

Maryland Commodity Classic A Success

CENTREVILLE, Md. — More than 300 farmers and guest gathered for the 2003 Maryland Commodity Classic, Thursday, July 24, at the Queen Anne's 4-H Park near Centreville.

"The purpose of this event is to inform our growers of what's coming down the road in relation to grain production and marketing," said Jamie Jamison, chairperson for the event.

According to Jamison, the collapse of the pier in Baltimore has had many producers hurting financially from the inability to market their crops for top prices. John Cassidy, vice president of Perdue Farms Inc., Grain and Oilseed Division, shared optimism towards the outcome of marketing this year's crop.

Cassidy said there will be a better price for soybeans this year as Perdue looks toward opening portable transfer stations in Central Maryland to help move the crop to the Perdue export facility at Chesapeake. "While the price will not rebound to what it was before the collapse of the pier, we are confident prices will be better than the last couple of years," he said.

Francis Childs, Manchester, Iowa, shared with the group his techniques for producing high-yielding corn. According to Childs, the key to high yields and environmental stewardship is spoon-feeding nitrogen and building a healthy soil for deep roots. Childs applies nitrogen in four doses, for a total of just over one pound per bushel of corn. By spoon feeding his corn, he said he does not apply a lot at one time leaving little in the soil to leach away.

Patrick McMillan was honored with the 2003 Man of the Year Award for the Maryland Grain Producers Association at the classic.

McMillan is the newly-named Maryland Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Marketing, Animal Industries, and Consumer Services. However, his dedication to Maryland agriculture and grain production runs deep in his veins.

"Pat has provided tremendous support to

the grain industry," said Mr. Jamison. "Pat has been a leader in the expansion of crop insurance programs in the state and we have him to thank specifically for bringing the Wheat Crop Revenue Coverage program to Maryland."

"He has supported our efforts to bring ethanol to Maryland and to work out a solution to the loss of the export pier in Baltimore," Mr. Jamison said. "Pat is one of those people who never says 'no' but always offers to do what he can to help."

McMillan has served Maryland farmers at MDA since 1986 and has acted as the Department's representative to both the Maryland Grain Producers Association and the Maryland Soybean Board.

In his earlier job with the Department, as an Agricultural Marketing Specialist, he was instrumental in organizing producer-only farmers markets in many regions of the state and coordi-

nating the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program in conjunction with the Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). This program now serves more than 21,000 Maryland families while increasing the customer base and income of farmers' market producers.

McMillan is a native of Pulaski, Va. He studied horticulture and agricultural economics at Virginia Tech University. As a Peace Corps volunteer, he served as an orchard crop specialist for the Ministry of Agriculture in Montserrat, West Indies. McMillan, his wife, Linda, and children, Katie Jo and Ryland, are residents of Annapolis.


The Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board, as part of their checkoff program, awarded Robert Davis Jr. and Edward Robinson each a \$2,500 scholarship during the classic.

"The checkoff program requires commitment. Results are not generated in a day, a week, or even a year — it is an ongoing process to expand markets and improve profitability. Too, education is a long-term investment. The youth we support today will ultimately return to our industry in the future to insure a safe, inexpensive food supply for our consumers," founding president of the Maryland Checkoff program, Bob Hutchinson said.

Davis attends Salisbury University and majoring in finance with a minor in agribusiness. He recently completed a project that measured the correlation between knowledge of ethanol and prices at which consumers would be willing to purchase E10, a 10 per-

cent blend of ethanol with gasoline. Davis' interest in innovative, value-added agriculture products, such as E10, and their marketability will help create a brighter future for Maryland grain growers.

Robinson attends Delaware State University and majors in Animal and Poultry Science, his family farms in Carroll County. Robinson's interests lie in animal nutrition. After graduation, he hopes to begin work with a feed company formulating feedstuffs or with USDA testing feed samples. Since much of Maryland's grain is marketed directly to feed companies, Edward's studies will directly affect the profitability of our grain producers.



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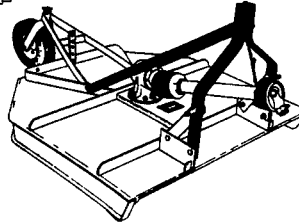
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