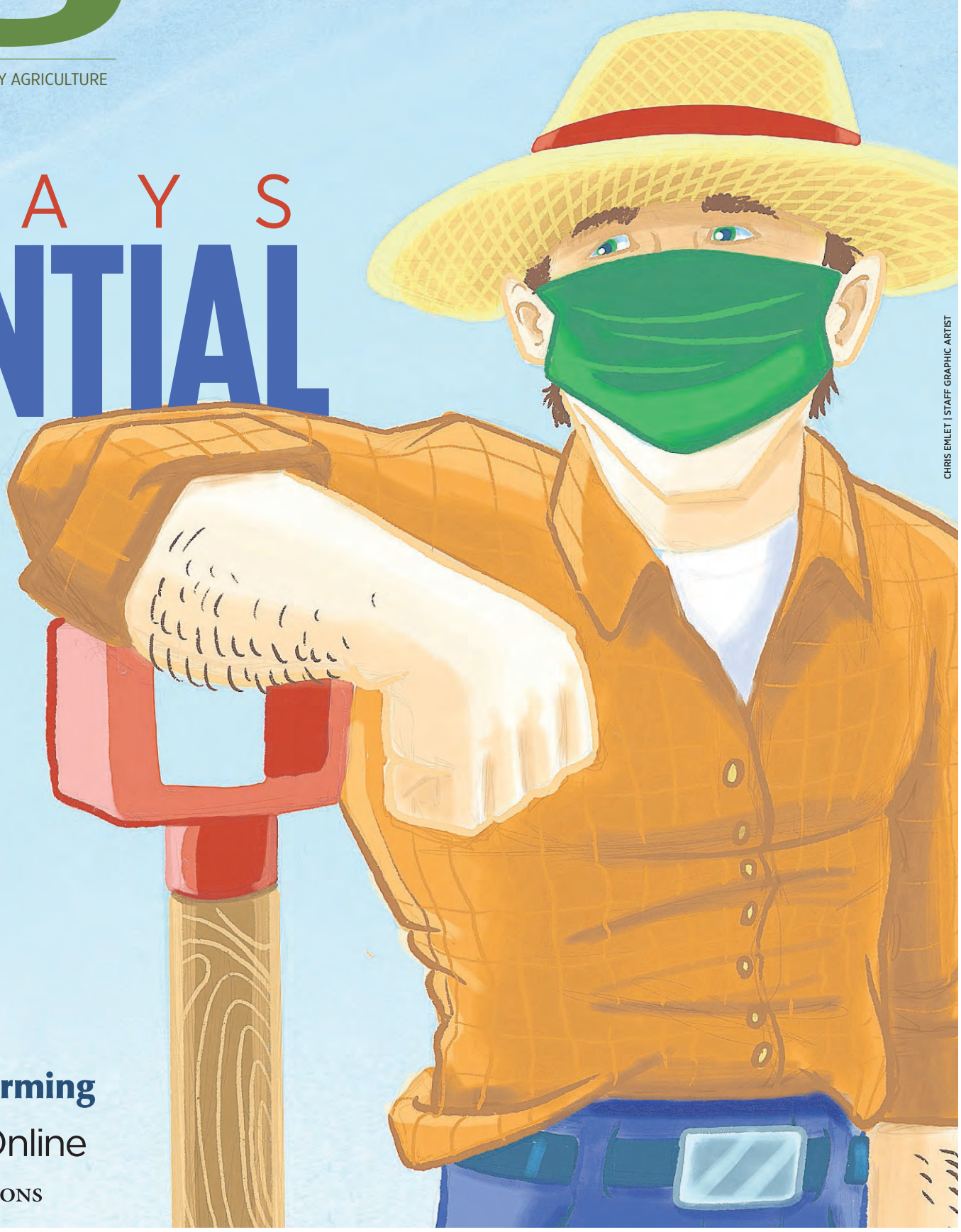
Ag week

Oct. 5-9, 2020 | CELEBRATING LANCASTER COUNTY AGRICULTURE

ALWAYS ESSENTIAL

STRENGTHENING LANCASTER COUNTY AGRICULTURE AFTER COVID-19



CHRIS EMLET | STAFF GRAPHIC ARTIST

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STEINMAN COMMUNICATIONS

LANCASTER COUNTY AG WEEK

OCT. 5-9 2020 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FILE PHOTO

MONDAY, OCTOBER 5

- **What:** Announcement of Agricultural Literacy Project by the Ag Council and the North Museum and rollout of jointly produced agriculture literacy materials for grades K-8.
- **When:** 9-10:30 a.m.
- **Where:** North Museum, 400 College Ave.; download at northmuseum.org/ag-week.
- **Detail:** Includes tour of new exhibits in North Museum.

- **What:** Farmer's Luncheon.
- **When:** Noon to 1:30 p.m.
- **Where:** Virtual via Zoom. Register at info@lancasteragcouncil.com
- **Details:** A review of programs for agriculture (highlighting COVID-related aid) and business issues in agriculture in Lancaster County during the pandemic. Will include tips from bankers and accountants and conservation assistance programs.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6

- **What:** Celebration of the Work of the Lancaster County Agriculture Council.
- **When:** 3:30-5 p.m.
- **Where:** Cherry Crest Adventure Farm, 150 Cherry Hill Road, Ronks.
- **Details:** Review of Ag Council accomplishments in 2020, presentation of "Report of the Council on the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Agriculture in Lancaster County: Lessons Learned," and rollout of Ag Council fundraising campaign for 2021.

- **What:** "A Conversation on Careers in the Agriculture and Food Industry."
- **When:** 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- **Where:** Virtual via Zoom. Register at info@lancasteragcouncil.com.
- **Details:** Hosted by Scott Sheely, executive director, Lancaster County Agriculture Council.

WED., OCTOBER 7

- **What:** "The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Agriculture in Lancaster County: Lessons Learned."
