

Be A Good Steward: Control Weeds, Forage Pests, Pesticides

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BERLIN (Somerset Co.)
—“We don’t only want to produce the greatest profit in our farming businesses, we also want to be good stewards of the land,” said Sjoerd Duiker, an assistant professor for the Department of Crop and Soil Science at Penn State who spoke to a group of Somerset County farmers recently at Somerset County Crops Day in Berlin.

Duiker was one of several experts in agriculture who gave Somerset County farmers updated and relevant research and information at the Berlin Community Center.

How to be a “good steward” of the land in terms of controlling weeds and forage pests with pesticide control while still being aware of the environment became the focus for the annual meeting.

Duiker, who is originally from Holland, spoke to the group about cover crops and how to use cover crops to improve soil, soil tilth, reduce erosion and fix nitrogen.

“This not only helps farmers learn about how to improve their operation but it also helps farmers become aware of new regulations and raises environmental awareness at the same time,” said Duiker.

Melanie Barkley, agricultural extension agent from Bedford County coordinated the all-day event, where speakers from Penn

State Cooperative Extension and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy discussed new techniques for crop management as well as ways in which to protect the environment.

She explained that commodity prices have been remaining steady or dropping as compared to the cost of production so farmers need to work more cost effectively and efficiently to make more informed decisions about their businesses.

“The farmers are here today for two reasons,” she said “First of all, agriculture is continually changing and the farmers here today are getting some updated, researched information and second, they are also able to update their private pesticide license with credits.”

Marvin H. Hall, professor of forage management at Penn State who spoke on the topic of “Common Forage Pests in Pennsylvania,” explained in an interview after his discussion that the olden days when farming might have been more of a “good old boys” network is over.

“Farming is a business and it is essential that the farmers stay on top of that business by coming to workshops such as this,” said Hall.

He also discussed the Timothy mite, which is a pest that gets on timothy in the spring and makes it look like it is drought-stressed. This pest has just recently entered Pennsylvania and may show up in the Somerset County area this year. It has already been

located in Virginia and Maryland and parts of New York state.

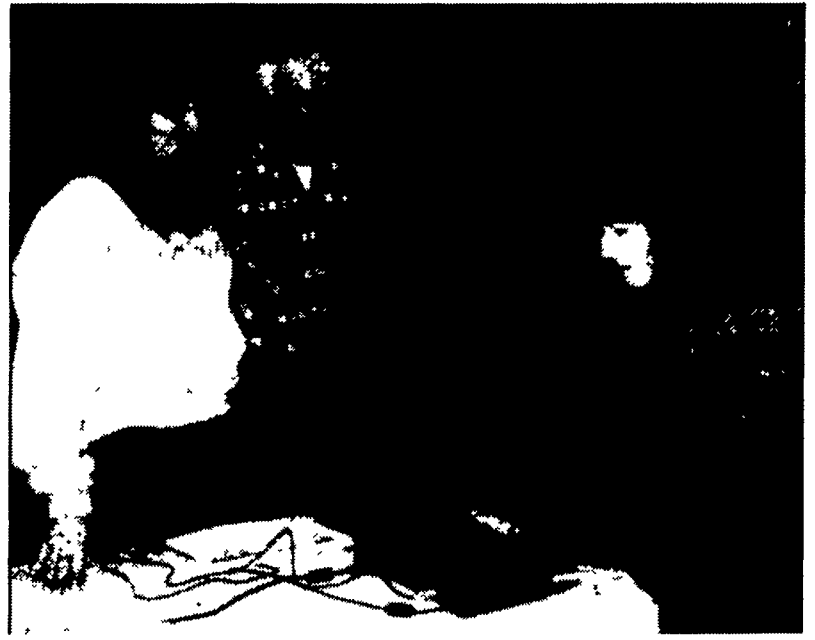
“Hopefully, the farmers here will never see the Timothy Mite but it is good to be prepared for it if and when it hits,” he said.

