

Temple Grandin Comes To Pa. To Discuss Animal Handling

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as farmers that we used to be," said Kellett. "The farm population has declined considerably and therefore the media is a powerful lobby. Everyone (the general public) likes farmers and everyone likes food, but you have to be careful about the media and the image you put forth.

"Legislators respond to lobbying groups," said Kellett, who pointed out that show horses have extensive protection because of lobbying groups.

"There is a powerful lobby that comes from pictures and media, and those laws change fairly easily across the U.S. when pictures become available to the public," she said.

Dr. Temple Grandin, assistant professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University, was the session's keynote speaker.

Grandin has authored more than 300 scientific articles on animal handling. She also designs livestock handling facilities that are in use worldwide.

Grandin has been involved in the livestock industry for 30 years — the first 25 she spent de-

signing equipment and teaching producers about animal husbandry.

The last five years, however, she has been hired by McDonalds, Wendy's, and Burger King as they seek to balance producer interests and consumer concerns about animal welfare.

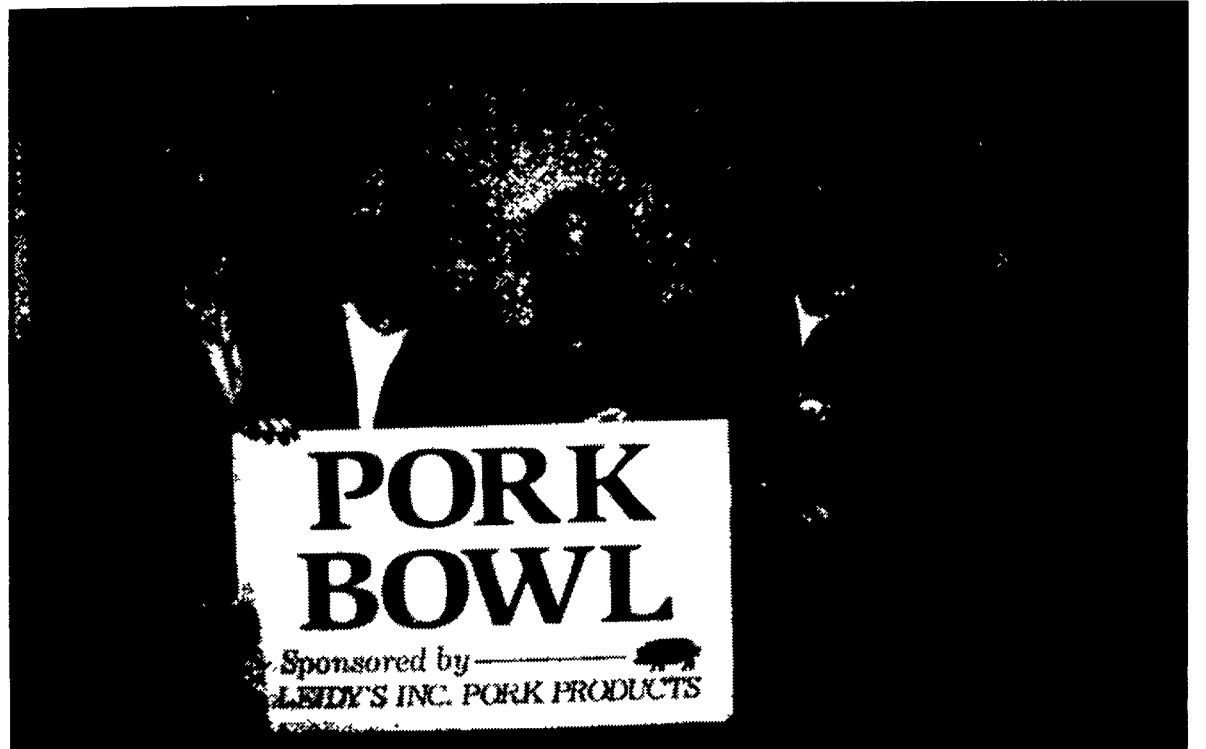
"Economic factors bring about change, and one of the things I've tried to do is direct this change into something practical and scientific," said Grandin.

For the fast-food restaurants, Grandin has taken to the road to train packing house auditors who monitor animal handling practices. She is working on putting together a simple, objective measurement system for auditors to use.

"Continuous measurement makes it possible to measure improvement and maintain a high standard," she said. "You manage the things that you measure, and animal welfare can be measured."

Her scoring system includes stunning efficacy, animal vocalization, slipping and falling, and electric prod use.

