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Steve Moore of Sonnewald Natural Foods stands in the greenhouse that is in production year-round for the store's produce demand. The business combines a greenhouse operation with a store to market supplements, educational books, and herbs, in addition to fruit, vegetables, and grains. Photo by Michelle Kunjappu

Sonnewald Markets Produce, Education Farm Store Part of MADMC Tour

MICHELLE KUNJAPPU
Lancaster Farming Staff
SPRING GROVE (York Co.)
— Note: This feature is part of a series that highlights direct marketing operations. These businesses are a part of the Mid Atlantic Direct Marketing Conference tour. The conference will take place Feb. 20-23 at the Holi-

dome in York. For more information look for the conference schedule on page A24.

The goal of Sonnewald Natural Foods, a combination farm and store, is not simply to market the farm's produce.

Educating customers about health and food has been paramount since the business was

founded 50 years ago by Grace Lefever and her late husband Tim. The operation has been carried on by their daughter Willa and her husband Bill.

In 1951 Tim and Grace completed an active solar greenhouse, the first in Pennsylvania. Today the farm and greenhouse

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Small Farm Graziers Gather

MICHELLE KUNJAPPU
Lancaster Farming Staff
QUARRYVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — Two days of seminars provided a forum for approximately 230 producers to learn about opportunities for small farms, the theme of the Southeast Pennsylvania Grazing Conference. Lancaster County Graziers, sponsors of the event, conducted the conference at Solanco Fairgrounds.

On Monday topics included small farm economics, on-farm processing and marketing, and understanding soil.

Tuesday Doug Gunnink opened the conference with principles of grass management.

Nutrition is the most important, said Gunnink. "It's important that nutrition not come from a mineral bag or supplements but in the grass." He advised producers to "work on getting sugars high up in the plant" for the cow.

"The ultimate monitoring tool in grass farming is the cow," he said. Soil testing should help make producers make decisions about pasture

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High Cost Of Cheap Food Challenged At Conference

DAVE LEFEVER

Lancaster Farming Staff
STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — More than 1,000 people turned out for the 11th annual "Farming for the Future" conference of the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) here last week.

Highlights of the two-day event included presentation of a sustainable ag leadership award, a variety of educational sessions, and the words of keynote speaker John Ikerd, ag economist from Missouri.

Ikerd challenged the group to reclaim a sense of community and connection to the land in the face of an industrialized system of agriculture.

Ever fewer farmers have been feeding a growing nation, and Americans spend only a little more than a dime on food out of every dollar they earn. Those facts shows the "impressive efficiency" of our agriculture, Ikerd said.

"But what is the cost of that cheap food?" he asked.

Ikerd grew up on a small dairy farm in Missouri. In the

1960s, he studied at the University of Missouri and became an extension ag economist. His work took him to major universities in Georgia, Oklahoma, and North Carolina.

During the farm financial crisis of the 1980s, his approach to ag economics underwent a profound change.

"I started to question what I saw happening and came to see that the profit-maximization approach being used by ag professionals was at the root of the problem," he said.

He witnessed his brother's struggle to maintain the family dairy farm in Missouri during the 1980s. His brother expanded the milking herd, "was working too hard and going broke," Ikerd said. After downsizing and switching to a grass-based operation, his brother now gets less milk per cow but greater profits and is making a comfortable living from the farm.

Ikerd returned to the University of Missouri in 1989 to provide state and national leadership for research and education programs related to sus-

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Sustainable ag leaders from left, Jim and Moie Crawford of New Morning Farm, Hustontown, with farm manager Chris Fullerton. The Crawfords were recognized by PASA for 30 years of growing and marketing a wide variety of organic produce and teaching many people. Photo by Dave Lefever

Drought Emergency Declared For 24 Counties

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — After signing a drought emergency proclamation for 24 counties earlier this week, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary David Hess discussed the drought and water resource protection at a Lancaster Agricultural Issues Forum at Landis Valley Farm Museum Thursday.

About 60 agribusiness representatives, farmers, lobbyists, and elected officials attended the forum.

"We cannot stress enough the importance of water and the se-

rious issues farmers in Pennsylvania are facing due to the drought emergency," Secretary Hess said. "We need to develop longterm water use strategies as part of a comprehensive approach to better manage our water resources. Lancaster County, one of Pennsylvania's largest farming communities, is a prime example of why we need to protect and preserve our precious water resources for the future."

With groundwater levels dangerously low in the southcentral

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Lancaster County Poultry Ambassador Rebecca Highley perfects her omelet-making skill with the advice of Lancaster County Poultry Association President Andy Bradford, center, and Guy Martin, board member. The association was one of several groups that served food during Lancaster extension's annual meeting. See page B2 for more about this tasty event. Photo by Lou Ann Good