

Agriculture Insights

Brent Landis
Agriculture Services Coordinator




Phone (717) 397-3531 ext 62
E-mail blandis@lcci.com

A CALL TO VOLUNTEERISM
As the Sept. 11 anniversary of the tragic events in our country approaches, it's time to reflect over the past year. While it's easy to point out all that is wrong with our society, this is a time to each ask ourselves what we can do to improve our society.

One of the many things that helps to make America great is our strong sense of volunteerism. President Bush encouraged Americans to volunteer during his State of the Union address last January to give at least two years, or 4,000 hours over their lives, to serving others.

There is a vast amount of volunteer opportunities available. President Bush created the USA Freedom Corps which offers a Website, www.usafreedomcorp.gov, which can help you determine volunteer needs in your own community based on specific areas of service. Why not volunteer in an area that you may have a special interest or concern? If

your area of interest happens to be the agricultural arena, I offer some options to consider.

There are a number of organizations to volunteer with in the field of agriculture. The ones mentioned in this article are just a few; there are still many others to consider. Step one in volunteering is determining your area of interest in agriculture. This might include youth development, farmland preservation, local government, international service, or business and industry service.

If you have an interest in volunteering with our youth, a great place to start is with the 4-H program. Sponsored by Penn State Cooperative Extension for youth ages 8 to 18, 4-H relies on leaders to help youth learn to appreciate the value and dignity of work, acquire knowledge and skills, cooperate with others, and many other valuable traits. Call your county's Penn State extension office to find out how you can become a 4-H leader. In Lancaster

County, you can reach the 4-H office by calling (717) 394-6851.

If helping to preserve farmland is your focus, consider volunteering with a farmland preservation organization. In Lancaster County, the Lancaster Farmland Trust works on preserving Lancaster's farmland. The organization relies on volunteers to help accomplish their mission in different ways, such as serving on committees, assisting at events, or helping to send out letters to its members. To learn more about the Lancaster Farmland Trust, visit their Website at www.savelancasterfarms.org or call (717) 293-0707.

If you would like to help make a difference in your local township, consider attending your monthly municipal board of supervisors meetings. To offer to serve on a board or committee, it is advised to call your township manager or secretary. If you would consider running for office in your township, you should contact your municipal political committee. Getting involved in

your local township is a critical area, especially for agriculture, as municipalities control a lot of the future planning and zoning for your community.

If you would like to share your knowledge or skills with struggling farmers in developing countries, there are several places to look. There are many faith-based mission groups that work overseas which are searching for people that could help with agricultural development. Penn State also offers information on several international programs offering volunteer opportunities on its Website, www.cas.psu.edu/docs/international.

If you have interest in getting involved in your local business community as a volunteer, a great place to start is with your county's chamber of commerce. Chambers offer many opportunities to serve on councils or committees focusing on key business issues. In Lancaster County, The Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry has an active Agriculture Committee. This tal-

ented group of leaders in agriculture is very involved on a variety of topics and events in the agriculture industry. For more information on The Lancaster Chamber, visit its Website, www.lancasterchamber.com or call (717) 397-3531.

Time is a limited resource, but volunteering enhances your life and the lives of others. Carefully determine what your key areas of interest are and select the volunteer opportunity that best meets those needs. Help make a difference for tomorrow — volunteer today.

Register today for The Lancaster Chamber's 26th Annual Agriculture Industry Banquet on Nov. 25. This event is Pennsylvania's largest Chamber banquet honoring the agriculture industry. For sponsorship and registration information, visit www.lancasterchamber.com. For more information on volunteerism or the Agriculture Industry Banquet, contact Brent Landis at (717) 397-3531 or e-mail blandis@lcci.com.

— Apples Make the Grade —

EAST LANSING, Mich. — A great-looking apple is no guarantee of great taste. Internal defects are difficult not impossible to detect. USDA inspectors sample apples to gauge taste and other quality factors.

