

# Survey Says Equine Industry Builds Ag Viability, Preservation



Secretary of Agriculture Dennis Wolff, standing third from left, joins others who spoke at the introduction of the 2002 Economic and Population Study of the Pennsylvania Equine Industry late last week. From left, Cheryl Cook, deputy secretary of agriculture; Commissioner Richard Abbott, Pennsylvania Horse Racing Commission; Wolff; James W. Simpson, president and CEO of Hanover Shoe Farms; Ann Swinker, Penn State; Dr. Terry Etherton, department head, dairy and animal science, Penn State; and Commissioner C. Edward Rogers Jr., Pennsylvania Harness Racing Commission. On horses in back, from the Dauphin 4-H Club, are Kristen Spicher, Halifax, riding Rein-A-Domino II, a 13-year-old Spotless Appaloosa mare, and Jennifer Rudy, Halifax, riding All That Jazz, a 19-year-old Quarter Pony mare. Photo by Andy Andrews, editor

**ANDY ANDREWS**  
Editor

**HARRISBURG** (Dauphin Co.) — Perhaps now the state knows full well just how important the equine industry is.

Not only does the horse industry generate a lot of money for the state, but it actually helps to preserve farming as a way of life and open space, according to several speakers late last week.

State Secretary of Agriculture Dennis Wolff and others spoke about the impact the horse industry has to about 75 who attended a ceremony introducing the 2002 Economic and Population study of the Pennsylvania Equine Industry in the new Equine Arena of the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg.

Wolff noted that a study of the state's equine industry indicates that horses and the many businesses that support the state's equine industry contribute significantly to the state's economy.

Wolff was joined by faculty from Penn State University's School of Agriculture Sciences, who conducted the economic impact survey, and state officials.

"As an \$8.27 billion industry, of which racing alone represents \$1.4 billion, the equine industry contributes generously to the state's economy," Wolff said. "This report demonstrates the importance of horses to the

state's agriculture industry and to the future of its growth and development."

The survey measured the growth of the industry over a 10-year period, including statistics on the number of horses involved in the racing industry and those utilized for other purposes. In addition, it demonstrates the value of the equine industry to Pennsylvania in terms of revenue generated, job creation, and the ripple effect of the industry on other equine-related businesses.

Commissioner Richard Abbott, state horse racing commission, noted that Lancaster and Chester counties represent "the most intense development pressure of any counties in the state and the (state's) highest horse population." Abbott noted that while traditional agricultural enterprises are no longer economically viable in places, horse farms represent "a tremendous force toward preservation of open space and a source of revenue."

James W. Simpson, president and CEO of Hanover Shoe Farms (profiled in the May 10 issue of *Lancaster Farming's Boarder & Trainer*), noted there are now one million acres of green space in Pennsylvania, thanks to the "equine farmland preservation industry," he noted. That industry contributes about \$10 billion in economic activity to the commonwealth.

Hanover, at 3,000 acres, noted Simpson, is just "another cog in the giant equine industry wheel," but does its best to "protect the animal called the horse."

Tom Kauffman, executive director of the Pennsylvania Horse Racing Association, noted that the state's four racetracks point to how large the equine industry is. The association finds the results of the survey "very encouraging," he said. The industry has about 26,000 horses in 52 counties. The industry helps preserve "one million acres in the state," he said, helping sustain thousands of jobs.

According to the equine census report, there are 216,000 equine living in Pennsylvania, representing about 50 different breeds. That is up from 170,000 horses just 10 years ago. Of those, more than 26,000 are racehorses, compared to 8,500 in 1990.

The number of jobs associated with the equine industry has doubled since the last census in 1990. Today, the equine industry employs about 15,000 people, compared to 7,500 in 1990.

Lancaster County has the highest equine population in the state, followed by Chester, York, Washington, and Berks counties.

For complete results on the equine census, visit <http://www.das.psu.edu> (click on horses).

## Ayrshire Association Field Day July 12

**ELVERSON** (Chester Co.) — The Pennsylvania Ayrshire Association will be conducting its annual state Field Day, Saturday, July 12.

Hosts will be Don and Pam Gable and their three sons, Josh, Tyler, and Kevin, and Don's mother, Josie of Conebella Farm.

The day will be filled with activities for everyone beginning at 10 a.m. There will be judging, dam/daughter contests, and identification contests to fill the morning time.

