

Life Sav.

Lancaster Farming

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Danville Swine Producers Install Innovative Manure-Handling Setup

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Lancaster Farming Staff
Editor's note: "Making An Impact" will be a new series of features on young farmers who are creating their own success. The first of a regular (not necessarily weekly) series focuses on a successful swine operation in Northumberland County. Future issues will focus on farmers in Luzerne and Berks counties, in addition to state and regional programs affecting new and beginning farmers.

DANVILLE (Northumberland Co.) — Caressa Crone's goal is to raise hogs profitably, in a way that minimizes stress on the animals, her family, and everybody else involved, including neighbors.

Crone, along with her husband Richard and father-in-law Stanley Crone, are willing to take some risks in reaching that goal.

The Crones manage two 1,100-head finishing barns, built last year for feeding contract hogs. The facilities include an automatic hog sorting system, along with an unconventional pen design that provides a lot of mobility for the animals and fits well with manure storage plans.

Their latest project is a digester manure system that will produce biogas (largely methane) to generate electricity. Digested manure will be returned to pits under the hog barns for storage.

Odor control is one of the main benefits the Crones expect from the new manure system. At this point, the farm is surrounded by supportive neighbors, but new housing developments are being built in the area — bringing a greater chance for negative reactions.

Heading off potential problems is part of a "professional" approach to hog farming, according to Caressa Crone.

"We've got to be responsible in the way we conduct ourselves," she said. "We're professionals, just like the doctor and the lawyer."

With two sons — Rusty, 9, and Sam, 6 — Crone is interested in making the farm and neighborhood an attractive place for the next generation.

"We care about the environment and what we leave our children," she said.

Manure digestion technology has been around for decades. What sets the Crones' system apart is the way storage will be handled.

Under the slatted floors in each section of the hog (Turn to Page A34)



Making An Impact

A FOCUS ON YOUNG FARMERS



The Crone family, including Caressa, right, and her father-in-law Stanley, center, are working with Penn State and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture on a digester system that will produce biogas from hog manure on their Northumberland County farm. The gas will be used to generate electricity to run the farm's two finishing barns. Joining the Crones is Robert J. Meinen, Penn State senior extension associate. Photo by Dave Lefever

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Caressa Crone

PASA's Farming For The Future Conference Feb. 5-7

BRIAN SNYDER
Centre Co. Correspondent
STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) will conduct its 13th annual Farming for the Future Conference Feb. 5-7 here at the Penn Stater Conference Center and Hotel.

This year's theme is "Path-

ways to Prosperity: The New Face of Agriculture." Once again the PASA conference will combine inspirational stories and practical information along with first-rate keynote addresses and cutting edge workshops. About 100 farmers, activists, and educators make up the list of presenters for this year's newly expanded program.

Keynote speakers this year include renowned author and sustainable business leader Paul Hawken, and Anuradha Mittal, a native of India who is co-director of Food First/The Institute for Food and Development Policy in Oakland, Calif.

A record of more than sixty (Turn to Page A36)



Larry Specht, left, was recognized Wednesday evening for his years of service to the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association and the industry, as he begins his retirement. He is congratulated by Ken Teel. More about the awards program on page A22. Photo by Charlene Shupp Espenshade

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Local Food On Campus: Farmers, Colleges Collaborate

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff
WEST CHESTER (Chester Co.) — College students get excited about locally-grown food. That's what coordinators of a new farm-to-college program are finding out. College food directors who buy local are noticing it, too. "Students love it," said Janet Kassab, food purchasing director at Swarthmore College in Delaware County. "They constantly tell us."

Kassab buys apples and other fruit on a seasonal basis from nearby Indian Orchards to serve in the college dining hall. "It's very popular and very well received," she said. Swarthmore is one of a number of colleges in Pennsylvania so far that are willing to buy local food. Beside produce, food directors are showing interest in purchasing local milk and meats as well.

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