

Pa. Farm Bureau Young Farmer/Rancher Picnic Held

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Special Correspondent

GRATZ (Dauphin Co.) — On Sunday, July 20, about 80 people gathered at the farm of Andy and Jessica Smeltz for an afternoon of fun, food, and fellowship for the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's Young Farmer/Rancher annual picnic.

This year's host farm is a contract poultry operation located in Gratz, Dauphin County.

Established in 1995 as a partnership between Andy and his two brothers, Dale and Larry, their operation includes three chicken houses. When filled to capacity, the Smeltz's can house an estimated 36,000 broiler chickens.

State Young Farmer/Rancher chairperson Shawn Miller of Indiana County recognized Andy, Jessica, and their family for their hard work and planning of the picnic, presenting them with a thank you basket.

Several state FFA officers also joined in the day's festivities. On behalf of the state officer team, 2003-04 Pennsylvania State FFA President, Eric Rubenstein, "thanked the Farm Bureau for inviting them" and for the opportunity to learn more about the Young Farmer/Rancher Program. Joining Eric at the event was State Chaplain Jason Klouser, Western Region State Vice President Becky Hedges, and State Reporter Bernadette Nace.



More than 80 people gathered at the farm of Andy and Jessica Smeltz for the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's Young Farmer/Rancher picnic. The Smeltz's operate a contract poultry operation in Gratz, Dauphin County.

PDMP Membership Meeting Set At Mercer-Vu

MERCERSBURG (Franklin Co.) — Aug. 7 marks the date for the next membership meeting of the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania, at the newly expanded Mercer Vu Farms, Inc. in Mercersburg, Franklin County. Ron and Judy Hissong and sons Rick and Rod invite you to visit their dairy for "Neighbors, Regulations, and Political Awareness" a joint effort of PDMP's Education and Legislative Alliances Committees.

Join PDMP members as well as state and community leaders as the Hissongs tell their successful expansion story, provide an opportunity for you to see their new facilities and nutrient management system, plus share recommendations for working with the community and offer tips on complying with regulations. You may want to visit their webpage for a virtual tour and photographs of the building process at <http://www.mercervufarms.com>.

Amy Van Blarcom-Lackey from Penn Ag Industries will speak on "Political Process: Access to Power" as well as conducting a workshop station for learning how to answer questions about dairying practices to the non-ag sector. Pat Wood from Green & Associates will conduct media training "Creating Positive Ag Media" sponsored by the Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders.

PDMP is able to offer this Membership Meeting thanks to sponsorship from AgChoice Farm Credit. The cost to attend is \$10 for PDMP members, \$50 for non-members. The program runs from 8:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and lunch is included. Contact PDMP or AgChoice Farm Credit for a one-time special rate for producers that are interested in joining the organization.

Reservations are required. Please send your payment and RSVP by July 30 to: PDMP, 324 Henning Building, University Park, PA 16802. You may also register by calling toll free at (888) 373-7232, faxing at (814) 865-4686 or e-mailing mcm14@psu.edu and bringing your payment to registration.

Northampton Beef Grazing Field Day Is Aug. 16

NAZARETH (Northampton Co.) — Having cattle graze on pasture is the natural food system for this livestock species and several farmers in Northampton County are opting to feed their cattle this way. Historically, this was a common practice among farmers.

To update farmers on information about beef grazing, a Beef Grazing Workshop and Field Day has been scheduled for August 16 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Sunny Hillside Farm, Stone Church in Northampton County.

Guest speakers will address nutrient management and pasture run-off issues, grass and legume pasture management, and cattle health, size and type.

Cost for the Field Day is \$5. Lunch will be provided. For more information, directions and a registration form, call the cooperative extension office at (610) 746-1970.



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