

Center Preserves Virginia's Agriculture, Wildlife Legacy

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the 43 acres that later became a commercial beef and poultry operation for two educators.

Planners recognize the integral value of intertwining fun with facts. So while the entire family is absorbing the reasons why agriculture was, is, and always will be life-sustaining, they will be entertained and amused participants. They will have an opportunity to get "up close and personal" with livestock species and small animals.

Just try milking a cow by hand, or gathering delicate fresh eggs, for instance. Or touch the furry animals, pet or brush their coats.

Besides entry gates, biosecurity measures prior to and following any contact with the animals will include disinfecting hands at dispensers similar to those in hospitals, and passing through a foot bath that allows ones shoes to be cleaned.

Among the species at the center:

- Hogs — no males, but four sows of different breeds and in various stages of gestation and farrowing. Piglets will be kept with their mothers until they are weaned.
- Goats — guests will be able



Promoting the Virginia Agriculture and Nature Centers promotional T-shirt, from left, Linda Cox, Susan Allen, and Eugenia Nelson. Photo by Gay Brownlee, Virginia Correspondent.

to milk a pair of female goats of different breeds and two other breeds will represent meat goats.

- Sheep — six breeds will show how the contribution of sheep to society is primarily wool and meat.
- Rabbits — their value as fur producers and meat animals.
- Poultry — six to 12 laying hens and broilers of varying ages. Also turkey poults and pullets.

- Dairy — during the calving season — March to November — cows will be at the center. A big black and white Holstein milked with automatic equipment will exhibit the modern methods, but confident visitors may try their skill at extracting milk by hand from the more sedate Jersey or Guernsey cow.
- Beef — two breeds of beef cows will be represented and alternative animals will include emu, llama, and beefalo.

There will be an emphasis on the environment, water, crops and wildlife.

In the off-season, staff will conduct visitations to nursing homes, civic organizations and schools, taking smaller species. The petting zoo and walking trail will be closed in the off-season from November to March.

Guest David Liskey, president of the Spotswood FFA, announced the Spotswood Chapter is constructing a progress sign for the foundation.

"We are glad to come and help sponsor this event," he said. "We would like to get more involved in the community."

For more information, call (540) 289-5052 or e-mail vaagandnature@aol.com.

Field Day Examines How To Breed A Top Dairy Herd

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — More than 120 farmers attended the "Breeding for a Top Dairy Herd" Field Day on Nov. 19 at Mar-R farms, the home of Marvin and Ruth Stoltzfus and their six children. The program was provided by Penn State Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County.

The Stoltzfus family milks 50 cows, with the distinction of holding one of the highest rolling herd averages in Lancaster County. The farm's November test showed 33,000 pounds of milk, with 1,213 pounds of butterfat and 947 pounds of protein.

When asked the secret of the farm's success, Stoltzfus gives credit to plenty of high quality forages. He keeps fresh feed in front of the cows at all times, feeding 6-8 times each day. The farm milks the cows on a 10-hour schedule. By including one 8-hour interval weekly, they can keep the same milking time on a given day of the week during the year. All of the milking is done by the family.

In selecting bulls, Stoltzfus selects primarily on TPI and lifetime net merit, while keeping strength in the dairy herd. He prefers to use bulls at least +.00 on strength, and emphasizes the

importance of longevity in the herd.

Several topics were covered in the program, including "Choosing Bulls for Your Dairy Herd," "Type and Profitability," and "Systematic AI Programs." Speakers included Dr. Stephen Foulke of Ag Vet Associates in Manheim, Dr. Barry Harris of Smoketown Veterinarians, Dr. Chad Dechow from Penn State, Douglas Speicher from Genex/CRI, and Jeff Myers and Beth Grove of Penn State Cooperative Extension.

Dechow presented a talk on "Crossbreeding in the Dairy Herd." He explained reasons why dairy producers would consider crossbreeding, including the possibility of increased fertility or longevity in a herd. Dechow also discussed the concept of "heterosis" or the additional production yield (about 5 percent) expected in a cross between two distinct breeds. He also spoke about some foreign breeds which may be considered in an effective crossbreeding scheme, including the Scandinavian Red.

After the morning's program, attendees were treated to a barbecue chicken meal and tour of the facilities.

Penn State Pesticide Education Garners National Recognition

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Penn State's Pesticide Education Program recently was one of four such state programs to be recognized as models by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In its publication, "Helping People Use Pesticides Safely," USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service highlighted the pesticide safety education programs at Penn State, Purdue University, North Carolina State University and Washington State University, saying that the programs "demonstrate the commitment to excellence shared by most pesticide safety education programs."

Nationally, pesticide safety education training is coordinated by USDA-CSREES at land-grant universities. Funding is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, state governments and other sources.

Led by John Ayers, professor of plant pathology, the Penn State program was cited for making "great strides in addressing urban concerns about pesticide issues." The publication noted the program's outreach initiatives and its leadership of Penn State's West Nile Virus educational efforts.

The program also was lauded for producing a series of consumer fact sheets, and for creating educational materials aimed at children — including a computer-based game — featuring the cartoon character, D.B. Pest. Kerry Richards, manager of the program's Pest Management Information Center, developed D.B. Pest to teach such concepts as integrated pest management, alternatives to pesticide use and safe use of pesticides when necessary.

In 2002, Penn State's Pesticide Education Program trained more than 5,200 new pesticide applicators and recertified another 25,600. In addition, the program reached more than 45,000 people through educational sessions for consumer groups, 4-H youth, school children, educators, Master Gardeners and others.

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Presentation On Scrapie Control Available

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — A PowerPoint presentation that explains how and when producers can use genetics to control scrapie is now available and was introduced at the American Veterinary Medical Association's Annual Convention in July. The title of the presentation is "Genotyping — A New Tool for Producers."

"This presentation has been designed for direct use by producers or by veterinarians, professors, extension agents, youth program leaders, and others who may be addressing producer groups," explains Dr. Cindy Wolf, a small ruminant specialist at the University of Minnesota and Chair of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture's (NIAA) Sheep Health Committee.

The presentation has an extensive notes section, a glossary and an appendix that were developed to assist the presenter with their presentation.

The presentation is available for viewing or downloading at www.animalagriculture.org/scrapie, or as a compact disc (CD) through NIAA.