

Fall Harvest At Pepperbox Set For Oct. 25

LAUREL, Del. — The only event on the Delmarva Peninsula featuring real horsepower at work is set for Saturday, Oct. 25 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event is sponsored by the Delmarva Driving Club, Inc.

Visitors may choose to ride with members providing the horsedrawn shuttles from the parking area to the event site, where they can see field work done by horses, observe a portable sawmill in operation, help make and taste fresh apple cider,

ride a horse or in a wagon, pet some farm animals, or just reminisce with friends about "how it used to be done, in the old days."

Hosted by Ed and Lois Evans on their farm east of Laurel, near Trap Pond in the tiny area locally known as Pepperbox, the event draws draft horse farmers and collectors of farm equipment, classic and antique cars, trucks, tractors, engines along with other memorabilia.

Ongoing exhibitions will include an operating portable saw-

mill, basket weaving, wool spinning, chair caning, blacksmithing, and woodcarving. An encampment of Civil War reenactors, primarily from the 46th Virginia Infantry, Company F, will be demonstrating living history. Vendors will be set up and will offer their varied wares — ceramics, paintings, jewelry, woodcrafts, baskets, tack, embroidery, candles, jams — all will be on display and available for sale.

The carriage museum, an old kitchen, chicken coop, harness

and tool sheds will be open to visitors. Live music will add to the festivities throughout the day. To wrap up the day, a parade at 2:30 p.m. will showcase the horses and antique machinery.

The Delmarva Driving Club was founded in 1983 to keep the skills of driving horses alive, and strives to be a link between transportation and farming methods used a hundred years ago and today's sport of driving horses. Club members and friends not actively involved with the various

horse-oriented activities during the day offer coffee and scrapple sandwiches for early arrivals, plus a wide selection of items for sale, including homemade chili, vegetable soup, fried chicken platters, baked goods, and ice cream.

For more information or to register as an exhibitor or vendor, call (302) 875-4971. The Delmarva Driving Club invites families and old-timers alike to join in the fun at Fall Harvest at Pepperbox east of Trap Pond, just south of Rt. 24.

USDA Expands Pilot Internet Payment System

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman last week announced that USDA is expanding its pilot e-LDP program to 50 counties, with every state having one participating county. The service, which allows producers to request and receive loan deficiency payments (LDPs) online, has been available as a pilot program in 21 counties since May 2002.

"This program saves America's farmers and ranchers time,

energy and money, and it is an example of how USDA is harnessing the power of the Internet to better serve producers," said Veneman. "The pilot program is part of the Administration's e-Government initiative, the government-wide effort to use technology to better serve individuals and businesses across the country."

The program allows producers to apply for and receive LDPs online from remote locations

such as their homes or offices. Participating farmers no longer have to travel to USDA Service Centers to receive their benefits. As a result, the program reduces paperwork load and speeds up payment processing.

The 29 new counties in which the pilot program is being implemented are: Cherokee County, Ala.; Delta County, Alaska; Pinal County, Ariz.; Glenn County, Calif.; Adams County, Colo.; Windham County, Conn.; Sussex

County, Del.; Calhoun County, Fla.; Mitchell County, Ga.; Honolulu County, Hawaii; Latah County, Idaho; Waldo County, Maine; Harford County, Md.; Hampshire County, Mass.; Montgomery County, Miss.; Humboldt County, Nev.; Coos County, N.H.; Burlington County, N.J.; Dona Ana County, N.M.; Monroe County, N.Y.; Gilliam County, Ore.; Washington County, R.I.; Sumter County, S.C.; Box Elder County, Utah; Caledonia Coun-

ty, Vt.; Westmoreland County, Va.; Whitman County, Wash.; Mason County, W.Va.; and Goshen County, Wyo.

Participation in the pilot e-LDP program is limited to producers in the selected counties. The length of the pilot is yet to be determined. For more information on the pilot e-LDP service or other USDA programs, contact the USDA Service Center nearest you or your local FSA county office.

10 States To Get Funds For Ag Innovation Centers

WASHINGTON, D.C. — \$10 million in grants to establish agricultural innovation centers in 10 states has been awarded by the USDA as part of the Bush Administration's ongoing effort to assist rural businesses, farmers and ranchers in developing value-added businesses through greater utilization of production

agriculture commodities.

The 2002 Farm Bill created the program to provide technical and business development assistance to increase and improve the ability of agricultural producers to develop markets and processes for value-added agricultural commodities and products.

The following is a list of the re-

cipients selected for funding: Michigan State University \$ 999,860; Montana State University \$1,000,000; Cornell University, New York \$ 993,200; Agricultural Utilization Research Institute, Minnesota \$1,000,000; Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship \$1,000,000;

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania \$ 996,935; Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey \$1,000,000; Kansas Department of Commerce \$1,000,000; Purdue University, Indiana \$1,000,000; and North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives \$1,000,000.

"These centers will give rural businesses, farmers and ranchers a new resource to help them create new markets for their commodities," said Agricultural Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas C. Dorr.

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