

Jersey/Holstein Crossbreeds Turn Grass Into Milk On Berks County Farm

(Continued from Page E1)

Used mainly as beef animals, the White Parks are also known to be easy calvers and strong milkers.

To help him better detect estrus and boost reproductive rates, Mast said he like to feed spelt, a primitive type of wheat.

"If you want cows to have good, strong heat, feed them spelt," he said.

The pasture walk included a discussion of some of the biological benefits of grazing systems.

Washburn pointed out the work of dung beetles on piles of fresh cow manure in the pasture. There are seven vari-

(Turn to Page E13)



Steve Washburn, second from right, with hat, examines the nutrient-processing work of dung beetles in Nevin Mast's pasture.

NW Grazing Conference Scheduled For March 4

DuBOIS (Clearfield Co.) — Would you like to get the latest information on grazing, updates on technological advances, find out what other graziers in your area, around the state, and yes, even from around the world are doing? Well then, the Sixth Annual NW Pennsylvania Grazing Conference is the place for you to be on March 4. This year's conference will again take place at the Ramada Inn in DuBois, just off exit 101 on I-80.

This year, the featured speakers are Tom and John Roche. Both brothers were born and raised in Ireland. Tom remained in Ireland and operates a 100 head Holstein-Friesian dairy herd that produces a 15,000 pound herd average on 200 acres of grassland. In addition, he runs a 300 head flock of sheep on the same acreage in a leader/follower system. Because of Ireland's dairy quota system, improving on farm income by increasing production is not an option. Tom Roche's main objective is to maximize his return per acre by controlling or reducing his costs.

Tom's brother John took another route and acquired a Ph.D. in dairy nutrition. He has conducted research in Ireland, Australia, and currently works for Dexel, a dairy corporation in New Zealand that conducts research on milk production for U.S. and N.Z. herds on both TMR and pasture systems. Both

men have visited Pennsylvania and the U.S. and feel the Northeast holds great promise for grassland based dairy production. Tom and John will join forces for the following presentations: "Is the Grass Greenest in Ireland?," "Grazing Opportunities in the Northeast U.S., An Irishmen's Point of View," and "Dairy and Sheep in the Same Farming System."

There are several other interesting speakers on this year's program. Jim Grace, from Cornell University and Peter Mapstone from Manlius, N.Y. will discuss cost of production figures from the N.Y. Dairy Summary and Mapstone's own herd. Dr. John Comerford, beef extension specialist from Penn State, will explore the differences between corn fed and grass fed beef and provide samples for an actual taste test. In addition to the previously discussed speakers, this year's farmer panel will include Paul and Beth Wingard, beef producers from Clarion County, and Susan Burlingame, sheep and chicken producer from Warren County.

Livestock and dairy producers need every advantage they can get to stay competitive in today's markets. Intensive grazing management is one of the tools available to them. Improved management of under utilized pastureland provides producers with an opportunity to reduce their cost of production, improve on-farm income, and spend less hours on the tractor seat.

Registration this year is \$20 and includes a hot buffet lunch. Brochures and Conference information can be obtained by calling Headwaters RC&D at (814) 375-1372, the county office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Penn State Cooperative Extension, or the county conservation district. Registration deadline is February 26.

For more information contact Gary Swope, Natural Resources Conservation Service at (814) 375-2125, extension 114, or Ken Hendrickson, Headwaters RC&D at (814) 375-1372.

PFGC Schedules Annual Meeting And Awards Reception

The PFGC has set the evening of March 5, during the Pennsylvania Forage and Grazing Conference, for its annual meeting and awards program. This year, we are planning an evening dinner with time to talk and mingle with others before a brief PFGC meeting and the presentation of this year's PFGC awards. You can register for the awards reception when you register for the conference. Note that you do not have to attend the conference to attend the evening reception.



Pennsylvania Crop Insurance Program

The PA Crop Insurance Assistance Program has been extended for crop year 2003. Benefits include:

FREE "CAT" Coverage

**Discounted Premiums & Fees
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March 15 - Spring Planted Crops

Dennis C Wolff
Secretary of Agriculture



Pennsylvania encourages growers to have crop insurance protection as part of their farming risk management plan. All policy fees and approximately 20 percent of net premium costs are paid for growers.

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