"I thought that if I'd get the



Second place winners, "Pigs R Us," from Potter County, are, from left, Josh Risser, Amanda Barker, Mylena Drake, Erin Dickerson, and coach Ken Risser.

hardware (the animal handling facilities that she designed) installed, everything would be fine." However Grandin is now

training people to use the facilities, which she refers to as installing her "software."

Grandin's prior work included employment for the USDA in 1996, when she was hired to do a survey of slaughterhouses. She discovered plants that had problems with equipment and management to plants "that have kept good standards all along."

Animals are not afraid of slaughter but they are afraid of shadows, shiny pieces of metal, or air blowing in their faces, she said. "Get down in the chute and see what the animal is seeing, and get rid of distractions."

She also recommended exchanging electric prods for flags to move animals more quietly. "That last five minutes in the plant, as they go up the chute, we can cause really bad quality problems in pork," said Grandin.

Animal handling facilities should be well-lit, lighting the path in front of the animal but not directly in its eyes, said Grandin.

She also suggested having a ramp to go over top of an existing

ramp for piglets transported in a cattle track, since piglets can injure their dew claws.

In addition, "if you are building a new hog facility, please make 30-36-inch wide alleys, enough that two pigs can walk down side by side," she said.

Walking through the pig pens often will train them to "just quietly get up and flow about you — it makes a world of difference in how they handle and load," she said.

"Producers need to ask themselves what the public would think about their handling practices," said Grandin.

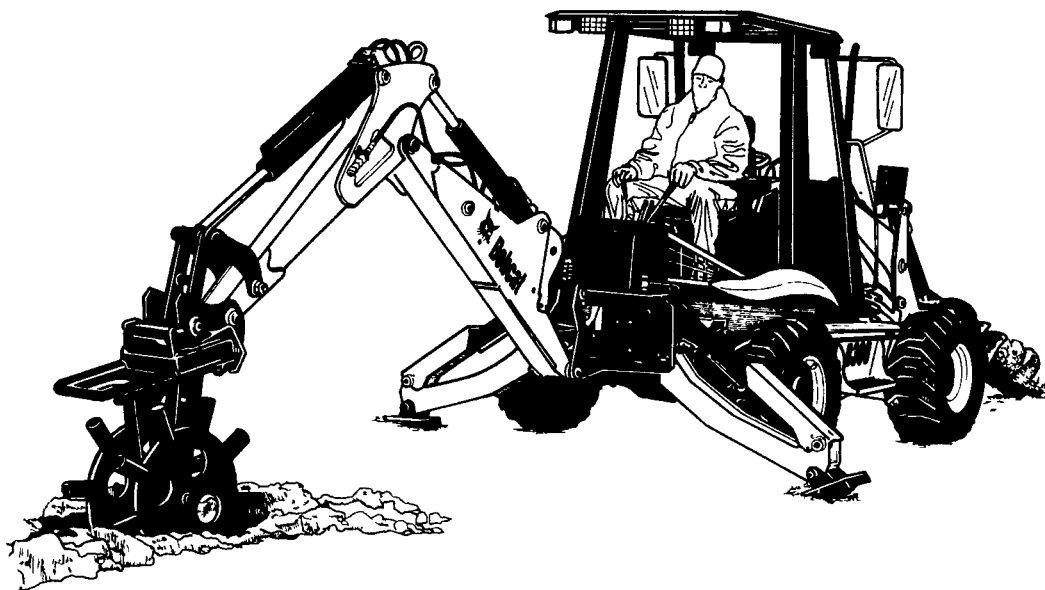
More information about her animal handling practices and facilities is available at www.grandin.com.

Other presenters during the conference included Robert Ruth, Hershey, president of Country View Family farms, a hog operation.

"As we move forward as an industry, we're finding that we can't avoid some of these (animal

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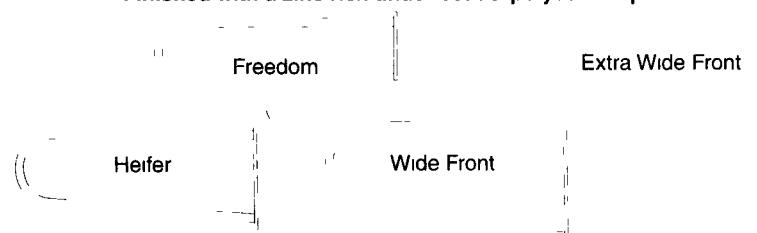


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