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Miraculous Mine Rescue Changes Everyday Life For Somerset Dairy Farmers



Bill and Lori Arnold of Lincoln Township in Somerset County hold their children Janna, 5, and Morgan, 3, outside on the lawn of their historic property, Dormel Farms. The farm was the site for the miraculous mine rescue in late July.

Photo by Sandra Lepley, Somerset Co. correspondent

Farm Expo Prepares For Second Successful Year

DEANNA CUNFER
Carbon Co. Correspondent

GILBERT (Monroe Co.) — The West End Fairgrounds, Gilbert, will be the site of the second annual Northeast Regional Small Farm and Rural Living Expo and Trade Show Sept. 21-22.

Located near the foothills of the Pocono mountains, the fairgrounds are a perfect setting for the various displays and demonstrations scheduled throughout the two-day event.

This year, Cornell Cooperative Extension has joined Penn State and Rutgers Cooperative Extensions along with several ag businesses, agencies, and producer and commodity groups to organize an even larger event than last

year. The event last year was a real crowd pleaser as visitors were treated to many interesting demonstrations on equipment use, rotational pasture maintenance, Christmas tree production, and the use and care of various livestock species just to mention a few of the many displays and demonstrations positioned throughout the fairgrounds.

The expo is designed to provide a useful educational experience and networking opportunity for small farm owners and individuals interested in living in the country. Many newcomers to the rural way of life do not know the contacts or where to go for supplies and help in their new ven-

tures. It is the hope of the organizers of this event that visitors will go away with the information and confidence they need to pursue their dreams.

Equipment demonstrations will include trailer design and safety, operation of small farm equipment, antique tractors, and portable sawmills.

The Parade of Horse Breeds, Alpaca Obstacle Course, and Oxen Driving exhibitors from last year will be returning and joined this year by a 4-H rabbit show, and display of rare breeds of sheep. The popular Border Collie sheep herding and free-range poultry demonstrations, both

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For Week, Market Hog Prices Drop Below \$20

MILLIE BUNTING
Market Staff

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — On the heels of the \$8-10 lower midwestern hog prices reported last week, at New Holland's hog auction Monday the reduced holiday supply of 49-54 percent lean, 220-280 pound barrows and gilts sold \$18-20 per hundredweight — fully \$7 lower than the previous Monday's prices.

Hog prices are at the lowest levels since November 1998 when many pork producers were forced out of business as the prices went as low as \$10 a hundredweight. The weekly hog average price at the Lancaster County auctions dropped to \$15.35 for the week ended Dec. 18, 1998.

What pork producers were or are trying to avoid is a market disaster in the fourth quarter of 2002 similar to the one in 1998 when hog marketings overwhelmed the capacity of the slaughter plants.

Producers have evidently

taken the advice of the analysts to market hogs earlier at lighter weights to avoid the predicted large, burdensome numbers in November and December.

As much as we try to find otherwise, in the midst of a lot of analyzing, it's still supply and demand that rules the marketplace. There are huge supplies of all meats filling the packers coolers and the frozen storage. The decline in exports has helped to overpower the domestic demand. The "other white meat" has had to contend with large poultry stocks that should have been exported to Russia, plus all that other red meat (beef).

At the Midwest terminal markets, last Thursday (Aug. 29), prices on 47-51 percent lean, 220-270 pound hogs ranged from \$17-19 — that was \$9.50-10 lower than the previous Friday. One market report noted that it was the largest one-week decline ever on a terminal market.

In the Eastern Cornbelt trade last Friday, prices on carcass basis lean hogs ranged

\$24.25-32.13, weighted average price \$28.92, which is \$8.69 lower than a week ago. Midweek reports indicate \$26.23. It was generally thought that the hog market was ready to level off after the Labor Day holiday. It didn't happen.

Instead, what did happen was the release of both the USDA's Aug. 1 Monthly Pig Report and the USDA's weekly slaughter report Friday last week. First, the July 2002 U.S. Pig Crop was reported at 8.68 million head, 2 percent more than the previous year. Sows farrowing during this period totaled 980,000 head, also 2 percent above last year. Second, the livestock slaughter report had the hog slaughter numbers estimated at more than two million hogs for the week.

A new round of pressure hit the hog market Monday and live hogs and future prices declined sharply. It sounded like a good idea to increase marketings in

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SANDRA LEPLEY
Somerset Co. Correspondent

SOMERSET (Somerset Co.) — Life has never been the same since Bill Arnold and his family, dairy farmers of Lincoln Township in Somerset County, awoke to their dog barking shortly before 2 a.m. Thursday, July 25.

The dog barking ironically symbolizes a moment in time when life was systematically commonplace on their 135-head milking operation at Dormel Farms.

That early morning, Bill told his wife Lori he was going out to see what all the commotion was

about over by the mines. He knew something was up and by view of his bedroom window, it looked serious.

"I saw a vehicle parked up there and there were people with flashlights, which is call to alarm on a farm, so I got dressed and went out,"

explained Arnold, whose wife, Lori, stayed at home with their two small children Janna, 5, and Morgan, 3.

"I knew one of the engineers, and he told me there was a mine accident with nine guys trapped in a mine underneath my farm," said Arnold. "I said 'what can I do to help?' and the rescue began. I never slept until they got out."

Although the dairy farmer and part-time auctioneer knew that mining accidents have happened in Somerset County before and several mine shafts were underneath his farm, he never imagined he would be part of an unbe-

lievable story of drama and rescue that would gather the attention of the whole nation and world.

In the early morning hours of July 25, 18 miners were finishing up their 3 p.m.-11 p.m. shift the day before when danger struck suddenly. An old mine barrier broke, trapping nine of the men underground and allowing the other nine to barely escape with their lives.

After 77 hours of edge-of-seat tension with media crews from around the world focused on this desperate scenario at Quecreek Mine, the miners were miracu-

lously pulled to safety from above, all unharmed.

"There were hundreds of people giving 100 percent and more to make this a glorious outcome and what a glorious outcome it was," said Arnold, who worked furiously alongside fire department personnel, engineers, and other mine officials in order to

free the trapped miners.

Arnold explained that the will of the rescue personnel to free the miners safely was as strong as the will of the miners to survive and come to the surface.

"Everyone who came here came here with one thing on their minds — to get those guys out safely. Everyone was thrown headlong into this, but never questioned it. They never thought 'can we do this?' We just thought 'we will do this, they can't die, we won't let them die,'" said Arnold.

Lori Arnold, who is originally from neighboring Cambria Coun-

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— Bill Arnold



Jen Linton with "Thyme," her 2-year-old Toggenburg doe, at the recent Maryland State Fair. Read more about the Maryland Dairy Goat Association Youth Representative on page B6.

Photo by Andy Andrews, editor