

PDA, Penn State Unveil Facility

(Continued from Page A20)

groups on the same environment and feed.

After the on-site test, animals are offered for sale during select times of the year.

The multipurpose facility construction began in spring 2002 and the finishing touches are still being applied.

Santini noted there are several factors the facility takes into account: feed efficiency, reproduction capabilities, and muscle lean-to-fat ratio.

A goat was recently sold that netted about \$900, noted Santini, during a goat test sale in early August. Average prices paid at the sale ranged from \$300-\$400.

The Sales Arena has a seating capacity of 700. The facility is continually lit by halogen bulbs, providing light for a workstation area, bedding areas, and test areas.

Included in the design is a western-style exercise lot that is gravity self-cleaning. The sides are ridged to allow manure to flow away into a collection area, where it is hauled to a holding facility. A challenge could lie in where the concrete meets the gravel.

The exercise lot readily manages water flow, even during heavy rains. Rainwater is directed to several lined drainage basins around the facility. Included is a quarantine area to restrict movement of animals to enhance biosecurity.

According to site director Glenn Eberly, the bull test facility is ten times larger than the former site, the meat animal evaluation center, at University Park. The new site can hold about 150 bulls or 300 steers.

The bull-testing program will house 15 bulls in each of five pens in a 112-day official feeding test program.

Information to consignors and buyers includes breeder's name and address, birth weight, 205-day adjusted weaning

weight, 365-day adjusting yearling weight, 112-day average daily gain, on-test feed efficiency, off-test weight, farm score, off-test ultrasonic estimates of fat thickness and ribeye area, weight per day of age, yearling scrotal circumference, yearling pelvic area, and expected progeny differences for growth and maternal traits.

The bull test sale is conducted the same week as the Beef Expo in late March each year.

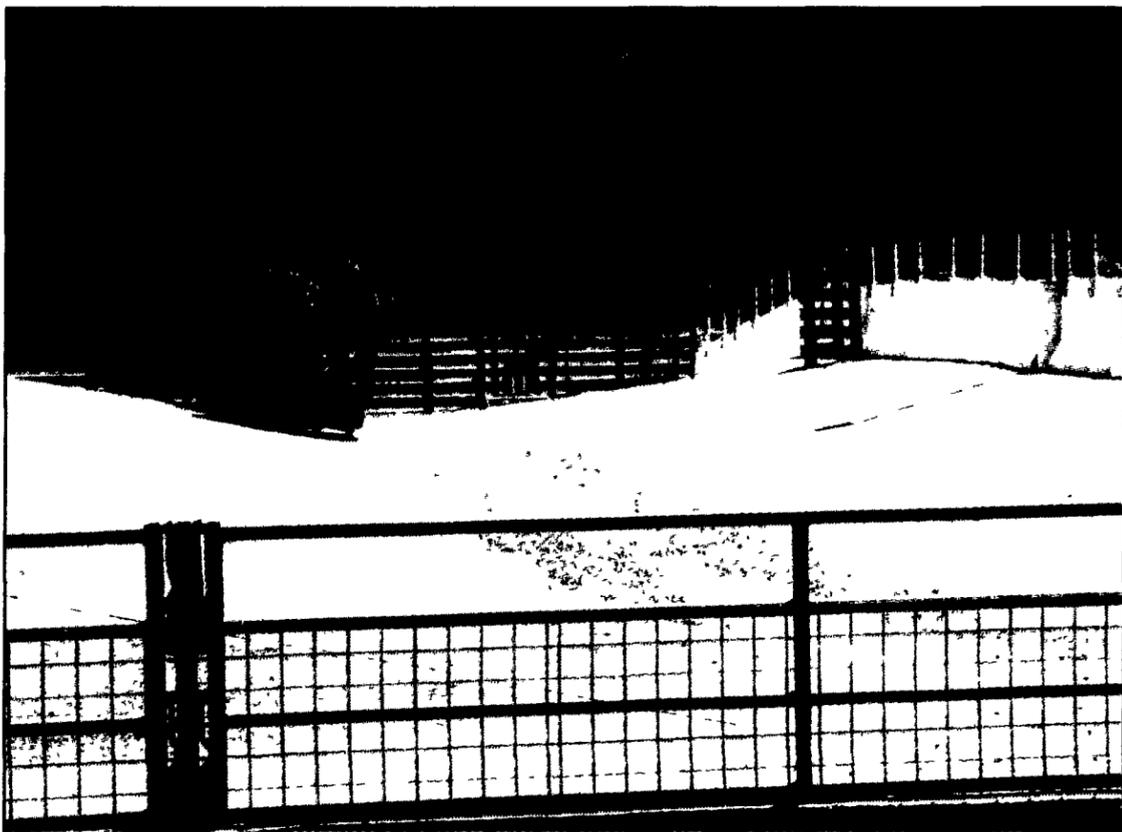
The ram testing program and sale includes breeds divided into several groups, with several other factors that must be met.

