

Agricultural Profitability and Natural Resources

CAMERON

CENTRE

CLEARFIELD

CLINTON

ELK

JEFFERSON

MCKEAN

POTTER

- Dairy farmers, like other business people, need expertise in record keeping and managing finances. The 14 farmers who attended the financial management session at the *Extension Farming Alternatives Workshop* in DuBois, registered a 71 percent average increase in knowledge on balance sheets and a 150 percent average increase in knowledge on income statements.
- Extension agents in Centre County conducted a daylong course to teach dairy farmers how to use the QUICKEN® software program for record keeping. Following the course, an agent visited each dairy farm to assist the farmers at their own computers. As a result of the course and one-on-one instruction, the farmers were able to start the new year using the Penn State Farm Accounting Quicken® template.
- A *Milk Marketing Workshop* in Coudersport offered local dairy producers a chance to gain a better understanding of milk marketing and the changes in milk pricing and marketing in the United States. Dr. Ken Bailey, a Penn State specialist who is a nationally known expert in these areas, answered producers' questions. Dr. Bailey's *Dairy Outlook* maintains a Web site at www.aers.psu.edu/dairyoutlook.
- A workshop held in DuBois covered the legal aspects of transferring a farm to a younger generation. Those who attended gained insights to the legal process and learned how to value timber assets on their farms for estate planning.
- At the start of a *Dairy Feeder Workshop*, only one out of nine participants was routinely conducting dry matter determinations to ascertain whether their cows were being fed to potential. When the workshop concluded, seven participants planned to start. The Coudersport-area workshop showed producers how to evaluate forage dry matters using microwaves, how to test feed pH levels, and how to measure the quality of particle sizes in forage.
- Farmers and growers can spray their crops with pesticides themselves and save the cost of hiring someone else to do it. However, they must have a private applicator's license to certify their understanding of safety issues and environmental stewardship. In Potter, McKean, and Jefferson Counties, 457 people received pesticide update training and credits toward renewal of their pesticide licenses. Two pesticide examination tests were offered at local test sites.
- It follows that healthy cow-calf herds are essential to healthy income and profitability for beef producers. The 13 local producers who attended an extension *Beef Health Workshop* in Port Allegany learned from Dr. Tom Drake, Penn State extension veterinarian, how to use vaccines and de-wormers to keep their cattle healthy. With a better understanding of vaccines, they can discontinue wasteful practices such as blanket vaccinations and replace them with cost-effective measures and programs.
- Nine out of the ten farm operators who attended *Farming Alternatives: Evaluating New and Nontraditional Enterprises for Your Farm or Natural Resource-based Business* said the course enabled them to identify and apply the basic business principles necessary to effectively operate a small business. All ten attendees completed feasibility studies to provide a realistic picture of the character and likely success of their new businesses.
- The *North Central Vegetable Producers Conference* in Coudersport provided the information and experience 20 attendees needed to make informed decisions relative to short- and long-term vegetable disease management. Follow-up evaluations revealed substantial gains in the producers' knowledge and their ability to adopt the information and practices presented in the conference.

