



NASS

Agriculture Counts

By Marc Tosiano
Pa. State Statistician

Editor's note: This is a monthly column from the Pennsylvania Ag Statistics Service (PASS), a field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA). The Website is www.usda.gov/nass/.

AG CENSUS SECOND CHANCE

Don't miss the chance to cast your vote for agriculture! Thousands of your friends and neighbors in Pennsylvania have already sent in their completed Ag Census form. Thank you!

But many have not yet returned the form. That's why we are mailing a second one. Pennsylvania farms need to be properly counted so that we receive fair consideration compared to other states concerning agricultural issues.

County counts are also very important because they can affect decisions about the future of extension services to growers, crop insurance, financial programs from the Farm Service Agency, and more. Even local chambers of commerce depend on county statistics to promote agriculture in your area.

These county statistics will often be the only information about your county until the next Ag Census, which is five years away. A complete count is needed for every county so that your county is properly represented compared to the rest.

Response in some counties is already approaching 50 percent, but a few counties are as low as 27 percent returns. Any county

that comes up short in the final tally may not get a fair consideration for extension services or other decisions that affect growers.

If you mailed the form close to the Feb. 3 due date, we may have already sent a second form before receiving the first one. Just make a note on the second form and mail it back.

Remember small, part-time and hobby farms must be counted too. Call (888) 4AG-STAT or (888) 424-7828 if you did not receive a census form or if you need any help completing the form.

2002 Fruit Summary Published Jan. 24

The Pennsylvania 2002 commercial apple crop totaled 390 million pounds, or 9.3 million 42-pound bushels. This was 19 percent below last year. Nationally, the utilized apple crop was down 8 percent from previous year.

For 2002, Pennsylvania peaches totaled 60 million pounds or 1.3 million 48-pound bushels. This was 20 percent below 2001 production. Nationally, the utilized peach crop was up 6 percent from previous year.

Pennsylvania pear production totaled 3,800 tons in 2002, 1,700 tons less than 2001. Nationally, the utilized pear crop was down 6 percent from previous year.

Pennsylvania sweet cherries totaled 355 tons in 2002, down 39 percent from 2001. Nationally, the utilized sweet cherry crop was down 20 percent from previous year.

Pennsylvania tart cherry production in 2002 was 3.8 million pounds. This was down 3 percent from 3.9 million pounds in 2001. Nationally, the utilized tart cherry crop was down 80 percent from previous year due huge losses in Michigan.

Pennsylvania grape production in 2002 totaled 53,200 tons, down 13 percent from the previous year due to spring frosts around Lake Erie. Nationally, the utilized grape crop was up 9 percent from previous year.

2002 Vegetable Summary Published Jan. 29

End-of-season statistics are published annually for major vegetable crops nationwide. Pennsylvania crops are listed here for the 2002 season. Prices received by growers are a weighted average of wholesale and retail sales.

Sweet corn for fresh market totaled 628,000 CWT or 1.5 million crates (with 5 dozen at 42 pounds). This is 10 percent less than a year earlier. The average Pennsylvania price in 2002 was \$31.80 per CWT or \$13.36 per crate.

Sweet corn for processing totaled 6,660 tons, up 36 percent from previous year. The average Pennsylvania price in 2002 was \$77.30 per ton.

Tomatoes for fresh market totaled 701,000 CWT, up 31 per-

cent from a year earlier. The average Pennsylvania price in 2002 was \$23.80 per CWT.

Snap beans for processing totaled 20,340 tons, down 1 percent from a year earlier. The average Pennsylvania price in 2002 was \$215.00 per ton.

Cabbage for fresh market totaled 342,000 CWT, twice as much as last year. The average Pennsylvania price in 2002 was \$13.30 per CWT.

Strawberry total production was 73,000 CWT, 15 percent below 2001. The average Pennsylvania price in 2002 was \$137.00 per CWT.

Cantaloupe production totaled 130,000 CWT, 16 percent above 2001. The average Pennsylvania price in 2002 was \$22.00 per CWT.

Pumpkin total production was 1,170,000 CWT, 18 percent above 2001. The average Pennsylvania price in 2002 was \$14.10 per CWT.

Cattle Counts Published Jan. 31

During 2002, there were 28,000 Pennsylvania operations with cattle and calves, unchanged from previous year. There were 9,900 farms had milk cows, 400 less than 2001. There were 11,200 farms with beef cows, 100 more than 2001.

Pennsylvania farms had 1.63 million bovine on hand Jan 1, 2003, down 10,000 head from previous year.

Pennsylvania milk cows, at 590,000 head, is up 2,000 head from previous year; 150,000 beef cows - down 1 percent; 280,000 milk cow replacements - down 2 percent; 45,000 beef cow replacements - up 13 percent; 50,000 other heifers - up 11 percent; 170,000 steers - up 3 percent; 25,000 bulls - unchanged; and 320,000 calves - down 3 percent.

Nationwide, bovine inventories are 1 percent below previous year. Compared to last year's inventories: Milk cows up less than 1 percent, beef cows down 1 percent, milk replacement up 1 percent; beef replacements up 2 percent; steers down 1 percent. Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter in all feedlots was 12.9 million head, down 7 percent from previous year.

