

Life SU

Grower & Marketer

Lancaster Farming • Section E • Saturday, February 1, 2003

Fish Farmer Explores Ways To Market

MICHELLE KUNJAPPU
Lancaster Farming Staff

BOYERTOWN (Berks Co.) — “Farmers, by definition, are entrepreneurs — they have to think about the market. I have a great location here, I have the capacity to hold the fish, I’m near millions of people and hundreds of restaurants.

“I had to think about what are my strengths, and what I could do better or best compared to my competitors,” said Mark Scott, Berks County Commissioner and part-time fish farmer of Mark C. Scott Aquaculture Corporation.

“I started with the customer and worked my way back to the farm. What the farm does

is what the customer wants, not what I want to do.”

Scott explained the progress of the farm, which has been in his family since 1949.

Scott’s grandfather, Erwin Michelfelder, as a boy in southern Germany, used to catch and keep fish in water of the family’s mill, then sell the fish to passersby.

When Michelfelder came to the U.S., “he always dreamed of raising trout,” said Scott, so after working in the deli meat business Michelfelder found the farm he was looking for, complete with its own spring. In 1949 Michelfelder purchased the farm and opened for business

in 1951.

He sold the fish to sportsman’s clubs, private landowners, and restaurants, including the Blue Bell Inn, which Scott has continued to supply with fish since Michelfelder began selling to the inn in 1959.

After building the raceways and hatching areas for the fish, Michelfelder continued in the business, learning as he went, until he had a stroke in 1981.

At the time Scott was a lawyer in Reading but decided to take a break from practicing law to move to Boyertown and begin work on the

(Turn to Page E12)



Mark Scott, Berks County commissioner and part-time fish hatchery operator, holds up a Rainbow Trout, part of his hatch-to-finish operation in Boyertown. Photo by Michelle Kunjappu

PennAqua 2002 Highlights Growing Industry

MICHELLE KUNJAPPU
Lancaster Farming Staff

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — The PennAqua 2002 conference, conducted every two years, featured a growing industry with plenty of possibilities, according to several conference speakers.

The event, conducted Oct. 24-26 at the Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center, drew 140 participants from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, New York, and even North Carolina and Florida.

Topics included hatch house management, the privatization of state trout stocking, designing ornamental systems, startup considerations, managing fish health on the farm, and effluent permitting and management, among others.

Speakers included specialists in a wide variety of industry disciplines.

Leo Dunn, Pennsylvania’s aquaculture coordinator since

1991, opened the conference.

Dunn was followed by Dr. Ted Alter, associate vice president for outreach and cooperative extension, Penn State. Alter highlighted the opportunities and challenges in aquaculture.

“There is significant economic opportunity for aquaculture development in Penn-

sylvania,” said Alter.

Aquaculture’s variety — products can be used as food for human consumption, in the ornamental sector, and as sports and bait fish — “positions it as a viable opportunity that is relatively undeveloped to where it could be, in terms

(Turn to Page E9)

Hort Expert: Get To The ‘Root’ Of A Plant’s Ills

ANDY ANDREWS
Editor

GRANTVILLE (Dauphin Co.) — Most problems with landscape plants originate below ground, according to a Penn State horticulture specialist.

And nursery managers would do well to dispel some of the myths about what happens in the root zone during a drought.

Rick Bates, ornamental horticulture specialist at Penn State, spoke to about 30 nursery, landscape, and related business representatives in late October 2002 at a drought workshop sponsored by the Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association (PLNA) at the Grantville Holiday Inn.

Nursery managers should learn to get to the root of the problem by looking at what makes a healthy root zone. That includes producing “the plant in as stress-free an envi-

ronment as possible,” said Bates.

Many believe, according to Bates, that the root actually is a “mirror image of the tree’s crown,” he said. In reality, more than 95 percent of the roots of a landscape plant such as a tree are in the top three feet of the soil, with most of the fine roots in the top six inches of soil. The roots also extend a great distance farther out — about two to three times the crown spread.

And more than 60 percent of the root systems can be located outside the dripline. Older plants do not have a taproot.

Why do they stretch out so far from the trunk? Mostly, it’s an “oxygen issue,” Bates said. The respiration needed to allow plants to grow occurs in the top layer of the soil.

Trouble is, 95 percent of the (Turn to Page E14)



Al Galetta checks a ripening crop of blueberries last May on the 1,300-acre Atlantic Blueberry Company farm, owned and operated by the Galetta family since 1935. See story page E11. Photo by Dave Lefever

Mid-Atlantic Fruit, Vegetable Convention Feb. 4-6

HERSHEY (Dauphin Co.) — Fruit and vegetable growers from throughout the mid-Atlantic region and beyond will be gathering here at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center Feb. 4-6 for the 2003 Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention.

About 2,000 persons are expected for the annual event that has become recognized as one of the premier fruit and vegetable grower meetings in the Northeast.

The convention has been

jointly sponsored by the State Horticultural Association of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, the Maryland State Horticultural Society, and the New Jersey State Horticultural Society for the past 25 years.

The Great American Hall at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center will host the trade show with more than 130 exhibitors. Specialized horticultural equipment, farm market merchandise, and

packaging will all be on display along with information on the latest seed varieties, fruit varieties, pesticides, and other supplies and services for the commercial grower.

Six or more concurrent educational sessions will be offered on all three days of the convention. The following full-day sessions are planned for the first day: tree fruits, season extension technology, vegetable production school,

(Turn to Page E3)