

Berks Extension Association Reflects On 89th Year



Berks County Cooperative Extension Association board members, from left, Judy Hospidor-Earnest, president; Kenneth Sanner, vice president; Travis Werley, treasurer; and Laura Kennedy, secretary.

LOU ANN GOOD
Food And Family
Features Editor

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — Berks County Extension Association serves as a resource to many, but Monday evening was an opportunity for staff, volunteers, and community members to learn together.

At the 89th annual banquet, Mary Bach, Pennsylvania's consumer advocate, presented compelling evidence for consumers to know the laws in order to become shopping savvy.

As extension enters its 90th year, Richard Kauffman, director, said that many challenges lie ahead. Especially pressing are the funding uncertainties. Extension must find new ways to fund extensive programing. Publication fees for 4-H have been implemented. Staffing continues to be downsized, and new ways to continue to operate are being explored.

Although changes are necessary, Kauffman said that one thing will not change. "Our focus on our clientele and dedicated

service to Berks County will remain."

Judy Hospidor-Earnest, president of the board, said, "This year's budget challenges have strengthened us as a board

and as a statewide community."

This past year, the extension hosted the first legislative committee breakfast, 4-H cost recovery program initiatives, and the implementation of a network computer system.

The family living advisory committee guides programing to meet community needs. Some of these outreaches included programs on coping with stress, grief, and diabetes and other health problems, and weight control. Workshops are also offered on sweatshirt recycling, and creating hats and scarves to donate to local emergency shelters.

Food safety is big issue that extension programing addresses through workshops, articles, and radio reports. More than 300 food handlers completed the extension course for sanitation certification.

Better Kid Care and family strength programing offer additional resources.

Through 4-H programing in schools and community, youth are served.

Some of the adult workshops include teaching on grazing, gardening, horticulture, turf management, marketing farm products, and providing educational support for farmers and landowners.

Extension outreach is not limited to Berks County. Fay Strickler, family living agent, served as the national president for cooperative extensions' professional organization representing more than 8,000 members.

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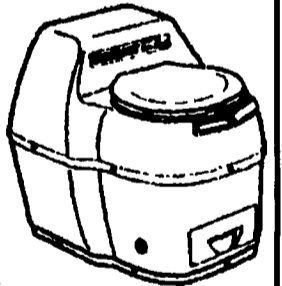


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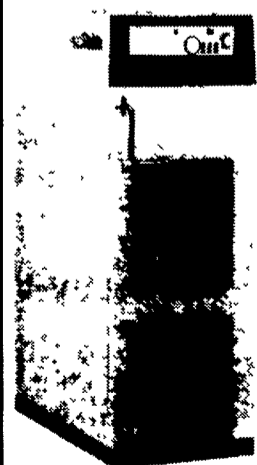
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