

Consumers: Look For Egg Safety Label

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TANNERSVILLE (Monroe Co.) — After speaking at the PennAg keynote session early last week, Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Samuel E. Hayes conducted an educational event and press conference at Mr. Z's Market, Tannersville.

Hayes highlighted the fact that Pennsylvania enjoys the edge in egg safety. Hayes also offered food safety tips to the consumers.

Also in attendance were Mark Oney, manager of Mr. Z's, and Jeff Brown, general superintendent. Mr. Z's Market is owned by Weis Markets Inc.

Paul D. Sauder, member of the PennAg Industries Poultry Council, which developed the Pennsylvania Egg Quality Assurance Program (PEQAP) in 1994, said, "We want shoppers to look for the 'PEQAP' seal to take advantage of our state's premier egg safety program and to purchase eggs at the markets that offer PEQAP."

According to Sauder, all of the eggs sold under the Weis Market label are processed according to PEQAP guidelines, and Weis has been a "strong supporter" of the program since it began in 1994.

"We launched PEQAP in 1994 as the nation's first egg safety program and as a private/public partnership," said Hayes. "It is a prototype for the world. Agriculture and health officials from all over the globe contact us to help them implement similar programs in their nations."

PEQAP is a voluntary industry program intended to minimize Salmonella enteritidis (SE) contamination of chicken (shell) eggs. About 22.5 million layer chickens, or 85 percent of the state's flock, now are monitored under the program.

To display the PEQAP label on their shell eggs, producers must meet stringent requirements for egg testing, chick monitoring and testing, manure sampling and culturing, farm biosecurity, employee and package sanitation, record keeping, and refrigeration and other criteria.

PEQAP requirements are a more stringent farm-to-fork system that the new federal rules implemented Sept. 4. Those rules require a safe handling advisory label on egg cartons along with egg storage and display at 45 degrees Fahrenheit, or lower, at retail establishments.

In its rule, the USDA noted that SE "continues to be a significant health concern," although there has been a 40 percent decline in the number of cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control since 1996.

People eating contaminated eggs that aren't properly prepared can suffer flu-like symptoms usually within 12 to 72 hours after consumption. The illness usually lasts four to seven days and can be most serious — or even fatal — for infants, the elderly, and those with impaired immune systems.

Sauder said, "Pennsylvanians eat about three billion eggs a year — or an average of 245 per person. Eggs are economical and are a source of important nutrients in a balanced diet. We want consumers to know that PEQAP eggs are produced with safety, as well as high quality and low price in mind."

Pennsylvania is the nation's fourth largest egg producer (after Ohio, California, and Iowa), producing about 5.8 billion eggs annually for in-state consumption and export.

Consumers can practice egg safety with these steps: buy eggs

Sponsors Assist In Production Of KILE

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Keystone International Livestock Exposition (KILE) is in its 45th year at Harrisburg.

The exposition is recognized nationally as a showcase for the nation's top beef cattle, swine, sheep, and horses. It will be conducted at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg Oct. 2-8.

To date, 70 major sponsors have committed funds to support KILE. A sponsorship program was put together a few years ago to assist in funding the show as well as to promote the show. With the revamped KILE program, many opportunities exist for agricultural companies and individuals to get involved.

Nutrena is sponsoring the "Challenge of the Breeds" show on Saturday evening in the large arena. This event will pit nine in-

ternationally recognized horse breeds: Appaloosa, Arabian, Half-Arabian, Percheron, Paint, Quarter Horse, Morgan, Palomino, and Pinto against each other in an evening of fun and mastery. A total of 12 horses chosen by their respective breed associations will be entered in the competition. The "Keystone Sovereign Champion" will then receive \$1,000.

Sponsoring the Kiddie Pedal Pull is Evergreen Tractor Sales at Myerstown. Dennis Grumbine, owner, reports that he chose the Kiddie's Pedal Pull to sponsor because of the close tie-in with the equipment business. The Pedal Pull will be conducted on Saturday, Oct. 6 at 3 p.m. The event is open to children between the ages of 3-8.

Kessler's has chosen to sponsor our daily "Kessler's Barnyard," as it is called, where kids of all

ages can touch and pet barnyard animals. Kessler's is located in Lemoyne.

Lebanon Valley Farmers/Fulton Bank is sponsoring the Agri-Kid Olympics. Farm-related competitive events will be conducted for children including wheelbarrow races, hay toss and sack races. Kids will even learn how to auctioneer.

Pennsylvania Livestock Association is sponsoring the Keystone Stockman's Contest. It will be Monday, Oct. 9 and is open to any 4-H or FFA member in the U.S. and Canada. Last year, 502 youth participated in this contest.

Sponsorships at KILE are available in six monetary denominations from \$50 to \$1,000 plus. Sponsors receive show pins, ring announcements, plaques, display ads, pictures, and banners depending on the level of participation.

Entertainment Scheduled For KILE

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The year 2001 has been designated "Year of the Sheep," so sheep exhibitors will receive special attention as part of the effort to increase public awareness of the hog industry and the high caliber of sheep shown annually at the Keystone International Livestock Expo (KILE).

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At the 2001 Show, the acts, booked primarily for Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, will amble around the Farm Show Complex putting on their show.

Two acts have been hired to stroll the show. They are J.J. Huggles, the Goodwill ambassador clown, and "Blaze," the world famous balloon blowing goat.

J.J. Huggles wants to put a smile on every face. He not only strolls but will perform on a small stage his combination of magic, fun, games, and the traditional clown skills.

Blaze the Balloon Blowing Goat has amazed audiences across, not only America, but also in Australia. The act consists of a witty clown named Dr. Happy Laclair and his friend, "Blaze." The act keeps all ages baffled and amused. You'll love the combination of a colorful, witty, clever clown making fantastic balloon art from balloons inflated by a talking, balloon blowing goat.

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