

Lancaster Farming

Vol. - 47 No. - 29

www.lancasterfarming.com

Five Sections

Saturday, May 18, 2002

\$36.00 Per Year

\$1.00 Per Copy

'Green Energy' From Poultry Litter Possible

MICHELLE KUNJAPPU
Lancaster Farming Staff

MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) — Approximately 20 poultry and allied industry representatives learned about alternative poultry by-products utilization at a meeting sponsored by Penn State Extension Service at Kreider's Restaurant Monday.

Dr. Lewis Carr, extension biological resources engineer for the University of Maryland, presented results of his latest work at the Lower Eastern Shore Research and Education Center, Princess Anne, Md.

Carr discussed the physical characteristics of litter, poultry litter as a combustible "green energy" source, and composting avenues to recycle the material.

Whole and caked litter, said Carr, weighs approximately 32-34 pounds per cubic foot, respectively, and has 15-20 percent ash content. Most litter has a pH of 8-8.3 and its primary nutrient

— at 71 pounds per ton of litter — is nitrogen. Phosphorus is another primary nutrient. Secondary nutrients include calcium, magnesium, and sulfur, among others.

The typical poultry operation will produce 1-1.25 tons of litter (feces, urine, and bedding) per one thousand birds per flock, according to Carr, who estimates that the Delmarva area produces 775,000 tons of poultry litter per year.

Recycling of this kind of volume could be achieved through direct land application, composting, cattle feed, organic fertilizer, or combustion to produce energy.

Carr has experimented on broiler litter in loose, ground, and pelletized forms as a biofuel. "Poultry litter can be used as a biomass fuel to generate electricity and steam," said Carr.

Understandably, the litter with

(Turn to Page A26)



The Stahl family's Harvest Lane Farm near Lititz opened for business last week, offering flowers, strawberries, and other produce in time for Mother's Day. Pictured, from left, Laura Martin, and Melody, James, Eileen, Joe, Rosene, Rachel, and Peter Stahl. Read about the Stahl's diverse operation on page 4 of this week's *Grower & Marketer* section. Photo by Dave Lefever

Pick-Your-Own Berry Season Begins On Sauder Farm May 20



Grace Sauder examines a field of berries. The Sauders grow three acres of berries for their pick-your-own operation, which opens May 20. Photo by Lou Ann Good, food and family features editor

LOU ANN GOOD
Food And Family Features Editor

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — Berry time is here. Due to a warmer March, the picking season is earlier than usual and much heralded by berry aficionados.

Growing the cheery red fruit isn't a job for the leisurely minded. Ask Harvey and Grace Sauder. The couple raise three acres of berries for their pick-your-own operation. Although the Sauders have a New Holland address, their 60-acre farm is actually tucked between Martindale and Fivepointville in eastern Lancaster County.

Generally sun brings sweeter berries. Despite some heavy rains this past week, Grace said the berries are looking really good for the fields that will open to customers on Monday, May 20. For the past two weeks, Grace had been picking early berries for customers and family.

For the Sauders and other growers, the berry season is an almost year-round operation.

For those considering planting berries, the Sauders have this advice: the year before planting, do everything possible to destroy all perennial weeds such as thistle, bindweed, dockweed, grasses, and others.

Sauder said the weeds can be destroyed through tillage or chemicals or a combination of both methods.

A soil test needs to be taken to determine fertilization recommended in July. Fumigation is necessary as a whole field treatment or the strips under black plastic mulch. If fumigating strips through the drip irrigation system, a three-week wait is required before planting for some fumigations.

Strawberry plugs must be ordered at least four weeks in advance of planting.

(Turn to Page A30)

What Will Season Bring? Here Are Growers' Thoughts

Vegetable, Dairy Farmers Share Hopes

Under new Farm Bill, the average Pennsylvania dairy farm can expect a \$5,600 check for slumping milk prices since last December, says a Pennsylvania Farm Bureau policy specialist.

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The 2002 season will bring potential weather risks as well as marketing opportunities for fruit and vegetable producers, according to Leon Ressler, Lancaster County ex-

tension director.

"The year has promise," he said. "The demand for locally-grown high quality produce has been growing."

An increasing number of customers are buying fresh produce at local roadside stands and at Lancaster County's two produce auctions. Local marketing infrastructures have been developing to meet that demand, according to Ressler.

The revival of farmer's markets in cities is another trend that bodes well for producers. Growers can tap that opportunity

(Turn to Page A31)

Grazier, Orchard Grower Provide Views

MICHELLE KUNJAPPU
Lancaster Farming Staff

KINZER (Lancaster Co.) and **LOGANVILLE** (York Co.) — The grazing season is generally on schedule for Roman Stoltzfoos, Kinzer, who operates a 200-acre grazing operation. His organic dairy includes 150 cows and 100 young stock. The farm is further diversified with hogs and 9,000 finished turkeys per year.

"We've had an excellent season so far. What we like is coolish weather — 50 or 60 degrees at night and 75 through the day. That's mostly what we've had, other than that one hot week there in early spring,"

said Stoltzfoos.

"Last year was a scorcher for us. We were significantly behind in hay and pasture yields because of the rain. We do irrigate but we're not set up to do without rain, we're set up to supplement it. Irrigation pays the best in years when you have reasonable rainfall." An irrigation system is "not insurance," said Stoltzfoos, since "it's pretty hard to replace what rain does."

Although the drought cost the farm thousands in lost income last year, said

(Turn to Page A31)