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- The annual *Pennsylvania and New York Horticulture Producers Conference* in Bradford attracted 75 people. They were there to learn about greenhouse engineering, lighting, and pest control; hydroponics; high tunnel production; and drip irrigation for vegetable production. A follow-up evaluation indicated the effectiveness of the conference. On a scale of 0 to 4 (lowest to highest), the mean gain in knowledge was 3.6.
- In Ridgway, a six-session training course for home gardeners attracted 40 people interested in learning more about intensive vegetable gardening, tree fruit production, plant propagation, native landscape plants, and other topics. Gardeners gave the course high marks. All 40 cited an improvement in their knowledge of plants best suited to their own garden/landscape needs. And they listed 44 new gardening practices they learned.
- Extension provided a production training program for 31 farm operators who are borrowers from the Farm Service Agency (FSA). All 31 successfully completed the five-day, 25-hour training program, required by the 1990 Farm Bill for farmers to receive continued servicing of their agency loan accounts.
- The *Northwest Pennsylvania Grazing Conference* introduced the latest information about current grazing programs to 129 producers. According to the feedback, the producers learned new ideas and intend to adopt them.
- An estimated 25,000 coyotes roam the Commonwealth. A program conducted by Tom Tomsa Jr., district supervisor with the USDA Wildlife Services in Harrisburg, helped residents of McKean, Elk, and Cameron Counties, and neighbors from New York's Allegheny and Cattaraugus Counties identify the animals and the damage they can do. Eighty-six percent of the 21 attendees indicated they would be able to identify and control coyote damage on their property.
- Soils are a key component of the earth system, and it is important for students to understand the relationship of soil to the environment. Extension education taught 80 Kane Middle School students in McKean County the characteristics of soil, how soil relates to water quality, and how to read a soil survey. The workshop was one of several conducted while the students participated in a national education program on learning about the environment around their school.
- Because sweet corn is subject to insect attack throughout the growing season, farmers need sound insect control strategies to prevent damage and to produce a marketable crop. Traditionally, they spray on a calendar basis once pests begin to appear in the fields. Extension offered farmers in Clinton, Centre, and Potter Counties a better alternative. The Integrated Pest Management program monitored the corn earworm, European corn borer (E and Z strain), and the fall armyworm and advised farmers when to spray. By tightening their spray schedules, they were able to decrease opportunities for insect damage and increase their chances for profitability.
- According to the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association, 2000 people accessed the sweet corn pest monitoring information on the Penn State Web site. Several hundred used the 1-800-PENN-IPM hotline, 145 received weekly updates by mail, and 80 received weekly updates by fax. Data of weekly trapping of insects can be found at <http://www.ento.psu.edu/vegetable/sweetcorn/default.htm>.
- Penn State professor Mike Orzolek documented favorable responses in yields from a Centre County trial of colored plastic mulch on melons. The trial was conducted to transfer successful research-based technology from Penn State research farms to the local agricultural community.
- A single ladybug may consume as many as 5,000 aphids in its lifetime. Yet, these beneficial insects are often destroyed by spraying landscapers who cannot recognize the ladybug in its egg mass or larval stage. An extension-led *Pest Walk* on the Lock Haven University campus pointed out beneficial and harmful insects and diseases in the landscape. Before the walk, 90 percent of the landscapers who participated could not identify the ladybug in its larval stage; afterward, everyone could.
- Cooperative Extension provided leadership to assist with the development of the Quality Hunting Ecology (QHE) management areas that promote ethical hunting and sound wildlife management. In McKean County, 136 landowners and sports enthusiasts attended a public meeting to learn more about the newly formed Kinzua Quality Deer Cooperative (KQDC). The 51,500-acre cooperative, in the northwest corner of the county, will require the involvement of landowners, hunters, and managers to institute the goals and objectives of the organization. Thirty-nine local people volunteered to help the KQDC with deer check stations, deer density estimates, breeding bird studies, and wildlife counts.
- The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) cites logging as one of the most dangerous occupations in the United States. Compliance with OSHA's Logging Standards can eliminate many fatal accidents and greatly reduce the number of lost workday injuries in the industry. The *Loggers and Sawmillers Spring Safety Meeting* in the Kane Armory taught 185 loggers more about OSHA safety training. In another meeting, 24 women from the surrounding area learned about OSHA and Logging Safety Guidelines.
- Logger education programs are vital to sustainability of Pennsylvania forests and the economic well-being of communities. In Stone Valley, 15 *Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)* trainers attended a continuing education course that will help them provide loggers with advanced training on erosion and sedimentation control during timber harvests.
- A workshop in Warren County provided 33 interested natural resource professionals, hunting sports enthusiasts, and private forest owners with information about deer density as it relates to the carrying capacity of the habitat. A similar workshop at the Kinzua Quality Deer Cooperative attracted 20 residents of McKean and Potter Counties. Evaluations indicated a 100 percent satisfaction rating for the workshop.
- *Forest Health 2000*, held in DuBois, offered insights to the health of our forests, current research on tree problems, and an outlook on important forest insects and diseases in Pennsylvania's North Central and Western Regions. The conference drew 200 foresters and natural resource professionals. Participants earned continuing education credits toward pest certification from the Society of American Foresters.

- Silvicultural practices are used to manage hardwood forests. More than one million acres of private and public forestland is in the care of the 59 foresters from five states who received silvicultural practices training in the Kane Experimental Forest in Elk County. Attendees gained hands-on experience in the use of SILVAH version 5.1, an inventory, analysis, and computer decision-making expert computer system.
- *Sustainable Forestry 2*, a train-the-trainer workshop, drew 17 loggers and foresters who plan to become instructors. The continuing education course helps loggers and foresters to assess the sustainability of timber harvests before they are cut. Ninety percent of the participants said the workshop increased their knowledge of silviculture and offered information that could improve timber harvesting in Pennsylvania.
- More than 17,389 acres of forestland is privately owned by those who attended a forest and wildlife management workshop sponsored by Penn State Cooperative Extension in cooperation with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Forestry, and the North Central Forest Landowners Association. The workshop could have a far-reaching effect. An evaluation revealed an overall increase in participants' knowledge of workshop topics of 50 percent or more.
- Cooperative Extension provided leadership and assistance for the formation of the North Central Forest Landowners Association, whose purpose is to promote good forest management. Some 100 members manage more than 300,000 acres. Fifty-four private forest landowners and natural resource professionals attended an association-sponsored public meeting to learn about the new system for calculating clean-and-green average land-use values on forestlands in all counties.
- *A Woods Walk* in Potter County provided information on herbicide use, forest regeneration, deer damage to seedlings, and the advantages and disadvantages of deer enclosures. The program was well received by 16 participants and led to four more woods walks.
- Like students, teachers continue to learn new things. The 23 elementary and secondary teachers who attended the *Forest Resources Institute for Teachers (FRIT)* program learned about tree identification, forest management and measurement techniques, and forest industry awareness. They received Intermediate Unit and University graduate credit for attending the program at the Warren County Cooperative Extension facility.
- An essay contest on *Forest Stewardship* became a pathway for 32 eighth-grade youth from McKean, Elk, Forest, and Warren Counties to participate in a *Natural Resources Conference in Ludlow*. The students and their teachers learned about tree value, forest management, and wildlife management in riparian areas. Teams developed management plans for a typical forest ownership.
- Lessons about tree value, from a wood, wildlife, and water perspective, were delivered to 367 students in the Kane Area School District. The youngsters attended an environmental education program at the Kane Experimental Forest, an outdoor education program in Smethport, and an ecology camp in Cattaraugus County, New York. Based on student and teacher responses, this new activity successfully integrated many of the critical basic skills students learned during the school year.
- 4-H/youth in the McKean County Family Center's after-school program learned about the importance of the forest and forest products in our everyday lives. Thirty youth attended the *Forest of Many Uses* program.

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Produced by Outreach Marketing Consulting Services
U.Ed. OCE 00-9020jlr/43261jlg