Rams are tested and fed in a similar environment, and the top 75 percent within any breed and/or breed group will sell.

Information includes the same as the bull group, including sire and dam, birth type, fat thickness, shoulder height, loin eye area, and scrotal circumference.

The swine testing program consignments includes boars born during the month of January. The test program houses four pigs (barrows or gilts) in each of 20 pens in a feeding test program that lasts about 90 days. At the conclusion of test, consignors can select two of the four pigs for exhibition at the state Farm Show. They are judged on on-foot competition and are then tested for carcass measurements. Premiums are earned for on-foot placement and percent acceptable lean. And overall champion and Reserves are selected on the basis of lean gain per day.

The test facility is staffed seven days a week and is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. For more information about the program, contact Glenn Eberly, Director, Pennsylvania Meat Animal Evaluation Center, 1494 West Pine Grove Road, Pennsylvania Furnace, PA 16865, (717) 783-5222 or (814) 238-2527.



The western-style exercise lot uses a gravity design to handle manure.



Glenn Eberly, Livestock Evaluation Center director, center, answers questions to a tour group at the center Tuesday.

Farm Bureau Calls For Limits On 'Clean And Green' Land Values

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Pennsylvania Farm Bureau last week called for passage of legislation that would limit property valuation benefits solely to land for agricultural use under the Commonwealth's "Clean and Green" program. Portions of land that fall under "forest reserve" and "agricultural reserve" categories are receiving the property valuation benefits originally sought by farmers for production agriculture.

Testifying before the Pennsylvania House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee in sup-

port of House Bill 657, Farm Bureau said the extension of property valuation benefits to land not actively used for agriculture misdirects the program and fuels opposition to the Clean and Green Act itself by some local taxing jurisdictions.

House Bill 657 would remove tax benefits to the "base acre" portion of forest reserve and agriculture reserve lands. Amendments to the Clean and Green Act in 1998 required base acres of all properties enrolled in the program to receive the tax benefit. A "base acre" is the portion of property that surrounds the home, farm

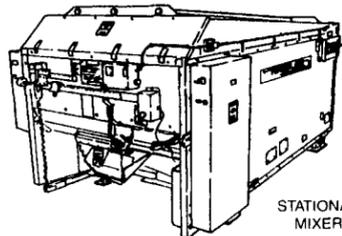
buildings and other buildings on land enrolled for Clean and Green valuation. The bill would retain the benefit for properties used in agricultural production.

Including base acres of forest reserve and agricultural reserve lands provides needless benefits for "min-estates" and other properties, said John J. Bell, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's Governmental Affairs Counsel, who presented the organization's testimony.

State lawmakers were also cautioned by Farm Bureau against making comprehensive changes to the Clean and Green Act.



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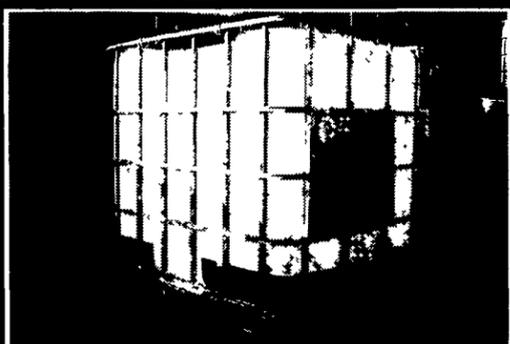
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