

Former Steeler Great Mel Blount At Ag Progress Days

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.) — Former Pittsburgh Steelers all-star defensive back Mel Blount will give a demonstration of roping and riding at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 20 at Penn State's Ag Progress Days.

Blount, who will perform at the Equine Experience area, owns a ranch in Washington County, and uses a well-publicized equine program there to reach at-risk youth.

"Mel will be riding a cutting horse — that takes a talented horse and an accomplished rider," said Ann Swinker, associate professor of equine science, extension horse specialist and coordinator of the Equine Experience. "He will ride a horse that was bred to work cattle in addition to being well trained."

Visitors to the Equine Experience also will be entertained by unique horse performances and can learn about horse ownership, management, and horsemanship throughout Ag Progress Days, Aug. 19-21.

The Equine Experience, conducted by Penn State, the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), the Pennsylvania Quarter Horse Association (PQHA) and other breed and industry groups, will offer horse enthusiasts new activities plus several popular attractions from past years.

A highlight is the AQHA 4aHORSE Test Ride. The program also will feature breed demonstrations, a learning center with educational displays, a Penn State Cooperative Extension educational venue, and demonstrations and seminars by horse experts. In cooperation with AQHA and PQHA, horses will be available for the public to ride throughout all three days of Ag Progress Days.

"This is a great opportunity for anyone who has always wanted

to ride a horse, those thinking about becoming horse owners, or current horse owners who want to improve their horsemanship knowledge and skills," said Swinker.

4aHORSE is AQHA's referral service that helps horse enthusiasts find breeders, trainers, riding instructors, horse vacations and health and maintenance care for horses.

"We're delighted to give horse enthusiasts in the Pennsylvania area a chance to ride American quarter horses," said Bill Brewer, AQHA's executive vice president. "Ag Progress Days gives AQHA a chance to bring together the region's top horse experts in a single place."

"The Equine Experience is a great place to visit with horse business and organization representatives, attend seminars in the learning center and obtain educational information from Penn State, AQHA, and other breed and industry experts," said Swinker. "We urge everyone to come out, give an American Quarter Horse a test ride, and learn more about horses."

Program topics will include nutrition, management, hay selection, preventative veterinary care, selection of the proper horse, horse behavior, handling and training, breed clinics and much more. Visitors also may participate in a variety of activities including riding, driving and horse judging.

"The Equine Experience will be of interest to all horse enthusiasts, from potential or new owners and novice riders to experienced horse owners or professionals," said Swinker. "This event will showcase Pennsylvania's equine industry and the Penn State Equine Science Program. It is also a safe and exciting way to introduce the public to horses and horse-related activities."

On Tuesday, Aug. 20, events will feature discipline clinics for Friesians, American Quarter Horses, Thoroughbreds, Australian Stock Horses, Percherons and other breeds; a working sheep dog demonstration, and performances by the Keystone Dressage and Combined Training Drill Team and the Pennsylvania State Police Mounted Patrol. Expert horse trainers also will demonstrate handling and training techniques. New this year, the Keystone Polocrosse Team will demonstrate the sport of polocrosse.

A demonstration on trail riding techniques and proper use of Pennsylvania's public lands will be given all three days.

Highlights on Wednesday, Aug. 21, will include an American Quarter Horse versatility demonstration, Pennsylvania State Police Mounted Patrol performance, draft horse breed and driving demonstrations, including a six-horse hitch; a horse-handling and training demonstration; and breed clinics.

On Thursday, Aug. 22, in addition to the continued horse educational demonstrations, the Penn State/Pennsylvania Quarter Horse Association 4-H Equine Skillathon will start at 10 a.m. The skillathon is a multi-phase competition that allows young equestrians to demonstrate their skills in a showmanship and horse-judging competition, a written test and a series of identification stations.

For more information about the Equine Experience, visit the Penn State Equine Science web site at <http://www.das.psu.edu> (click on horses), or contact the Penn State Equine Science Team at (814) 865-7810.

For more information, call (800) PSU-1010 toll-free until Aug. 21 or visit the Ag Progress Days Website at <http://apd.cas.psu.edu>.



Ag Progress Highlights Forestry Careers

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.) — Why should you care about our forests? Because they could hold a key to your future, according to an expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, who urges young people to come to Ag Progress Days Aug. 19-21 and find out more.