In addition to the speakers mentioned, Tom Zundle from Blair County Cooperative Extension and Ben Wright of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy also spoke.

For Deborah Knapp of the Central City area, getting some updated information and learning about new research in the agricultural arena is why she decided to attend Somerset County Crops Day.

Knapp, who has an agricultural science degree from Penn State University, has within the past year moved back to Somerset County after her and her husband Michael and their family traveled throughout the U.S. while he served in the U.S. Army. He retired as a lieutenant colonel last year and they recently purchased the family farm. She attended Crops Day with her father Marlin Shaffer.

“Growing up, I worked with beef cattle and took them to the local fair and learned to appreciate and value that in my life and now I want my children to be exposed to that,” said Knapp. “For now, I am looking for my niche in terms of what I will grow on the farm. I need to study what the market is, and Somerset County Crops Day has helped me in terms of awareness and updated research.”



Melanie Barkley, right, a Bedford County Cooperative Extension agent, talks with Deborah Knapp and her father Marlin Shaffer, both of the Central City area, during a break at Somerset County Crops Day at the Berlin Community Center in Somerset County. Deborah has recently moved back to Somerset County with her husband Michael and family and attended the workshop in order to get updated information for her agricultural plans for the family farm.

AI Training Upcoming

NEW WILMINGTON (Lawrence Co.)—AI training will be conducted March 11, 12, and 13, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the New Wilmington Livestock Auction, one-half mile north of New Wilmington on Route 158.

10 and 11, 6:30 p.m. and April 12, 10 a.m. at the Damascus Livestock Auction, one mile south of Route 62 on east side of Valley Road.

For registration contact Dave Watt of COBA Select Sire at (800) 837-2621, ext. 3445.

It will also be conducted April

Bull Evaluation Shows 84-Day Test Results

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Acting Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff today announced that 77 bulls on the 2002-03 Performance Evaluation Test at the Livestock Evaluation Center have passed the 84-day mark of their evaluations.

“Pennsylvania Agriculture continues to lead as we enter the 21st century,” said Acting Secretary Wolff. “To stay competitive, Pennsylvania must maintain the excellence of its breeding pro-

grams, one way to do that is through the use of proven genetics.”

Bulls were placed on test on Oct. 29 at the PDA Livestock Evaluation Center in State College, Centre County, and over the course of 112 days will be evaluated for average weight gain, feed efficiency, and genetic potential.

Based on the performance of the bulls, the Livestock Evaluation Center can objectively determine their hereditary poten-

tial. The resulting offspring are more efficient and have more genetic potential for the producer.

Results of the Bull Performance Test at the 84-Day point are as follows: listing breed, number on test, breed Average Daily Gain (ADG), and Breed Average Weight per Average Day of Age (Wt./DOA)

Angus: 41 Bulls, 4.18 ADG, 3.37 Wt./DOA
Charolais: 4 Bulls, 4.13 ADG,

3.67 Wt./DOA
Hereford: 6 Bulls, 3.46 ADG, 3.24 Wt./DOA
Limousin: 1 Bull, 2.48 ADG, 2.71 Wt./DOA
Shorthorn: 1 Bull, 3.60 ADG, 3.09 Wt./DOA
Simmental: 24 Bulls, 3.87 ADG, 3.48 Wt./DOA

At the conclusion of the test, the bulls will be offered for sale on March 28 at the Ag Arena, University Park, Centre County. The most recent census data

shows income from Pennsylvania beef production on 28,000 farms was \$409.7 million, an increase of 6.7 percent from the previous year.

For more information on the Livestock Evaluation Center, the Bull Performance Test, or Pennsylvania’s beef industry, contact the Department of Agriculture at (717) 787-4737 or Glenn Eberly at the Department’s Livestock Evaluation Center (814) 238-2527.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bird control (Avitrol) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spraying for common flies and destructive beetles |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hister Beetle trapping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rodent control (PEQAP Trained) |
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