But if they so much as pick up an apple, it has to be discarded. And there are grading tests done on sample apples when they are first bought from growers, before the fruit ever reaches the packing line. But, again, all those tests require destroying (or eating) the apple which means the ones tested are guaranteed to be the ones we never get to eat.

So Renfu Lu, an ARS agricultural engineer working in Michigan, the third-largest U.S. apple-producing state, is using remote sensing techniques borrowed from NASA and the military to do an automatic, hands-off sampling of every single apple before it gets to your hands or mouth.

Apple packinghouses currently rely on digital camera

imagery to sort apples by surface appearance only, flagging those that are visibly defective or the wrong size or color.

"That system is literally skin-deep," Lu says. "It can't detect bruises beneath the skin."

Lu proposes looking deeper with a system that uses the latest imaging spectroscopy techniques. These combine the digital camera's conventional two-dimensional imaging with spectroscopy to analyze various wavelengths of reflected light. This method can discern subtleties in an object's features whether it's terrain, camouflaged Army tanks, or apples.

Lu's system would bounce light off apples one at a time as they pass by on processing lines. The returning light would be detected by an imaging spectrometer to create a spectral image of the apple on a computer screen. Specially designed software would allow the computer to sort the apples by internal quality attributes required for various grades.

Lu's tests have shown that his system can detect bruises deep within the apple's flesh. But first he is focusing on the top two things that make a great-tasting apple — sugar content and firmness. Lu developed mathematical equations that relate sugar content to the amount of light absorbed by an apple and firmness to the amount of light bounced off the apple. He hopes to expand the system to detect acid content.

Industry studies have shown there to be different demands for various types of apples, Lu says. "Oldsters tend to prefer softer, sweeter apples, while youngsters like them hard and sour," he says. "With a taste- and firmness-sorting system, each apple gets to the right person."

Lu is confident that his work with apples and cherries will be easy to adapt to oranges, peaches, or pears.

In home mortgages, we speak the local language.



You've found the house that's perfect for you Now it's time to talk to your hometown bank about a home mortgage.

At Northwest Savings Bank, you'll be meeting with local people you know and trust. Your application will be reviewed promptly and

approved locally, not by strangers in a distant metropolis as with some large regional banks.

When you need to speak the local language in home mortgages, talk to your Northwest banker. We're good listeners who will treat you right.



744 South Broad Street, Lititz, 625-3001 • 24 W Orange Street, Lancaster, 392-6264
922 Columbia Avenue, Lancaster, 393-0900 • 1195 Manheim Pike, Lancaster, 393-0700
24 E Main Street, Mount Joy, 653-8121 • 350 Locust Street, Columbia, 684-2868
201 West Main Street, New Holland, 355-5350 • 2296 South Market Street, Elizabethtown, 367-8070
Dutch Way Shopping Mall, Rte 501 N, Schaefferstown, 949-2829



MEMBER FDIC
www.northwestsavingsbank.com





Pro Grain Bagger



6'-10' Ag-Baggers

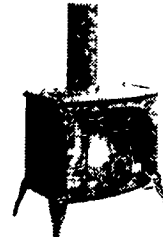
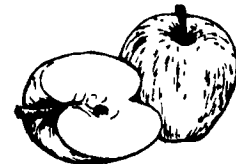


10' & 12' Ag-Baggers for Trucks
4-7 tons per minute
Up to 600 tons per bag (12 x 300)

Custom Bagging & Tubing
Large Rental Fleet
Call Toll Free
877-412-4224
New & Rental Machine Sales



Agri-Service LLC
Rental & Custom Services
14137 Pennsylvania Ave. ~ Hagerstown, MD 21742
(301) 665-9333 or TOLL FREE (877) 412-4224



**Over 80
Stoves &
Fireplaces
On Display**

1060 Division Highway 322 East,
Ephrata, PA 17522
1 Block East of Rt. 222
(717) 733-4973
800-642-0310
www.bowmansstove.com
Mon., Tues., Wed. 10 to 6; Thurs.,
Fri 10 to 8; Sat. 10 to 4