



## New Farmers, New Generation

Marion Bowlan

Pennsylvania  
Farm Link

### GROWING YOUR BUSINESS NATURALLY

Every successful business, including farming, grows out of a love for making the products that come from that business, not out of a calculated plan to make money. Farmers who are successful chose something they love to do.

Dairy farmers choose dairying because they love cows. Vegetable farmers love to grow things. Crop farmers love working with machinery. It keeps them going through tight times and long hours.

These farmers also take great pride in creating high-quality products because they know in the long run that's what sells. Top-of-the-line products are more attractive, taste better, and keep the customer wanting more. Poor quality leaves a bad taste that spreads like wildfire. In other words, high quality sells. Increasingly, consumers look to local farmers to provide unique high-quality products they can't get from the big retailers.

Start small and grow naturally. Invest your ingenuity first, your labor second, and your money last. To lower your risk when be-

ginning, borrow or get used machinery or equipment. Work for someone else until you decide what you want to grow and how to grow it.

Rent land until you learn how to develop markets, work out production practices, and learn about the peculiarities of the business. Once you have experience under your belt, you will be more likely to get a loan from your lender and be in a better position to survive downturns in the market or weather.

Base decisions on good records. If you keep good records on production costs, sales, and taxes, you will have sound information on which you can base your decisions, not on what you hope or guess it will be. Seek knowledgeable professional help if this is not your strong suit.

Adjust your production to the demand of your customers. To be successful you have to love what you do and produce what your customers want. Find out what are your customer's preferences, tastes, and motivations. Talk to your customers, give them samples, ask for feedback, and listen to their suggestions.

Identify your special niche, or

place, in the market and focus on establishing a loyal, local customer base. Producing high-quality products and following the demands of your customers will help establish customer loyalty. Repeat customers are always easier to sell to than new customers.

Provide your customer with an experience. People buy directly from farmers because they want the experience as well as the product. Sharing some of the satisfactions and spiritual rewards of farm life adds to the value of your product in the customer's eyes.

Involve as many family members or partners in the farm business as you can. Each person's talents and abilities contribute to make the total farm operation larger than the sum of its parts. If family members aren't available or interested, take on partners that compliment your own abilities.

Stay informed. The only constant in life is change, and you will continually need to follow trends, get feedback from customers, stay on top of regulations, and know your competition to survive.

Finally, plan for the future. Just because you made a plan once, don't think you are finished. Success requires constant revision, renewal, and reinvention.

To learn more about growing a farm business, come to the Farmers Market and CSA Sales workshop scheduled June 19 at 7 p.m. in Greensburg. Call Pennsylvania Farm Link at (717) 664-7077 to register for this free event and to obtain more information.

Next column: "What makes a good farm entrepreneur?"

## Pennsylvania Cornfields Damaged By Late May Frosts

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Many areas of Pennsylvania experienced late frosts in the last week, resulting in damage to acres of corn in central Pennsylvania. An agronomist in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences said farmers should know the factors affecting frost damage.

Gregory Roth, associate professor of agronomy in Penn State's crop and soil sciences department, explains that good planting conditions and warm weather in late April resulted in rapid emergence and development for many of the earliest planted fields. Some fields had corn with two to three fully developed leaves.

"When the frost hit, many of these early-planted fields were hit," Roth said. "Corn fields that were full of growing small plants last week now appear to be very sick. Producers are wondering how this will affect their crop and if they need to replant."

"The severity of the damage varied depending on the location and the size of the corn. Generally, drier, tilled fields or low-lying fields are most at risk, but even the absence of those factors did not save some fields from damage. In some locations, where the temperature was below 28 degrees for more than several hours, plants may have experienced a lethal dose of frost damage and the young plants may not recover. For instance, low temperatures of 27 and 29 were reported for Huntingdon and Altoona, respectively, on the morning of May 20, with lower temperatures likely in out-

lying areas." Roth said the key to assessing the ef-

fects of the frost damage is to be patient and wait for several days to see if the plants are showing signs of recovery. Usually after two to three days of 70-degree temperatures, new growth will be initiated and be visible in the plant's whorl (the base of the plant where the leaves originate). Under cool conditions, it may take a few more days to see recovery.