- **When:** Noon to 1:30 p.m.
- **Where:** Virtual via Zoom. Register at info@lancasteragcouncil.com
- **Details:** Lancaster County farmers and agri-business people talk about the effect of the pandemic on their businesses. Includes breakout sessions and an open forum.

- **What:** Virtual Denim and Pearls.
- **When:** 6:30-8 p.m.
- **Where:** Virtual via Zoom. Register at info@lancasteragcouncil.com
- **Details:** A retrospective on past Denim and Pearls, comments by state Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding, and a virtual concert (sponsored by Flintrock Farm and Stables), $25.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8

- **What:** In-depth virtual presentations hosted by presenting group or Ag Council featuring topics from earlier in the week.
- **Where:** Virtual via Zoom. Register at info@lancasteragcouncil.com

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9

- To be determined.

Above, farmer Arlin Benner plants rows of corn on his farm near Mount Joy in 2019. Lancaster County Ag Week promises a week of virtual events discussing agricultural aid, education, COVID-19 pandemic and more.

FARM MARKETS

Pandemic causing a new dairy dilemma

Shutdowns, changing purchasing habits hit struggling industry as things were starting to look up

SEAN SAURO | SSAURO@LNPNEWS.COM

By January, things were looking up at Meadow Vista Dairy near Bainbridge, according to farmer Justin Risser. After a yearslong downturn in milk profits in a volatile market, Risser said he watched as revenue increased on his 850-cow dairy operation in Conoy Township. "It was one of the best quarters we've had," Risser said, adding he was planning for a good year at the bank.

Then, COVID-19 hit. And by mid-March, a government-ordered shutdown forced dairy-buying restaurants closed, instead sending customers to clear out grocery store shelves.

It was an abrupt change in the farm-to-consumer supply chain — one that left processors unable to quickly adapt, leading to waste and yet another round of profit loss.

