

2003: A Year Of Big Changes

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ice farms and get the product delivered.

At its annual convention, the Pennsylvania Holstein Association inducted Ray and Barbara McMillan and Harold and Lena Umble into the Pennsylvania Holstein Hall of Fame.

March

Lancaster Farming published a report from Cattle-Fax, a market analysis and information organization from Denver, Colo., which predicted fed cattle prices in 2003 would average \$73-\$74 per hundredweight, about \$6 per hundredweight higher than in 2002.

The Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council conducted its annual conference featuring the Roche brothers of Ireland. The Roches spoke about grazing and forage systems in Ireland and New Zealand.

The Pennsylvania Beef Expo in State College included one of the largest junior shows in the history of the expo.

April

A conference in Harrisburg outlined ways to prevent agroterrorism. Penn State student Jennifer Flinchbaugh gave a presentation, noting that the purposeful introduction by terrorists of harmful organisms to livestock and/or the food supply is "a distinct possibility."

Penn-Mar Ethanol, LLC announced plans to begin building a facility in southcentral Pennsylvania to produce about 50 million gallons of ethanol from corn.

The Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors gathered in Hershey for its annual convention, which included a presentation by attorney Charles Zaleski. Zaleski told the group that townships must allow for large-scale agricultural enterprises in comprehensive plans.

The possibility of building a biodiesel plant in the area was brought to light by leaders of the Regional Economic Development District Initiative based in Harrisburg. The group conducted meetings in Berks and Adams counties to gather farmer input on the idea.

Terry Barr, chief economist with the National Association of Farm Cooperatives, told farm credit company officers and ag industry representatives at a conference in Harrisburg that dairy processors will need to work together to "counterweigh what's happening on the retail side" through giants such as Wal-Mart.

Pennsylvania secretaries of agriculture and environmental protection Dennis Wolff and Kathleen McGinty, respectively, met at an ag forum to discuss agricultural and environmental issues and how their two departments can cooperate to promote environmental stewardship in the state.

The Pennsylvania State Grange con-

ducted its annual legislative luncheon under the banner of "Grange Month," designated as April by the Rendell Administration and the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

May

East Cocalico Township near Ephrata proposed to drill a test well on the Paul B. Zimmerman farm, which is part of a 500-acre Ag Security Area. Zimmerman and neighbors opposed the township's plans. After drilling, and attempting twice to determine if the well could produce a suitable public water supply, the township said this fall that it was abandoning the site.

Canada announced the discovery of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), also known as mad cow disease, in a single cow in Alberta. U.S. cattle organizations worked quickly to assure the country that the domestic beef supply was safe, and officials closed the border to Canadian cattle and ruminant meats.

Dairy producers learned about CWT (cooperatives working together), a voluntary plan created by the National Milk Producers Federation to reduce cow numbers and the nation's milk supply in an effort to improve milk prices on the farm. The plan met with considerable opposition and was eventually scaled back to about one third of the original scope hoped for by planners.

Pennsylvania Ag Secretary Dennis Wolff announced the appointment of a new Farm Show team, consisting of Bill Wehry, deputy secretary; Edward Nielsen, Farm Show director; and

Larry Weaver, chief of show management.

June

June Dairy Month featured stories of dairy farmers who have found ways to remain successful despite record-low milk prices.

A hog farming summit in Gettysburg drew a diverse crowd, from environmental activists led by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., to pastured pork producers, direct marketers, and large-scale hog producers. Meanwhile, a proposed hog finishing operation created controversy in southern York County, as neighbors aired concerns about possible odor emissions.

Controversy continued over

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) legislation for ag products, mandated by U.S. Congress in the 2002 Farm Bill. About 150 people, representing most commodity groups, gathered in Lancaster for a meeting on the issue led by William Sessions, deputy administrator with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. Thirty speakers gave a diversity of opinions, for and against the legislation.

International Harvester enthusiasts gathered in Bloomsburg for the 14th Annual Red Power Roundup.

The National Holstein Convention took place in Winston Salem, N.C.

Eric Rubenstein,

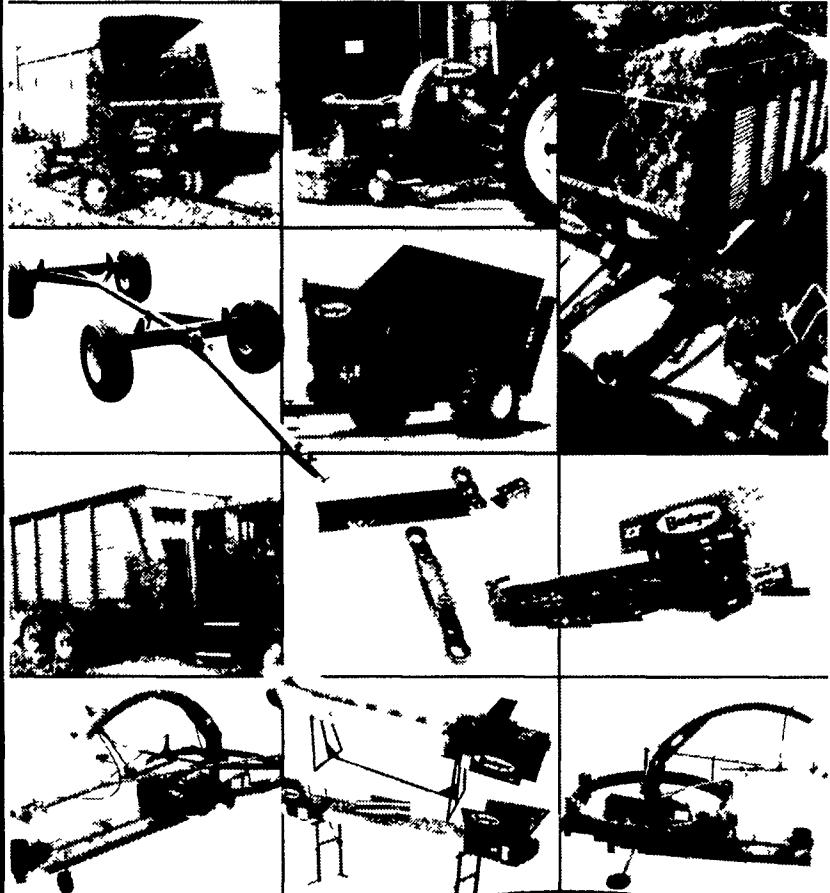
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A cornfield near Farmersville, Lancaster County, was one of many devastated by winds from Tropical Storm Isabel in September. Photo by Andy Andrews, editor



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