

RICH'S REFLECTION

.Summer is open house time of year for colleges of agriculture as researchers and extension workers show industry representatives, policy makers, and the public what we are doing to enhance their lives. During the past week I attended open houses at the Fruit Research & Education Center at Biglerville and the Southeast Agricultural Research & Extension Center in Landisville. Both events were well attended even though the temperature in Landisville was about 100 degrees. At Biglerville we saw presentations by faculty, extension educators and graduate students, as well as engineers from Carnegie Mellon, on subjects related to apple and peach disease control, new technologies for insect monitoring, the latest information on stink bugs, efforts to control borers with entomophagous nematodes, grape disease control, grape variety trials, and efforts to mechanize various orchard practices. Apple training systems have really evolved during the past 20 years from free-standing trees planted 22' x 16' to supported trees planted 14' x 4'. These orchards should be more profitable because they are very high yielding and are being designed for mechanization to replace expen-

sive and unreliable labor. The open house at Landisville featured the flower trials that are coordinated by extension educator Alan Michaels with some help from Rob Berghage. This was one of several open houses that Alan hosts for seed companies, wholesale plants producers and buyers, and the general public. According to industry folks this is one of the top three flower trials in the country. I also had a chance to look at some of the vegetable research being conducted by two county educators.

At both events I had time to visit with some county educators to discuss some of the changes that are coming in extension. Extension administrators are developing a major reorganization of the system and it will impact the academic departments, the specialists and the county educators. This is just the latest step in the evolution of extension. Fifty years ago when there were more horticulturists and educators in most states, faculty with research/teaching appointments did applied research aimed at solving industry problems. Faculty with extension appointments (specialists) worked closely with the researchers to help them identify relevant problems to work on and to

bring research information to growers. County educators worked closely with the specialists and spent quite a bit of time visiting growers, and they also developed educational programs to connect the specialists with the growers. This system truly facilitated the transfer of knowledge from campus to the people across the state that needed the information. The amazing foresight of the politicians who envisioned this unique Land Grant system can be credited with the fact that Americans today spend a lower percentage of their salary for food than any society in history. This system of extending research-based information worked well until the early 1980s when declining public funding resulted in fewer specialists and less money for travel. Now researchers tend to focus on areas where funding is adequate to support their research programs and the specialists do the applied research to solve problems facing the industries. County educators also perform applied research to work on problems relevant to their region of the state. In some, but not all, cases there is good interaction between the county educators and the specialists. In the future, county educators are

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Calendar of Events:

- Aug 10—Classes End (2nd 6-week Session)
- Aug 13—Summer Commencement
- Aug 16-18—Ag Progress Days
- Aug 22—Fall Semester Begins

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going to be expected to do more research, so future educators will have M.S. and doctoral degrees.

The new extension plan being developed will likely involve reducing the number of county offices, requiring educators to do more state-wide programming, and the educators may be evaluated by someone at University Park. I think this restructuring can provide real opportunities for specialists to work more closely with educators and for academic departments to interact more closely with county administrators to identify needed positions around the state as well as on campus. It seems that the educators would like more leadership from our specialists, especially in the area of research. There are opportunities to develop joint projects that address important issues in the state and together we may be able to identify new sources of funding to support applied research. While visiting with the educa-

tors it became clear that the combination of new highly productive cultivars and new cultural practices, such as plasticulture, are causing them to re-evaluate the nutritional needs of the crop. I have similar concerns about orchard nutritional programs. If a source of funding can be identified, this could be a great opportunity for county educators and specialists to collaborate to develop recommendations to better manage crops in these new systems based on solid plant physiology. Hopefully as the new extension structure develops, horticultural specialists will take leadership roles in developing interdisciplinary research projects involving extension educators.