That's according to Liam Migdail, a spokesperson who offered information about the current state of the dairy industry on behalf of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

"Many dairy farms that survived the past five years were left hanging on by a thread," a statement from

DILEMMA, page 5

TY LOHR | FILE PHOTO

Dairy farmer Justin Risser, of Meadow Vista Dairy in Conoy Township, says 2020 was looking to be a good year for farmers — then COVID-19 hit.

Dilemma: *Pandemic pressure*

Continued from 4

Migdail read.

It noted that more than 1,000 Pennsylvania dairy farms ceased operation in the past five years.

That downturn can be attributed to multiple factors, including an abundant supply coupled with low market prices, said Robert Barley, chairman of the state Milk Marketing Board.

But late last month, Barley mostly highlighted a decrease in the consumption of fluid milk, specifically high-fat whole milk.

It's a decrease that Barley said can be blamed on what he calls erroneous reports linking whole milk consumption to health problems like obesity, which led to the removal of almost all fat from milk served in school cafeterias — one of the dairy industry's largest fluid customers.

Separated milk fats and proteins are processed and sold on store shelves or sent to restaurants in large quantities as products like cream, butter and cheese.

"That's why things always taste so good at restaurants," Risser said. "Cheese and butter are always added to food to make them taste better."

'Huge disruption'

All along, farmers like Risser were making adjustments, altering animal feed and looking to financial experts to maximize profits, he said.

Heading into 2020, it also looked like the dairy market was improving, according to Migdail.

"Most economic indicators before the pandemic showed the dairy market finally starting to recover, so many farms were looking at 2020 as the light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

Then came the pandemic, and Gov. Tom Wolf's mandated school and restaurant closures, which meant those institutions no longer needed much of the dairy products they were previously buying.

"Overnight, the amount of places that were taking milk just slowed down completely," Barley said. "April and May were some of the worst months in recent memory."

In fact, farmers across the state were left with so much excess milk that some had to be dumped out and wasted — a practice that Risser said is emotionally demoralizing for farmers.

That's true despite the fact that consumers, unable to visit restaurants, were buying milk from grocery stores at a much higher rate. Processors could not quickly transition from bulk, restaurant-style packaging to single-family options.

"The system is set up in a balanced way, where everything was working and then you had this huge disruption that just threw everything out of whack," said Barley, an owner at Star Rock Farms in Conestoga.

All of that combined translates to profits lost.

Virus remains a threat

Luckily, farmers like Risser were able to lean on financial planning, as well as federal aid from programs like the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act and its Paycheck Protection Program to keep things afloat, he said.

However, Risser admitted many farmers found it morally objectionable to accept government aid.

That was in addition to working within a multifarm cooperative to set production caps to ensure supply doesn't drastically exceed demand, Risser said, adding that the situation is improving but profits still aren't where they should be.

Now, many restaurants have reopened for both takeout and inside service. A lot of dairy-buying schools and colleges have reopened, too.

But Migdail pointed out that the virus is still a threat, and possible outbreaks could shut down those institutions again.

"The market is improving as schools and colleges begin to open back up, but no one knows for sure whether they will remain open or for how long this pandemic will continue," he said.

For Risser, one thing is certain — the bare grocery store shelves at the start of the pandemic served to educate consumers about the fragile food supply chain.

"We've taken that for granted," he said. "I think it's brought a sense of appreciation back to farming. We've never turned the food industry on its head like we did in COVID-19."

99% of all **farms** in Lancaster County are **family owned**.

SOURCE: LANCASTER COUNTY AG COUNCIL

Farmers serve needy during pandemic

Ag programs able to donate surplus that would otherwise go to waste to food banks as needs rise

GILLIAN MCGOLDRICK | GMCGOLDRICK@LNPNEWS.COM

As the coronavirus pandemic closed restaurants and upended supply chains in the spring, many Lancaster County farmers scrambled to find ways to make sure their food didn't go to waste. Farmers across the county donated surplus dairy, fruit, vegetables and meat to local food banks, pushing food that otherwise would go wasted into the county's charitable food system — a welcome development as the county experienced unprecedented job losses.

