

# Pennsylvania's Farmers Encouraged To Participate In Census

**HARRISBURG** (Dauphin Co.) — On Thursday, Agriculture Secretary Designee Dennis Wolff appealed to all Pennsylvania farmers, growers, and agribusinesses that have not completed their 2002 Ag Census to do so.

"According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2002 Census of Agriculture rates are lagging behind previous censuses," said Wolff. "Every response counts and assists in building a complete picture of Pennsylvania agriculture."

Because of the low response rates, the Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service, in conjunction with the USDA Nation-

al Agricultural Statistics Service, are beginning to intensify their data collection efforts, which require more extensive methods such as telephone calls and personal visits.

In December 2002, more than 91,000 agriculture census forms were sent out across Pennsylvania.

Wolff noted that in order to develop an accurate picture of Pennsylvania agriculture, it is vital that all farmers and growers who have not already returned their census forms take the time to submit them. An accurate report of farm operations in Pennsylvania helps to formulate a

complete, detailed picture of agriculture in Pennsylvania and the nation.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture wants farmers, ranchers, and agriculturalists from every sector of the industry to know how crucial it is that they complete and return their census forms. Not only does data gathered from the census provide information for local and state agricultural investment decisions, it also help local, state and national representatives and agencies make informed agricultural policy decisions.

In addition, the Census helps the U.S. compete for its share of

the global agriculture marketplace. Information gathered ensures quick access to vital local statistics in the event of a natural disaster or possible homeland security threat.

The Census of Agriculture is the sole source of comprehensive, detailed agricultural facts for every county in the U.S., and is only conducted every five years.

By law, (Title 7, U.S. Code), data provided by individual farms is held in strictest confidence. No information will be

disclosed about any individual operation.

For assistance in the completion of the census, a help line has been established at (888) 4AG-STAT.

To learn more about the 2002 Census of Agriculture, contact the Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service at (717) 787-3904 or visit the Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service homepage through the PA PowerPort at [www.state.pa.us](http://www.state.pa.us), PA Keyword "agriculture."

## Custom Forage Harvesting Conference Set

**WATSONTOWN** (Northumberland Co.) — Penn State Extension in the Central Susquehanna Valley is sponsoring an educational program on custom forage harvesting for dairy producers, custom forage growers and harvesters, and dairy agribusinesses. The conference will take place Thursday, March 20, from 9:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Watson Inn, Watsonstown.

The goal of the conference is to review custom forage harvesting from the perspectives of both dairy producer and custom harvester.

Speakers for the conference include Sandy Costello, Central Susquehanna Valley dairy agent, on the importance of forage quality to production and herd

health; Greg Roth, extension corn specialist, on managing corn for silage production, and hybrid selection to feed bunk management; John Becker, professor of ag economics and law, on setting up forage contracts; Karl Nestor, Mycogen dairy technical specialist, on including quality factors in forage contracts; and Sarah Roth, extension associate in dairy farm business management, on the economics of custom forage harvesting decisions.

Registration for the conference is \$10 per person, due March 14. Persons who would like more information or would like to register are asked to call the Northumberland County Extension Office at (570) 988-3950

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