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Five Sections

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A Year To Remember Agriculture Moves Ahead In 2002

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EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — As the numbers roll from 2002 to 2003 and we reflect on the past year — from the scorching, record-breaking drought of the summer to our latest Christmastime snowfall — *Lancaster Farming* would like to take a little time to reflect on the colorful, unforgettable year.

January

We again kicked off the year with the Farm Show.

According to Sam Hayes, agriculture secretary, the "largest indoor agricultural event in America" offered a record \$315,000 in premiums to exhibitors. The event featured more than 8,000 entries, including 5,000 head of livestock, and more than 325 commercial exhibitors.

Poultry exhibits were canceled

because several cases of avian influenza were discovered in Pennsylvania in December.

By the end of January, Gov. Mark Schweiker announced the 2003 Farm Show schedule would be expanded from six to eight days.

February

The Virginia Farm Show, relocated from Richmond to Fisher-

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A complete listing of Agricultural Decision Makers in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

Look what we've included in the 2003 *Lancaster Farming Ag Directory* this issue! We have hundreds of contact numbers for the decision-makers in regional agriculture. Something new this year for our third annual directory: several "essential contacts" pages, a quick reference for those new to farming or interested in starting a farm.

Forrest Stricker manages about 270 tillable acres, including this three-acre paddock, at his dairy farm near Wernersville in Berks County. The grass-based farm includes 105 head, made up of Holstein, Jersey, and Holstein-Jersey crossbreeds. Photo was taken in April this year. Photo by Andy Andrews, editor



Happy voyages through the New Year! *Lancaster Farming* captured this scene Christmas Day at the Farmersville Road bridge in Brownstown. For the first time in more than three decades, up to a foot of snow fell in some regions of southeast Pennsylvania on Christmas. (Unofficially, Brownstown had about seven inches of snow). The staff of *Lancaster Farming* wishes all its readers a safe, happy, and profitable New Year.

Photo by Andy Andrews, editor

National Organic Standards: What Do They Mean In Pa.?

PCO Annual Meeting Set

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff

CENTRE HALL (Centre Co.) — New USDA organic standards should help boost sales for organic growers and marketers, according to members of Pennsylvania Certified Organic, the state's main certifying agency.

On the other hand, some smaller growers worry that the rules may cater to large-scale operations and compromise organic production methods.

The National Organic Program's new rules were released this October, specifying uniform standards across the country. PCO was recently accredited as a

certifying agency under the USDA program. That means PCO-certified products are in line with national standards and eligible for a USDA Organic logo.

The new rules brought some minor changes to what Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) had required of its organic growers and handlers in Pennsylvania prior to the new rules, according to Penny Sandoval, certification director at PCO.

"Some things are a little different as far as regulations go," she said. PCO is "helping farmers be aware of the changes."

One of the more significant changes under the new rules is that certified organic crops and produce must now be started from organic seeds — except in cases where organic seeds are not commercially available.

Especially relevant to poultry, beef, and lamb producers is that these products can now be certified organic.

"For years, red meat and poultry hasn't been able to be called organic," said Robert Eberly of Eberly Poultry Farms, Stevens.

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Having a New Year's party? Be sure to check out Shirley Orfanella's tips on page B2. She's an expert in cooking and decor, and throws annual parties for 150 and more guests. Photo by Lou Ann Good, food and family features editor

Pages D25-D29 include complete Farm Show 2003 maps, exhibitor lists, schedules, and lots of information so you can plan ahead.