FALL DEPARTMENT MEETINGS

All meetings held in Room 10 Tyson

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday, September 14
10 am

OCTOBER

Wednesday, October 12
4 pm

NOVEMBER

Wednesday, November 16
10 am

DECEMBER

Wednesday, December 14
2pm

VISIT THE CELLAR MARKET
EVERY WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY
12:00 PM – 5:00 PM
HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENT VEGGIE CELLAR
ALL PRODUCE GROWN LOCALLY IN THE HIGH TUNNELS AND FIELDS AT THE PENN STATE HORTICULTURE FARM
ROCK SPRINGS, PA
ITEMS INCLUDE FRESH FRUITS, VEGETABLES, HERBS, AND CUT FLOWERS

Master Gardeners to keep things buzzing at Ag Progress Days

University Park, Pa. -- If things seem all aflutter around the garden demonstration plots at [Penn State's Ag Progress Days](#), to be held Aug. 16-18 at [Rock Springs](#), it may be because the huge number of flowers and plantings within the plots will be celebrating their third year of attracting and nourishing the native bees, butterflies and other pollinators for which they are intended.

As the nation's populations of pollinators continued to plummet, [Penn State Master Gardeners](#) from across the state and horticulture faculty created and nurtured the gardens at the

foot of 11th Street at the show site to demonstrate that supplying pollinators with food and habitat can be beautiful.

Molly Sturniolo, coordinator for [Master Gardeners in Centre County](#), said Ag Progress Days visitors find them an effective exhibit, often stopping because they are drawn to the colorful floral displays and staying to comment on the abundance of butterflies.

To read more on this story, please visit <http://live.psu.edu/story/54311>.



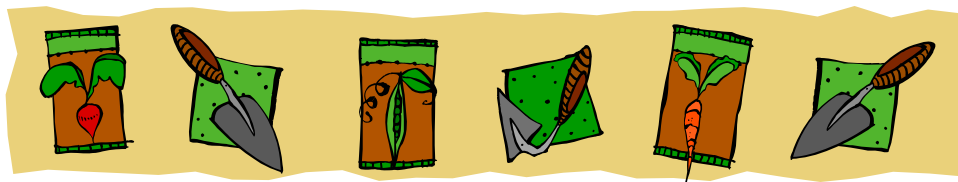
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Field demonstrations focus on business side of Ag Progress Days

University Park, Pa. -- Demonstrations of the latest agricultural technology and machinery will highlight the commercial portion of Penn State's Ag Progress Days exposition, Aug. 16-18 at Rock Springs.

New field demonstrations this year will feature equipment used in corn chopping, planting of cover crops and overseeding standing corn with cover crops.

An integral part of no-till systems, cover crops are a crucial component in maintaining soil, water and air quality in high-yield agriculture, noted Sjoerd Duiker, associate professor of soil management in the College of Agricultural Sciences.

"Planting mixtures of cover crops to serve several objectives is a relatively new development," he said.

Visitors can see more than 10 cover crop mixtures suitable for

various purposes, such as providing forage for livestock and feedstocks for biofuel production. Machinery demonstrations will include cover-crop drills and precision cover-crop seeders.

In addition to the demonstrations, more than 430 commercial and noncommercial exhibitors are expected at the event, according to Bob Oberheim, Ag Progress Days manager.

"There are very few places you can go to see and learn about the full range of goods and services that support our agricultural industry," Oberheim said. "It's a real time-saver for producers to be able to spend just a single day evaluating and comparing the products they need to remain efficient, productive and competitive."

Vendors will display and explain such products as crop-production

machinery, dairy equipment, animal housing, feed, seed, fertilizer, banking, insurance, crop consulting services and many other categories.

Oberheim pointed out that Ag Progress Days also is an opportunity for producers to ask questions of Penn State faculty specialists, extension educators and other experts and to keep tabs on the latest research findings, best practices and governmental regulations that could affect their operations.

To read more on this story, please visit <http://live.psu.edu/story/54326>.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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Department Birthdays

August 5—Kathy Shumac
August 8—Scott DiLoreto
August 13—Mark Guiltinan
August 17—Tom Kon
August 23—Rich Arteca
August 26—Anna Reibson