"Frost damage most often results in the death of above-ground plant parts," he said. "Frost-damaged leaves will blacken and turn straw-colored in a few days. The growing point of the plant is located deep inside the whorl and is below the soil surface until the plant has about five fully emerged leaves. Usually small corn will recover quickly from frost damage and in two weeks will show little sign of injury. In this episode, because of the severity and multiple frost events, I am concerned that the frost injury may be more severe than usual."

If all the plants don't recover, Roth said producers should assess the population of plants and decide whether the fields need to be replanted. Guidelines for replanting can be found in the corn production section of the Penn State Agronomy Guide, which can be found on the Web at <http://agguides.agronomy.psu.edu/CM/Sec4toc.html>. The 2002 edition of the guide is available for \$9.

For ordering information, call the College of Agricultural Sciences Publications Distribution Center at (814) 865-6713. To order using VISA or MasterCard, call toll-free, (877) 345-0691.

## April Milk Production Up 0.9 Percent In Pa.

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Milk production in Pennsylvania during April 2002 totaled 920 million pounds, up 0.9 percent from last year's production, according to the Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service (PASS).

The number of milk cows in the state during the month averaged 581,000 head, unchanged from March and down 18,000 from April 2001.

Production per cow averaged 1,600 pounds in April, 30 pounds less than in March but 60 pounds more than April 2001.

In the 20 states surveyed, milk production during April totaled 12.5 billion pounds, up 2.9 percent from production in these same states during April 2001. March revised production, at 12.8 billion pounds was up 3.1 percent from March 2001.

Production per cow in the 20 major states averaged 1,614 pounds for April, 43 pounds above April 2001. The number of milk cows on farms in the 20 major states averaged 7.75 million head, 12,000 head more than April 2001, and 8,000 head more than in March of 2002.

### Producer Websites Upcoming

OMAHA, Neb. — Angus Productions Inc. (API) will provide online coverage of the 2002 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Annual Meeting.

Producers can go to [www.bifconference.com](http://www.bifconference.com) for information, articles, news releases and links related to the conference as it happens. This year's BIF conference will take place July 10-13 in Omaha, Neb., and will focus on beef cattle efficiency.

The Web site will include a schedule of events, biographies of speakers and tour hosts, symposium papers, award winners, tour and conference highlights and links to the registration information as well as links to other related sites.

Angie Denton, API director of Web marketing, said, "this first-time online BIF coverage, along with the beef efficiency site, will provide producers from across the country information they need to enhance efficiency and profitability."

In addition to providing coverage of the BIF conference, there will also be a site dedicated to beef cow efficiency. The API editorial and Web marketing teams will compile information and articles to post to the site, [www.beefcovefficiency.com](http://www.beefcovefficiency.com). The site will also include links that can potentially increase efficiency and profitability for the producer.

Both sites are scheduled to go live June 1.

# WHAT A "COOL" DEAL



# SPECIALLY PRICED

## AMERICAN **Coolair**® NCF FANS

NCF52W/W 52" Fan in Waferwood Box

1343556 1 HP 1 PH Motor  
CFM for 52" fan is 24,884 @ 375 rpm. 1 HP Motor @ zero static pressure

NCF36W/W 36" Fan in Waferwood Box

1343656 1/2 HP 1 PH Motor  
CFM for 36" Fan is 11,683 @ 484 rpm, 1/2 HP Motor @ zero static pressure

- ABT3 Belt Tightener Kit
- LRW51 Aluminum Shutter F/52" Fan
- LRW39 Aluminum Shutter F/36" Fan

**HERSHEY**  
EQUIPMENT CO., INC.

Your Partner in Agri-Business

255 Plane Tree Drive, Lancaster, Pa 17602  
Toll Free 800-HEC-0988 Fax (717) 291-1534  
Email address-partsservice@Hequip.com  
Website: [www.hequip.com](http://www.hequip.com)

We are open Mon. - Fri. 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Our Service Department is Available 24 Hours a Day

## SPECIAL SALE

GOOD-USED

70 case per hour

Diamond Farm Packer

"READY TO GO" - \$2000.00