

# Lancaster Extension Gathers For Fun, Fellowship



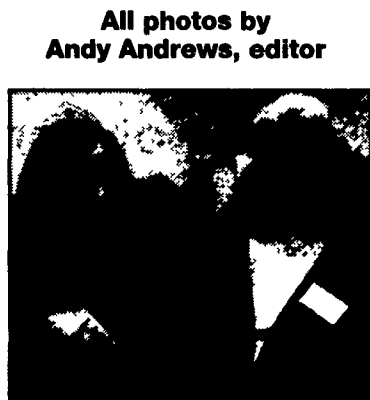
Lancaster County poultry producer representatives crack a few eggs at the omelet table last week. From left, Andy Bradford, Greg Martin, and Brent Landis.



Judi Chien, right, assists at the Penn State Cooperative Extension table last week.



Master Gardener Coordinator Shirley Wagner, left, receives a Dedicated Service Award from Scott Martin, Lancaster County Youth Intervention Center.



Lancaster Dairy Princess Kari Martin, left, assists Dale Smith at the county dairy table during the extension meeting last week.



Mike Kauffman with Joanna Kauffman represent the Lancaster County fruit growers at the extension



Chet Hughes, left, and Leon Ressler were honored for many years of service to county extension.

ANDY ANDREWS  
Editor

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Lancaster County agents were honored for outstanding service last week at the extension annual meeting.

Chet Hughes, Lancaster extension livestock agent, was honored for 20 years of service by Michelle Rodgers, regional director of cooperative extension. Leon Ressler, extension director, was honored for 15 years of work with cooperative extension. Staff receiving honors for five or more years of service were Nancy Wiker, Lori Little, and Katina Showman.

The staff was honored at the annual extension meeting, which featured food provided by the county's many commodity organizations. Represented were the Lancaster County dairy producers, poultry industry, fruit growers, pork producers, and other organizations.

Mark Chien, regional wine growing specialist/extension agent, provided information on the wine grape producers in the county and region. Pennsylvania is home to 74 branded wines and more than 100 independent vineyards.

Greg Martin, poultry extension agent, spoke about the outreach program to inner-city schools in the "pizza" program, which examined how a food such as pizza is produced from the farm to the table. For some students, it was the "first time they'd ever seen a greenhouse or handled plants," said Martin. "For some, it was the first time they had been near a cow."

Tim Elkner, horticulture agent, spoke about the Master Gardener Program. He also noted that the statewide sweet corn integrated pest management (IPM) program provides \$13 million in economic and environmental benefits to the state. Elkner also reviewed the pumpkin and seedless watermelon variety programs that have proven successful and helpful for many county growers.

Mary Beth Grove, extension agent dairy/environment, noted that "Lancaster County has more dairy cows per square mile than anywhere else in the country." There are 1,840 dairy farms in the county. Grove reviewed the many ways in which Penn State provides tools for the dairy producers. There are 50 organic dairy farms in the county, and many workshops provide ways to help the dairy industry remain profitable. That includes Dairy Day - the county dairy day program hosted 200-300 producers.

Chet Hughes, county livestock agent, spoke about the success of the Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Program. He noted also the work of the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) efforts and the Trucker Quality Assurance (TQA) programs well under way in the county. One TQA program included five workshops and involved more than 200 drivers.

Nancy Wiker, family living agent, reviewed various food and nutrition programs, in addition to food safety certification and others. Included was an overview of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program by Stacey Hutchison.

Katina Showman, 4-H program coordinator, spoke about the benefits of the 4-H program to county youth. She noted that the 4-H Benefit Auction is scheduled for the Farm and Home Center on Saturday, Feb. 22 at 9:30 a.m.

Leon Ressler, extension director, noted the work of two long-time staff members who recently

retired: Glenn Shirk, dairy agent, and Susan Smallhoffer, office staff, each with more than 40 years of service. John Yocum, Landisville Research Center, retired in September after more than 40 years of service to Penn State Extension.

Ressler noted that the county generates more than \$960 million in farm receipts. One in five jobs in the county are ag-related.

Ressler pointed to the bookmark included with handouts to those who attended the meeting. The bookmark includes a survey for those who rely on extension, addressing different program areas.

In the annual report, there was a listing of 2002 accomplishments. The extension office provided 16,693 different types of individual assistance, with 7,213 types of assistance by volunteers. Extension listed 285 newspaper articles written, 13 radio broadcasts, 10 TV programs, 267 written newsletters, and 81,315 educational publications distributed. There were 1,068 meetings conducted by staff with an attendance of 19,976. The number of Master Gardeners is 62 with a posting of 3,365 Master Gardener volunteer hours.

Glenn Shirk provided some comments about the passing of Jay Irwin, longtime extension agent through the 1980s. Irwin died unexpectedly on July 30 last year.

Said Shirk, "Jay has enriched our lives with so many precious memories. His life was a living testimony of what he taught and believed."

Irwin, who grew up on a dairy farm in Blair County, was graduated from Penn State in 1949 with a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics. After serving with the navy in the South Pacific aboard a submarine during World War II, Irwin managed Farm Bureau cooperatives in western Pennsylvania for 15 years.

In 1967, Irwin and his family moved to Lancaster County, and



Lloyd Hess, Hess Barbecue, finds the weather downright tropical at the annual meeting of Lancaster County Extension.

Irwin began his extension career as an agent. He worked closely with the poultry industry. Through the years, Irwin introduced various youth and adult programs and participated in Penn State international programs in Poland, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland.

Irwin wrote the "Now Is The Time" column for *Lancaster Farming* as extension director beginning in 1981. He retired from extension in 1991.

Irwin was renowned for his work with the poultry industry during the avian influenza crisis of the mid 1980s. He was honored as Pennsylvania's Broiler Industry Man of the Year and received the coveted George C. Delp Award from the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Irwin also was recognized with the Lancaster County Farm Bureau Award, the American Dairy Association's Ag Communicator Award, and the Penn State Master Educator Award for outstanding business and leadership training.

Shirk said, "Jay, you have enriched our lives in so many ways, and we shall continue to remember you by the wonderful legacy you have left with us. Thank you so much!"



Dairy treats are served at the Lancaster Extension annual meeting. From left, Becky Ashley, Liz Ackerman, and Mary Beth Grove.



Representing the Lancaster County pork producers are, from left, Doris Wenger, Ann Swartzbaugh, and Gene Wenger.