

# Farmers To Meet Nov. 12



**Now Is  
The Time**  
By Leon Ressler  
Lancaster County  
Extension Director

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Dr. Alan MacNab, vegetable disease specialist at Penn State, noted that black rot could infect fruit but take up to four weeks to show any symptoms. So the fruit that you sell may look fine, but when your buyer puts it on his market stand it may "suddenly" start to show disease symptoms.

There are two options you have in protecting your fruit from disease once it is mature. First, maintain a fungicide program until harvest. You are no

longer protecting the leaves from diseases but the fruit still needs protection. Second, harvest the fruit and store it in a cool, dry location until you sell it. This might mean handling the fruit an extra time, but if field conditions favor disease development, it could be worth the extra labor cost.

Another proven method to help reduce diseases in pumpkin fruit is to use a no-till production system. Having a plant residue over the soil will protect the fruit from rain-splashed fungal spores as well as reducing infection by fusarium since the fruit is not in contact with the soil. This can increase yields by lowering the number of fruit lost to rot diseases. In addition, your fruit will be cleaner at harvest and weed control can be easier.

Make some notes now on observations of this season's pumpkin crop so that you can make any necessary changes next season to potentially improve yields and fruit quality. Making a few changes in your production practices has the potential to result in higher income from your pumpkin crop. In addition, a high quality pumpkin will result in satisfied buyers and more return business in the future.

**To Participate In  
The Beef Quality  
Assurance Program  
Fall Training**

The Pennsylvania Beef Quality Assurance Program has sched-

uled both classroom and chute-side training sessions for the fall season. These sessions will train, certify, and recognize beef producers who adopt and maintain BQA guidelines and best management practices.

Locally, classroom training will be held beginning at 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 14 at the Blue Ball Elementary School. A chute-side training will be conducted at the Leesport Livestock Auction on Thursday, Nov. 21, beginning at 6 p.m. These back-to-back trainings will enable producers to gain certification status in an efficient manner.

Successful participants receive a certificate of completion, an attractive "Certified Producer" farm sign, and have access to program ear tags or back tags. For more information or alternative dates, contact BQA coordinator Scott Wright at (717) 939-7000. For directions to the Blue Ball Elementary School, call Jeff Stoltzfus, (717) 354-1522.

**Quote Of The Week:**  
"I have come to the conclusion that politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians."

— Charles De Gaulle

MESHOPPEN (Wyoming Co.) — Several farm organizations, including The Progressive Agriculture Organization (ProAg), Pennsylvania Farmers Union (PFU), the Northern Tier Milk Coop, and the Family Farm Defenders, will sponsor a general meeting for all farmers and business people on Tuesday, Nov. 12. The meeting will be at the Bradley Hall Columbia Crossroads beginning at 1 p.m.

Speaking for the groups, Arden Tewksbury, manager of ProAg, stated that many dairy farmers are extremely discouraged regarding the continued low agriculture commodity prices. PFU and ProAg believe the accelerated amounts of agriculture imports coming into the U.S. play a major roll in the low commodity prices.

Tewksbury said the main topics to be discussed at the meeting will be the continued low milk prices paid to dairy farmers, the imports of agriculture products including milk protein concentrate, and the attempts being

made to qualify Tioga County animal growers to be eligible for the Livestock Compensation Program.

Larry Breech, president of the Pennsylvania Farmers Union, strongly agrees with ProAg that Tioga County should be declared a primary county for disaster relief. Tewksbury also said 16 U.S. senators, including Sen. Specter, Sen. Schumer, and Sen. Clinton, have submitted a letter to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman urging the secretary to reopen the drought declaration for several counties.

According to Tewksbury, dairy farmers who do not have a soil conservation plan for their farms can still apply for the plan, have the plan developed and approved, and the dairy farmers could receive their dairy market loss funds.

Breech said it's time for our organizations to set aside any differences we have and focus on the major items we agree on to benefit all farmers.



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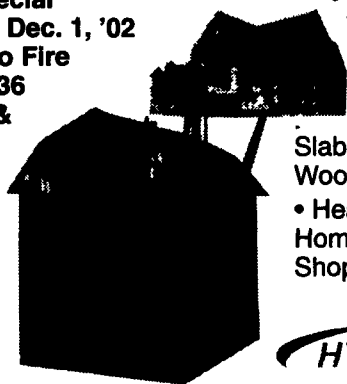
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