

# Lancaster Farming

Vol. 48 No. 26 www.lancasterfarming.com Four Sections Saturday, April 26, 2003 \$36.00 Per Year \$1.00 Per Copy

## Family Farm Days At Oregon Dairy June 17-19



**LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)** — Oregon Dairy's annual Family Farm Days are scheduled here at the farm market June 17-19. A variety of sponsorships are available until May 15 by contacting Sandi Thompson, program director, Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at (717) 397-3531, ext. 139, or by going online at [www.lancasterchamber.com/ag](http://www.lancasterchamber.com/ag). Photo by Andy Andrews, editor

## Processors: Work Together To Ensure Improved Milk Prices

**ANDY ANDREWS**  
Editor

**UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.)** — Dairy's future could signal the consolidation of processors to gain market strength, as a way to, in the words of one analyst, "counterweigh what's happening on the retail side," noted Terry Barr.

Barr, chief economist, National Association of Farm Cooperatives, spoke about the nature of retailing dairy and other commo-

dities. He spoke Tuesday during the Penn State-sponsored 37th annual Pennsylvania Agricultural Credit Conference at the Nittany Lion Inn. About 80 bank and farm credit company officers and agri-industry representatives attended.

In 2001, noted Barr, the four largest chains claimed 22 percent of the market for food, including dairy. The number one dairy re-

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## Secretary Designees Discuss Ag, Environmental Issues

**MICHELLE KUNJAPPU**  
Lancaster Farming Staff

**MOUNT JOY (Lancaster Co.)** — A meeting Tuesday further encouraged the joining of agriculture and the environment as both Dennis Wolff, agriculture secretary designee, and Karen McGinty, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) secretary designee, discussed ag and environmental issues.

Conducted here at The Gathering Place, about 100 people attended the meeting, part of a series of Agricultural Issues Forums that have addressed many topics important to agriculture.

As the new administration begins their work, said Wolff, the

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## Revolutionary Crop Yields Top Writers' List

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — The most important change in agriculture in the past 50 years, say members of North American Agricultural Journalists (NAAJ), was the hybridization and improvement of many crops.

Starting with a list of events and changes prepared by three prominent agricultural historians, members of NAAJ voted on the top 10 developments in agriculture during the past 50 years. The results were released recently at the 50th anniversary meeting of NAAJ in Washington.

Hybridization is the process of inbreeding plants, then crossing their offspring to create stronger,

higher-yielding varieties.

Hybrid corn was developed long before NAAJ was formed. Plant scientists were experimenting with it at the turn of the 20th century and hybrid corn began to be sold commercially in the 1920s. But during the past 50 years, the combination of hybrid crops, cheap farm chemicals derived from fossil fuels, and mechanization has created a technological revolution in agriculture that has helped feed billions of people on the planet.

When NAAJ formed in 1953, the average corn yield in the U.S. was 40.7 bushels per acre. Last year, even after a severe drought

in many states, hybrid corn helped U.S. farmers harvest an average of 130 bushels an acre. Hybridization accounts for about half of that huge increase in yields as well as corn's improved ability to withstand drought.

Here are the events and developments of the past 50 years that agricultural journalists picked as the most important:

1. Hybridization and other improvements of crops.
2. Genetically modified crops that have been engineered to kill insect pests and tolerate herbicides. Most U.S. farmers adopted this technology in less than a decade, starting in the 1990s. Some consumer groups, especially in Europe, oppose modifying crops through genetic engineering.
3. The discovery of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), the chemical building block of heredity, by James Watson and Francis Crick in 1953. These researchers discovered the ladder-like double helix structure of DNA, helping to start the biotechnology revolution now underway.
4. Norman Borlaug's "Green Revolution." Plant breeder Norman Borlaug, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970, developed

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## Poultry Council Hosts Banquet



**LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)** — Grammy and Dove Award-winning singer Sandi Patti provided entertainment for more than 1,000 attendees of the PennAg Poultry Council's spring banquet Wednesday evening at the Lancaster Host Resort. Patti is joined by, from left, Jim Shirk, PennAg Poultry Council vice president; Dan Heller, banquet chair; and Chris Pierce, PennAg Poultry Council chair. "Proud to Provide" was the theme of the banquet. Photo by Michelle Kunjappu

## Inside The Farmer

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- ✓ Chester/Delaware County Farm Bureau Meets page A31.
- ✓ Beware Of Japanese Knotweed page A36.



Enter Lancaster Farming's annual Dairy Recipe Drawing and you could receive one of these prizes shown by Lou Ann Good, food and family features editor. For details on entering the contest, see story page B2.

Photo by Michelle Kunjappu