After the noon meal, there will

be an informational meeting about the state association's plan to host the 2005 National Ayrshire Convention. Everyone's help is needed in order for the Convention to be successful, so come to hear the plans to date and decide how you can be involved. Following the meeting, the contest winners will be announced, door prizes awarded, and additional tours or information on the Conebella herd will be given.

Conebella Farm is home to 110 Ayrshire cows, along with 90

head of young stock. In 2002 the herd was moved to a new freestall barn. Over the years the herd has received many production awards from the National Ayrshire Association.

Please RSVP by July 7, if possible, by calling Don and Pam at (610) 286-2967. Directions from Morgantown: Rt. 23 east to Rt. 401 east. Turn right onto Rt. 82 south. Turn right onto the first road, Chestnut Tree Road. The farm is one mile on the right with an Ayrshire farm sign at the end of the lane.

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### MARKETING PRODUCE TO RESTAURANTS

Steve Bogash  
Horticulture Agent  
Capitol Region

Marketing produce directly to restaurants is one of the least explored and exploited market avenues for produce growers in our region. Since restaurants are listed in the telephone book and most produce farmers are not, it is up to the grower to make the contact.

Is this for you and your operation? This article will point out some features of this type of produce marketing.

First and foremost, any would-be produce seller to a restaurant needs to recognize that there are many kinds of restaurants. Each will have different needs and approaches. Fortunately, all restaurants use produce and lots of it. Whether you as a seller can get your foot in the door will take some homework. This is some of the most enjoyable studying you can do — the best method to research a restaurant's produce needs is to read the menu and eat there.

Think broadly in your definition of a restaurant. There are a lot more out there than those that are open to the public and advertise in telephone books. Start with those that advertise, but look also at nursing homes; retirement communities; hospitals; college, university, and school food systems; country and other private clubs; caterers; service organizations, etc.

We Americans eat an incredible number of our meals out of the home and we eat an incredible variety of foods as well. As you explore this marketing niche, ask lots of questions. Just because you don't currently grow it and probably would not eat it, does not mean you could not or should not grow it for a restaurant. Think about garlic, shallots, leeks, baby greens, edible flowers, basil, and many ethnic specialties as you talk to potential buyers.

Here are a few things to think about as you explore this niche:

- Never approach a restaurant during peak meal times. This is a



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great way to have the door permanently close in your face.

- Think samples. One of the best ways to establish an open conversation with a restaurant buyer is to drop off a usable quantity of sample product. Leave a tray of tomatoes, a box of garlic, or any standard package of your best product.

- Leave your card with the sample and call back in a day or two.

- Don't try to fill all of their needs. Just getting a piece of the action is all you need.

- Let the relationship develop.

- Not everyone is a customer. Don't be surprised if they love your product but cannot or will not buy from you. Your produce may be too good, and although priced fairly, too expensive for their uses.

- Build trust. Be ready to communicate honestly and often. Restaurants rely heavily on their suppliers being up to the task. They will need to know that you will keep them in the know as your availability changes during the growing season.

There is much more to know than this short article can cover. For more information, as well as stories about producers doing business with restaurants, contact me at (717) 263-9226, via e-mail at [smb13@psu.edu](mailto:smb13@psu.edu), or do a simple Web search with the expression "selling produce to restaurants."

## Pa. Senate Confirms McGinty

**HARRISBURG** (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Senate recently confirmed Kathleen A. McGinty as Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection. She is the first woman ever to hold the state's top environmental post.

"Secretary McGinty has the creativity, drive, and spirit to reinvent environmental regulation and build with the people of Pennsylvania a very bright and promising future," Governor Edward Rendell said.

"With her experience at the federal level and in the private sector, we have someone who not only has a realistic view of what needs to be done and but also knows how to do it." "DEP can

and should be an engine for economic revitalization in Pennsylvania. Where others see environmental challenges, I see economic opportunities," Secretary McGinty said.

"This department will play an integral role in sustained growth by encouraging technological innovations that make the state more competitive and ensure a cleaner environment."

A Philadelphia native, McGinty served as a top counselor and senior advisor on environmental, natural resources and sustainable development issues for the federal government. In 1995, she was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

Think auctioneers have easy pay for a day's work? Find out. Read the Auctioneer Guide, a free booklet included in today's issue of *Lancaster Farming*.