Sheep And Wool Published Feb. 1

Pennsylvania farms had 83,000 sheep and lambs on hand Jan. 1, 2003, down 3 percent from a year earlier. These sheep were on 2,600 farms in Pennsylvania, up 4 percent from previous year.

Breeding ewes at 55,000 head is unchanged from previous year. Other changes are replacement lambs down 8 percent, rams down 17 percent, and market sheep and lambs down 8 percent.

Wool production in Pennsylvania totaled 430,000 pounds in 2002, down 2 percent from previous year. Average price to growers was 25 cents per pound, same as 2001.

Satellite Program To Help Delaware County Residents Solve Pond Problems

SPRINGFIELD (Delaware Co.)—Ponds can provide many recreational benefits to homeowners, but they have their share of problems, says a water resources specialist in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"Some may develop leaks or fill with sediment," said Extension Associate Bryan Swistock. "The water may be muddy, or choked with weeds and algae. And sometimes, that big fish you hoped would be there for the kids to catch just doesn't materialize."

To address the basics of pond management, experts from Penn State, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and Mansfield University will offer a live satellite clinic from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Feb. 27. The program will be aired locally at 6:45 p.m. at the Delaware County office of Penn State Cooperative Extension, Smedley Park, Springfield.

Swistock recommends that people who own a pond, develop a management strategy depending on their goals.

"How you manage your pond depends on your goals," he said. "People who want a pond for swimming, for instance, usually want a clean, sandy bottom without many weeds. But if you want a good fishery, you'll need some plants and structures."

During the program, the experts will offer tips and advice on common pond problems and proper management. Attendees will be able to ask questions by telephone and fax. Master Gardeners Steve Kosiak and Carl Pfeiffer will serve as facilitators for the local event.

"The most frequent questions involve the control of aquatic plants and weeds," says Swistock, "so we'll spend time discussing how to identify and control nuisance plants and algae. We also get a lot of questions about fisheries, so we'll discuss the best kinds of fish to stock, the species to avoid and how to harvest to keep the populations balanced."

Other topics will include getting permits, general pond maintenance and testing water quality. Professional pesticide applicators can receive re-certification credits for attending the program. The clinic costs \$3 and pre-registration is required.

To sign up or for more information on the satellite program, contact the Delaware County office of Penn State Cooperative Extension at (610) 690-2655.

Maryland To Host Getting Started In Farming Sessions

ELLICOTT CITY, Md. — Is there room for beginning farmers in an economy that is forcing farms to get larger and larger to survive? Resoundingly, yes.

The Howard County Office of the Maryland Cooperative Extension and the Howard County Economic Development Authority will sponsor four evening sessions for people interested in starting a farming or natural resource based enterprise.

Seminar participants will receive practical knowledge and advice on how to select the right enterprise for them and how to convince their banker they have what it takes to succeed. Examples of different enterprises will be used to detail start-up consideration and how to structure an entry into farming.

Scouting out the market, developing a successful business plan, examples of starting from

scratch and juggling farm and family life will be among the topics covered.

These sessions will be conducted Wednesday evenings 7-9:30 p.m., March 12, 19, 26, and April 2 at the Maryland Cooperative Extension, Howard County Office.

There is a \$40 registration fee per participant or \$70 per couple to cover the cost of materials. Registration ends March 7. Class size is limited.

Registration forms are available from the Maryland Cooperative Extension, Howard County Office, 3525-L Ellicott Mills Drive, Ellicott City, Maryland, 21043. The phone number is (410) 313-2707.

If you need special accommodations to participate in this meeting, please call by February 28, 2003.

Simmental Show Posts Results

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)—Larry Hughes and Triple L Farm made a clean sweep—winning the grand championship with KJS Kenya and following it up with LLL Ms Cleo's reserve championship placing—was accomplished at the Farm Show here in January.

Hughes and Triple L are no newcomers to the Farm Show's winner's circle, having won the grand champion bull in 1998 with LLL Chunk and the grand champion female in 1999 with K-Hill Sophia. Although Hughes has been raising purebred Simmental cattle in New Oxford for 15 years, his farm upbringing was on a dairy farm in Harney, MD.

After one enlistment in the Marine Corps and a career in the automobile business, Hughes returned to his roots—farming and raising cattle. His herd includes approximately 75 brood cows.

Following the heifer show Scott Greiner, Blacksburg, Va., selected SVJ Champe from 17 entries in the Simmental Bull Show.

Champe was lead to champion honors by Justin Mankey, Amity, Washington County. Mankey first garnered champion bull calf honors. In the reserve champion bull position was Montana Pete, owned by Haven Woods Farms, Stoneboro, Mercer County. Montana Pete won reserve champion bull calf honor.

Correction



Eric Charles, Lancaster, right, broke the harvest barrier for mechanical harvest of tomatoes with a 54.9-tons-per-acre average yield. James Kohl, Furman Foods vice president, awards a crisp \$100 bill to Charles for breaking the 50-tons-per-acre harvest barrier, not bushels per acre, as was incorrectly reported in the Feb. 8 issue of Lancaster Farming. We apologize for the error.



The 2002 Five-Acre Corn Club winners are scheduled to appear in the March 1 Corn Talk, a newsletter of the Pennsylvania Corn Growers Association (PCGA). Included that issue: PCGA board of director information, grower feature, and PCGA and NCGA news.