"Nearly 60 percent of Pennsylvania is still covered by forests, and Penn State's School of Forest Resources offers a variety of career choices related to forest ecosystems, the wildlife and fish that inhabit them and the trees themselves," said Jim Finley, professor of forest resources. "Many of those careers will be highlighted in fascinating displays, presentations, and hands-on activities in the College of Agricultural Sciences Exhibits Building."

"If you have an interest in forestry, wildlife and fisheries management, nature and the outdoors — and if you think a college degree and career in those fields might be perfect for you — don't miss 'Seeing the Forest for the Trees,' a look at Penn State's forestry, nature and wildlife research and educational programs," Finley said. "Pennsylvania's forests provide about 100,000 jobs and \$5 billion for our state economy. Almost three-fourths of the forests are owned by private landowners and about one in nine households in the state own forestland."

At "Seeing the Forest for the Trees," prospective students will find professors, instructors, and current students eager to answer questions; specific information about majors relating to forestry, nature, wildlife and fish and wood products; staff who can detail scholarships and financial aid available; and fun activities, exhibits, tours, and interesting presentations.

Visitors can take a walk through the "Top 10 Common Trees in Pennsylvania," where they can test their knowledge and identify the state's top 10 most common tree species. Landowners will have an opportunity to see how their forests change over time with a computer model that depicts forest stand cutting and stand manipulation. A hands-on display about tree DNA will allow the viewer to go through the first and last steps of isolating DNA.

Exhibits featuring the American chestnut will show visitors the difference between healthy and unhealthy tree specimens along with other chestnut species, and will illustrate how scientists may have finally beaten the blight that virtually wiped out native chestnuts in Pennsylvania. Adjacent to the building, visitors will have a chance to look inside

a log, seeing the wood it yields. They even can put a bid on the lumber, perhaps taking it home to build their own Pennsylvania red oak furniture.

Informative presentations in the building's theatre will feature such topics as "Visualizing Your Forest," a computer software program that shows how decisions made today affect the forest in the future; "Forests in DNA," a look at what tree molecular geneticists do with DNA once isolated; and "The History of Deer in Pennsylvania," a look at the changes Pennsylvania deer have faced as the state has become more urbanized and less agriculturally based.

The schedule of presentations in the College Exhibits Building theatre follows:

Tuesday, Aug. 19

10 a.m. — The Arboretum at Penn State
11 a.m. — Visualizing Your Forest
Noon — The American Chestnut
1 p.m. — Visualizing Your Forest
3 p.m. — Western Pa. Conservancy Video "Upstream, Downstream: Preserving Our Way of Life"

Wednesday, Aug. 20

10 a.m. — The Arboretum at Penn State
11 a.m. — Visualizing Your Forest
Noon — American Chestnut
1 p.m. — History of Deer in Pa.
2 p.m. — Visualizing Your Forest
3 p.m. — Western Pa. Conservancy Video "Upstream, Downstream: Preserving Our Way of Life"
4 p.m. — Forests in DNA
5 p.m. — History of Deer in Pa.
6 p.m. — Visualizing Your Forest

Thursday, Aug. 21

10 a.m. — Town Meeting — House Ag Committee
11 a.m. — Town Meeting — House Ag Committee
Noon — American Chestnut
1 p.m. — Visualizing Your Forest
2 p.m. — Western Pa. Conservancy Video "Upstream, Downstream: Preserving Our Way of Life"

Penn State's Ag Progress Days is conducted at the Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center at Rockspring, nine miles southwest of State College on Rt. 45.

For more information, call (800) PSU-1010 toll-free until Aug. 21 or visit the Ag Progress Days Website at <http://apd.cas.psu.edu>.

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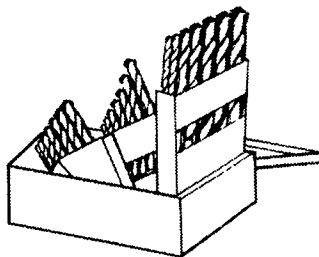
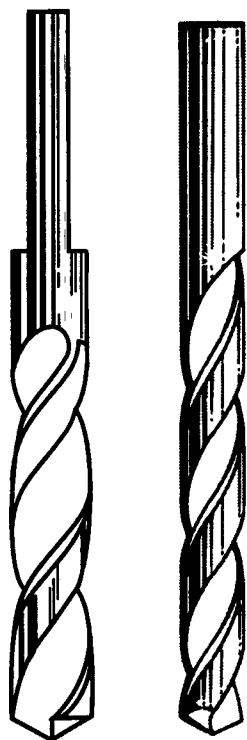
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