

Life Size ✓

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Farm Equipment Takes Center Stage At Penn State's Ag Progress Days



Although the number and diversity of Ag Progress Days exhibitors has grown each year, organizers have not lost sight of the show's roots, said event manager Bob Oberheim. "This show has a long tradition of being a true agricultural exposition," Oberheim said. "Our show is unique in that the overwhelming majority of our exhibitors are directly ag-related." Oberheim expects more than 350 commercial exhibitors in 2002. Thousands of visitors flock to Rockspring each year. This view is from an Ag Progress Days in the past, looking down Main Street. More information about the show is included in two special sections included this issue. *Photo by Andy Andrews, editor*

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.) — The 2002 edition of Penn State's Ag Progress Days, set for Aug. 20-22 at the Larson Research Center, continues the tradition of bringing farmers and other agricultural producers together with the latest in equipment and technology.

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"This show has a long tradition of being a true agricultural exposition," Oberheim said. "Our show is unique in that the overwhelming majority of our exhibitors are directly ag-related. Other ag shows on the East Coast may

have higher numbers than we do, but they also have exhibitors of the flea-market line, or arts and crafts."

Oberheim expects more than 350 commercial exhibitors in 2002, featuring the latest technology, goods, and services. Vendors will showcase everything from buildings, equipment, seed and fertilizer to insurance, fences, and crop consulting services.

This year also will feature more field machinery demonstrations than last year, Oberheim said — as many as time permits.

"We feel this is an important part of the show — providing something new and educational

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Penn State Ag Progress Days Preview 2002

LOU ANN GOOD Food And Family Features Editor

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Glenn Shirk is often accused of being a workaholic. "But I have a hard time looking at this as work. It's satisfying working in a field you enjoy," Shirk said of the long hours he devotes as Lancaster County Extension dairy agent. For 41 years, Shirk has labored on behalf of dairy farmers, helping them become better managers, more successful, and adapt to

technological changes in a responsible matter.

On Sept. 30, Shirk will retire from extension.

It's not a change without quite a bit of trepidation.

"This is all I know," Shirk said of his career that started with extension even while he was still in college.

Shirk grew up on a small dairy farm in Quarryville. He participated in a variety of 4-H clubs for 10 years, and at Solanco High School took the vocational agri-

culture course.

"My 4-H leaders, extension agents, and teachers had a considerable influence on me," Shirk said.

He liked dairy farming. But the family farm was not large enough for him to stay there. Because learning came easy to him, Shirk decided to go to college, although he had no specific career goal in mind.

Becoming a veterinarian appealed to him, but the formidable cost of education and the years of

required study discouraged him from pursuing that course.

During the summer of 1958, Shirk worked as a 4-H summer assistant in Huntingdon County, and the following summer in Mifflin County.

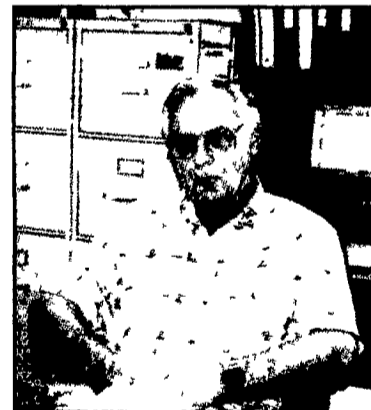
"The summer extension jobs showed me opportunities. It was the next best thing to managing a dairy farm. I knew I was more farmer- than research-oriented," Shirk said.

After achieving a degree in dairy science at Penn State, Shirk decided to broaden his education by continuing for a master's in the same field of study.

After attaining a master's degree, Shirk became assistant county agent for 4-H and dairy in Somerset County.

After two years there, Shirk said, "Uncle Sam decided he needed me." Shirk served a two-year stint with the U.S. Army, stationed in Germany.

When Shirk returned to the states, he accepted an interim position as assistant county agent in Snyder County. When that ended, he was appointed county agent for Chester County, where



Glenn Shirk will retire Sept. 30 after 41 years as a dairy agent. *Photo by Lou Ann Good, food and family features editor*

he remained for 15 years, from 1964-1979.

When the position opened up with the Lancaster Extension in 1979, Shirk applied. He said, "The opportunity to specialize in dairy appealed to me."

The county had more than

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Nathan Dietrich won grand champion and Emilie Miller took home reserve champion at Kutztown Fair's market beef show. Lee Wagner, Easton, judged the show. See story page A45. *Photo by Michelle Kunjappu*

Drought Conditions

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) - Citing worsening drought conditions, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) urged the basin's water users to continue conserving water to reduce the demand on the shrinking supplies.

SRBC endorses and has been actively promoting the drought emergency declarations in effect

in the lower Susquehanna region as issued by Pennsylvania Gov. Mark Schweiker earlier this year on Feb. 12 and by Maryland Gov. Parris Glendening April 5. The Pennsylvania counties located entirely or partially in the Susquehanna basin that are under the commonwealth's drought

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