Garges, the maze provides not only a chance to teach the public, but also help the farm's bottom line economics. Watch for more about the farm and maze in the Oct. 13 issue of *Lancaster Farming's Corn Talk*.

Photo by Michelle Kunjappu



SPRUCE CREEK (Huntingdon Co.) — Though the days shorten, the sunsets make for some pleasant evenings. The annual Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council (PFGC) summer picnic was conducted here at Harpster's Evergreen Farm Aug. 15 during Ag Progress Days, just a few miles down the road on Rt. 45 between Warriors Mark and Spruce Creek. Read more about PFGC scheduled in next week's issue of *Foraging Around*.

Photo by Andy Andrews, editor

Migrant Ed Program Reaches 11,000 Pa. Children

MICHELLE RANCK-KUNJAPPU
Lancaster Farming Staff
MILLERSVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — If education is the key to the future, then more children will be holding keys because of the work of those involved in the Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program.

Numbers testify to the scope of educational need of migrant children. For instance, approximately 1,400 students in Lancaster County alone will receive more educational attention because of the program. In Pennsylvania 11,000 children are served in 139 school district in 46 counties.

ilies move on the average of five to 10 times per year.

Most of them have combined annual income of \$10,000 or less and did not graduate from high school. Hispanic peoples make up 87 percent of migrant families. However people from Russia, Bosnia, and Vietnam have also moved to U.S. to look for work, according to Jenny Carranza, who works to recruit families into the program.

Carranza adds that migrant workers may also be Americans who move consistently for work. Some of the workers follow a circuit that takes them from one area to another year-round, while other families work six months a year then, go back to Mexico or Puerto Rico — two areas where many workers originate.

Migrant workers are hired in Pennsylvania for everything from nursery and greenhouse

work to employment on dairy farms for increased ice cream production over the summer. Mushroom production is another draw for agricultural work. Orchard and vineyard owners may also need seasonal labor.

The large- and small-scale beef, pork, turkey, and chicken processing plants in Pennsylvania are another employer. Employees that work in meat processing often move around because of the large employee turnover in these operations. Their jobs are considered temporary and they qualify for assistance, said Juan Biblioni.

Biblioni is recruitment and data manager for the three projects in Lancaster, Berks, and Lehigh Valley areas. These three project areas are administrated from a center at Millersville University.

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The Circuit
From North Carolina's tobacco fields to the East Coast's blueberry patches to the Susquehanna Valley's peach, apple, and pear orchards, migrant fam-