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Lancaster Farming

Vol. 48 No. 40 | www.lancasterfarming.com | Four Sections | Saturday, August 2, 2003 | $37.00 Per Year | $1.00 Per Copy

Farm Family Picks Up Pieces After Tornado Levels Property

200 MPH Twister Winds Threaten Lives, Devastate Buildings

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff

GENESEE (Potter Co.) — As the twister bore down on the farmhouse, Krystal and Justin Smoker knew that the best plan of action was to get down to the shelter of the basement.

But Justin, 16, couldn't muscle the basement door open because the force of the vacuum created by the storm was too strong. As he worked on it, his sister Krystal, 18, took refuge in a bathtub on the first floor.

When the tornado had finished ripping a path of destruction through the property, Justin and Krystal found themselves on the basement floor after all, along with the two family dogs.

The entire wood-frame farmhouse had been flattened.

The two youth had some scrapes, bruises, and scratches, but no serious injuries. One of the dogs was killed, but the other survived.

"God was definitely there watching out for my children," said their mother Judy Smoker, who was at work when the tornado hit around 4:30 in the afternoon of July 21.

"It's a miracle they were even alive."

Judy was aware a severe storm was moving through the area, but she didn't know about the tornado until after Krystal and Justin had climbed out of the basement and went to a neighbor's place to phone her.

"When she said our house was gone, I couldn't begin to fathom what had happened," Judy said. And it wasn't until the following morning that she learned about the destruction of the barn and silos.

Her husband Kevin had been out in the barn as the twister approached. He took shelter in the milkhouse — which turned out to be the only part of the original dairy barn that wasn't leveled.

It was another of "the many miracles" surrounding the events of that turbulent afternoon, said

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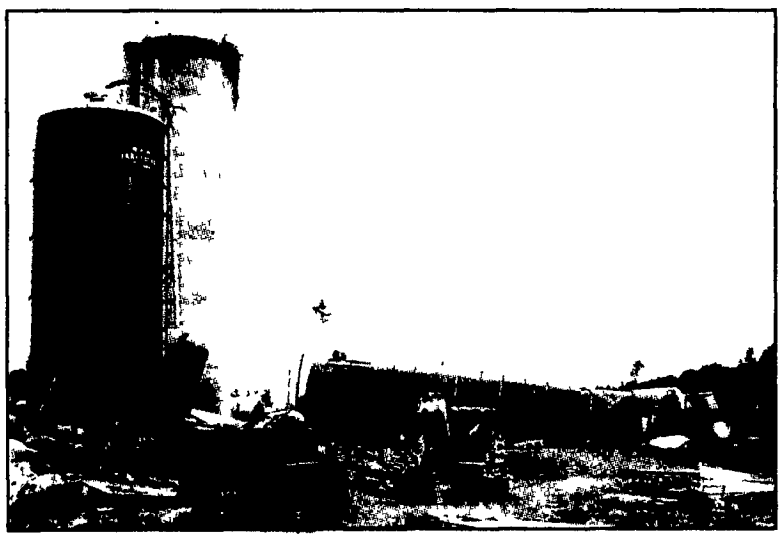

This upright silo, along with another poured concrete silo, were toppled by the 200 mile-per-hour winds of a tornado that whipped through the Kevin and Judy Smoker farmstead July 21. The Smokers' farmhouse and dairy barn were also destroyed.

At the halters of 4-H breed champions at the Lebanon Fair youth dairy show Tuesday are, from left, Royell Bashore, Lineback; Joel Smith, Guernsey; David Maulfair, Ayrshire; Chanelle Horst, Holstein (also supreme champion); Heath Spatz, Jersey; and Nathan Heim (for Harrison Miller), Brown Swiss. See story page A34. ***Photo by Dave Lefever***

New York's Premier Ag Event, Empire Farm Days, Aug. 5-7

SENECA FALLS, N.Y. — Success in agriculture means knowing what works and what doesn't.

That's why Empire Farm Days (EFD) is at the center of the Northeast agriculture success story.

From Aug. 5-7, farmers, manufacturers, and policy makers meet, exchange ideas, and together plug into the excitement of agriculture in the Northeast. The 70th annual show is scheduled at the Rodman Lott and Son Farm in Seneca Falls, N.Y. The 300-plus acre site will become host for more than 600 exhibitors and 75,000 farmers from all over the U.S. and Canada.

EFD is a direct link to new farm technologies, equipment, ideas and the excitement of Northeast agriculture. For businesses, EFD means getting back to basics. It's a chance to show off products and services to key players in Northeast agriculture. It means sales, but it's much more than that.

Businesses come away with a clear picture of their market and who they are selling to. That's the essence of getting back to the basics of selling-knowing customers and their market first hand. At EFD, businesses aren't just selling to customers — they are part of the excitement of Northeast agriculture in this new market they are helping to create.

With more than 600 exhibitors, Empire Farm Days offers today's Northeast Farmer more than 3,000 brand names to look over. Exhibitors showcase the latest developments in technology and equipment to northeast agricultural professionals, face-to-face. Farmers can connect directly with the manufacturers and representatives for the thousands of agricultural products and services available to today's farmer. They can touch, see and examine the actual products and equipment.

No matter what type of agriculture you are involved in, EFD has the connections to "plug you into the future."

Demonstrations, Seminars And Presentations

Action is the name of the game at Empire Farm Days. Exhibitors pull out all the stops to show Northeast farmers what's new and innovative. Many exhibitors actually demonstrate their products and services right on their exhibitor lots and adjacent fields.

Tractor safety, skid steer dances, band saws, fence building, hay management, mixer wagons, combining, building construction, antique tractors, vegetable and fruit specialty equipment, livestock handling, crop and breed displays, dairy and livestock equipment, are just a

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Business Takes Root At Nursery Trade Show

ANDY ANDREWS
Editor

FORT WASHINGTON (Montgomery Co.) — Where business takes root.

That was the theme of the annual Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show, Tuesday-Thursday this week at the Fort Washington Expo Center in Fort Washington.

And it's a lot of business, amounting to about $3.1 billion annually, noted Gregg Robertson, president of show coordinator Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association, Harrisburg.

"It's the place where business gets done," said Robertson, commenting on the 12,000 people from the green industry — nursery managers, landscape contractors, and retail centers — who registered for the show.

Each year the show has been growing. This year, 1,100 exhibitors managed 650 exhibits.

PLNA has about 700 members. This trade show event complements an educational show during the wintertime in Grantville.

The varied exhibits, from nursery supplies to landscape and plant management materials, occupy about 225,000 square feet of floor space. (Bigger than the New Arena at Farm Show, which is about 175,000 square feet.)

The location makes the event a regional trade show for the Mid-Atlantic, Robertson noted.

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Bobby Blew, sales manager at Centerton Nursery, Bridgeton, N.J., works the "bar display" called "Hemerocallis Hangout" during the Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show Tuesday. There are daylilies in those water mugs.
Photo by Andy Andrews, editor