

Bitler Well-Qualified

(Continued from Page B2)

ag board member for First Union Wachovia Bank, and teaches a Sunday school class.

Of her spokesperson's responsibilities, Phoebe said that her experience in 1986 as the National Ag Spokesperson of the Year provided experience in learning to think before talking, and to always speak truth.

Media crisis communications training and in-depth information are provided to help spokespersons respond positively in reinforcing ag facts.

According to Laura England, Mid-Atlantic's director of communications, Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association appointed 15 dairy

farmers to serve as spokespersons in selected areas of Pennsylvania and Maryland.

In addition to providing continued training, Mid-Atlantic staff will work to secure more interviews for its spokespersons. Among the topics pitched to the media were the new 3-A-Day program and June Dairy Month.

The idea for appointing ag spokespeople was started by Dairy Management Inc. and supported by state and regional dairy promotion groups.

For more information about Mid-Atlantic's Dairy Farmer Spokesperson Network, contact Laura England at (215) 627-8800, ext. 15.



At Vista Grande farm, bull and heifer calves are raised as breeding stock.

On Being a Farm Wife

(and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



Get a game plan.

Want to go into business, take a trip, remodel your house? Want to buy a car, plant a garden, build an investment account? Better have a game plan.

That's the first line of advice we usually get, regardless of our end goal. For a garden or remodeling your house, at least if you're doing the job yourself, maybe your plan is tucked away in your head. But if you need to borrow money, work with consultants, make arrangements for services, better get the plan on paper.

Corporations have strategic, long-range plans; so do single business operators, though the plans are perhaps less formal. Sports teams live and die by their game plans. Parents plan for their children's education, health care, career training.

It only takes one trip to the supermarket without a specific list to remind me of the value of a paper plan. Without that list, we'll have plenty of food and supplies, except for that key item that was the purpose of the trip to begin with.

So, too, farmers, need a game plan. Livestock breeders better their odds at the genetics game with mating plans, aim at calving times, calculate expansion and contraction of herd or flock numbers. Crop plans are initiated months ahead, as seed is ordered, lime and fertilizer spread, prices contracted perhaps. Grains, like barley, wheat, oats, are mostly already growing by late fall, planned and planted many months before their mid-summer harvest.

Most games for which we plan, or play, have fairly dependable rules and procedures.

The first and foremost rule of the farming game is that anything that can throw a monkey wrench into your plan, will. And, there'll be a few glitches deemed impossible — until they happen.

Of course, the biggest wrench in the gears is Mother Nature herself, specializing in throwing down challenges of drought and deluge, blasting blizzards, wicked winds, unseasonal cold fronts, spa-like humidity and heat straight from the netherworld. So farmers huddle and revisit their summer planting and harvest plans, discarding, altering and inventing tactics to get to game plan goal.

To at least break even.

Which is why scores of bags of seed corn are on their way back to suppliers, seed that farmers were never able to put into the ground during the prolonged weeks of swamp season. Which is why ground planted to barley or wheat, and originally planned to be double-cropped with soybeans, may instead be double-cropped to

weeds, the one thing sure to thrive and mature at this late stage of the summer planting game.

It's why hay that was to be baled was instead chopped, ahead of the rain, and hay that was to be chopped was blown back into fields after it rotted. It's why rye grass that was supposed to be a green forage crop instead matured to a grain crop to be combined. And, it's why bags of sudan grass seed, a fast-growing forage crop often used to replace a forage crop Mother Nature messed with, are almost as scarce as \$2 bills.

While farmers juggle and fine tune their crop game plans this season, trying to keep a step ahead of the rules changes, most of us gardeners have battled the same forces.

After planting hills of cantaloupes for about the third time, I've finally resigned myself to supermarket melons. After losing one whole variety of tomato plants to bunnies and bugs (mostly bunnies), some side-shoots of the best thriving ones have been rooted as substitutes. We may go for a late string bean planting, because the first two attempts have been disappointing; or, frozen ones are reasonably priced — and ready to use.

And after yanking out scores of self-seeded morning glory vines from the flower beds, it finally occurred to me that the sturdy volunteers could fill the holes poked in my garden game plan. A few strategically placed supports will enable them to climb away, filling the voids left by annuals either drowned or eaten alive by slugs during swamp season.

Mother Nature is a formidable game plan opponent. To play her game, one needs to train for marathons, fake the pass, run on a possible pop foul, putt carefully, spike the ball and sprint for the goal post with all you're worth and hope you can sidestep the groundhog hole, which she'll throw somewhere into the final lap.

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