

Agro 2003, Opening Ceremonies Highlight New, Improved Farm Show

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security). Schweiker told Farm Show visitors that "you'll see that tomorrow, in glorious passion like few states can muster."

Schweiker said the Farm Show is "absolutely special and large and I'm proud to offer that reflection." He witnessed Pennsylvania's number one industry "for the last eight years, and it is unforgettable."

And on Saturday, Schweiker recounted what he said the previous evening. He said he watched Agro 2003 grow from a few hundred attendees to more than 1,200 guests the Friday evening.

State Ag Secretary Sam Hayes recounted Schweiker's administration, which is succeeded by the new administration under Gov.-Elect Ed Rendell, as a successful one. Schweiker served in an "honorable, statesmanlike way through some very, very difficult months," noted Hayes. And the state ag secretary told the thousands assembled the next day in the Large Arena that the opening ceremonies and speech was Schweiker's last public appearance as Pennsylvania governor.

Hayes received two standing ovations and at least "three huzzahs," salutes of honor, from the crowd, assisted by character-portrayed guest speaker Ben Franklin, at Agro 2003.

During ceremonies late last week, Hayes announced the winners of this year's Agribusiness Achievement awards. The following Pennsylvania companies were selected for this prestigious award: First Union National Bank, \$50 million and more sales category; Turner Dairy Farms, Inc., \$16 million to \$50 million sales category; and Oak Hill Veneer, Inc., less than \$16 million sales category.

"Agribusiness Achievement Awards are presented to Pennsylvania agriculture, food, and wood-products companies that have made a special contribution toward the development and expansion of Pennsylvania agriculture, as well as a positive commitment to their local community," Hayes said. "These awards recognize companies that contribute to Pennsylvania's No. 1 industry."

All companies competing for this award must meet Department of Agriculture standards and qualifications.

First Union National Bank is a full-service financial services company. There are 350 branch locations in Pennsylvania. The First Union Agri-Finance segment is composed of a 17-member staff located in three offices in southeastern Pennsylvania, but is supported by many other bank associates in various disciplines. Loan financing and other banking services have been provided to farmers and agribusinesses since 1977, when a one-person Agri-Finance Department was founded in Lancaster County with predecessor National Central Bank.

Many products and programs have been developed to specifically target the agricultural community such as term loans, lines of credit, construction loans, equipment leasing, and cash management services. Agricultural lending services are also associated with the USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA) program to further fit farmer and agribusiness needs. First Union is now the leading commercial bank lending to agriculture in Pennsylvania, ranking first in the northeast and sixth in the nation.

Medium category winner, Turner Dairy Farms, Inc., operates their Penn Hills-based com-



Gov. Mark Schweiker spoke at opening ceremonies for this year's Farm Show in the Large Arena.



Bradley Gladfelter, right, son of Brian and Shelly Gladfelter, Felton, shares a tractor seat with Gov. Mark Schweiker last Saturday during Governor's Day.

pany under the mission statement: "Perfect Products, Perfect Service, and Treating People Right." The Turner family has owned and operated their farm since 1930 and have built long-term business partnerships in a wide range of markets: schools, hospitals, nursing homes, supermarkets, convenience stores, and colleges. Excellent customer service and continuous leadership in the agricultural community made Turner Dairy Farms, Inc. a prime candidate for the Agribusiness Award.

Small category winner Oak Hill Veneer, Inc., is a leader in the veneer and plywood industry and has been recognized by the Hardwood, Plywood and Veneer Association (HPVA) for promoting the long-term growth of the industry. Located in Troy, Oak Hill Veneer, Inc., supplies kitchen cabinet, flooring, door and furniture companies throughout the nation with various types of veneer. President Lee Cummings has worked closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and is an active member of the Pennsylvania Hardwoods Development Council. He and his company have exhibited their products at the Agro Trade Show and also participate in international trade missions.

During the awards banquet, Hayes awarded the 2003 Farm-City honors to the Blair County Chamber of Commerce, Franklin County Farm-City Council, and Fulton County Farm-City Council.

"Farm-City Programs provide a wonderful opportunity of learning for those in the towns and in the townships," said Hayes. "I want to commend Blair, Franklin, and Fulton counties for the hard work and creative educational programs they sponsor in their counties. All Farm-City councils throughout the state are to be commended for their dedication in bridging the gap between rural and urban neighbors. Pennsylvania's Farm-City programs help create a better quality of life for all citizens in the towns and townships."

The Blair County Chamber of Commerce continues to host several highly visible Farm-City



Crowds packed the Large Arena during a record-breaking opening day for attendance during Grand Opening at this year's Farm Show.

events, generating media coverage by local newspapers and TV stations. Continuing an 18-year tradition, "Business After Hours 'Down on the Farm'" brought the business and agriculture community together for a night of socializing at a local farm and to enjoy an old-fashioned pig roast.

To reach out to the younger generations, the Blair County Chamber of Commerce joined forces with the Williamsburg FFA Chapter to organize an "Ag In the Classroom" program, which brought the farm to the school where children were able to experience agriculture up close. Other successful events included a "Visit to Industry" tour for the local farm community, job exchange, and the annual Farm-City Dinner.

The Fulton County Farm-City Council has completed yet another successful year, hosting at least one event a month in 2002. Several new activities were added to Fulton County's Farm-City Program such as a water resources forum, which address water issues such as the 2002 drought situation; a forestry seminar; Project Grass Field Day, which talked about farm conservation practices; and a farm safety expo. Fulton County has also continued to raise awareness of agriculture in the classroom with a mini-

awareness class for sixth grade students on environmental issues, a youth ag expo, Farm-City tours, and a Farm-City poster contest. Through their efforts, thousands of people have been contacted.

To round out this year's Farm-City Award Winners is the Farm-City council from Franklin County. The Franklin County Farm-City Council has successfully reached out to both its rural and town communities by hosting 15 events in 2002. Several events received media coverage from the local radio and television stations. A business expo was hosted at Wilson College to give insight to Franklin County's businesses and agribusinesses.

The Franklin Fall Farm Fun Fest (a farm tour), Agricultural Weekend at the Chambersburg Mall, an apple festival, and the Farm-City Week Speaker's Bureau provided excellent opportunities for town neighbors to enjoy the heritage of their rural counterparts.

The Farm-City Award recipients were selected by the Pennsylvania Farm-City Council, which consisted of a panel of judges from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the USDA.

Agro 2003 — Pennsylvania's international agriculture showcase and trade show — was con-

ducted Thursday, Jan. 9 to Monday, Jan. 13.

"Pennsylvania agriculture offers a diverse array of products that are ready for export to the marketplaces around the globe," Hayes said. "We are truly producing 'Products for the Planet,' and Agro 2003 helps us showcase Pennsylvania's agriculture to the world."

More than 200 guests from 76 countries were present. More than 130 agribusiness companies participated in the Agro Trade Show and other business meetings.

"Export-ready" companies from all sectors of Pennsylvania agriculture — including foods, hardwoods, machinery, genetics, service, and agritechnology — were represented at the trade show.

"For the remainder of Agro 2003, international guests were paired with representatives of Pennsylvania agriculture for more than a thousand customized business meetings," Hayes said. "It's important to build relationships of mutual benefit to Pennsylvania agriculture and our friends from around the globe."

Pennsylvania agriculture is Pennsylvania's leading industry, generating \$45 billion cash receipts in 2001. Pennsylvania agriculture exports totaled more than \$1 billion in 2001.



Ag Secretary Sam Hayes honored international award recipients before the Agro 2003 awards banquet late last week.