In some instances, farmers were paid for their donated goods via U.S. Department of Agriculture programs.

The USDA will spend a total of $3 billion by November for its Farmers to Families Food Box program, which purchases fresh food directly from farmers to be donated to local food banks. Since the program began in May, it has delivered 46 million food boxes to families across the country.

Lancaster Farm Fresh Cooperative was awarded nearly $1.37 million to participate in this program, Gov. Tom Wolf announced in May. This allowed the cooperative to deliver 1,800 pounds of produce per week to the Lancaster County Food Hub. That produce helped the food hub fill hundreds of 15-pound boxes distributed to families.

"Lancaster County is such an agricul-

FARMERS, page 7

BLAINE SHAHAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kimberly Todd, left, and her husband, Nicholas, of Lititz, harvest jalapeno peppers at Wittel Farm In Mount Joy Township.

Farmers: *Serving the needy*

Continued from 6

turally rich community that we're very fortunate to be so well supported by our local farmers and community gardens," said Alex Schramm, the interim director of the Food Hub.

As of early September, the Lancaster County Food Hub had served more than 20,000 people in 2020, as well as 11,000 people at its clothing donation center.

Other food producers, such as Sensenig's Feed Mill, made donations directly to families in the county. In April, Sensenig's purchased thousands of gallons of milk from Clover Farms Dairy to give to those in need.

Schramm says the demand for assistance from the food hub has remained steady throughout the year. But the need for food aid across the county is certainly higher in the COVID-19 era: David Lapp, the CEO of Blessings of Hope, previously told LNP | LancasterOnline that he saw the need for food assistance in central Pennsylvania nearly triple since March.

Wittel Farm, a mission farm in Elizabethtown owned by Lutheran Camping Corp. of Central Pennsylvania, also has contributed thousands of pounds of fresh food to the Lancaster Food Hub, as well as other food pantries in the county.

Now in its fifth growing season, Wittel Farm said this year has been the most challenging it's ever faced. The 85-acre farm started by Zion Lutheran Church pastor Matt Lenahan saw its usual 400-strong volunteer workforce drop to only 90 because of pandemic restrictions.

But Lenahan said he knows the farm's work has never been more important.

"In a crisis like this one, it accentuates the challenges of poverty and food insecurity," Lenahan said. "What we recognize is that many, many households around us are vulnerable and many of our neighbors are a furlough ... away from being food insecure."

Wittel Farm has harvested 6,000 pounds of food so far this year, all to be shared with people who are food insecure in the county.

"I feel very strongly as a person of faith to be good stewards of the land," Lenahan said. "The land is a gift that we are called to serve and share."

Above, the Rev. Matt Lenahan, pastor at Zion Lutheran Church, right, talks to volunteers before they head out to harvest at Wittel Farm in Mount Joy Township on Sept. 11. At right, Lenahan shows jalapeno peppers he picked at Wittel Farm. Below, Stephanie Risser, of Lititz, left, and Pam Drenner, of Penryn, help with the harvest.

BLAINE SHAHAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER PHOTOS

Auctions get a boost during pandemic

Changes in consumer habits lead to higher prices, volume at Leola and Weaverland produce sales

MARY ELLEN WRIGHT | MWRIGHT@LNPNEWS.COM

Four days a week, in Leola and New Holland, a whole rainbow of fruit, vegetables and flowers changes hands. These fresh commodities, which have just been picked from area farm fields and often hauled by tractor and horse-drawn wagon, will find their way into waiting vans and trucks owned by operators of supermarkets, farmers markets, restaurants and farm stands around the region. The exchange happens under an auctioneer's gavel at Leola Produce Auction in Leola and at Weaverland Produce Auction in New Holland. And though the COVID-19 pandemic has caused so much disruption in business, in general, over the past few months, at these auctions, it has resulted in higher prices on the sellers' produce.

"The one thing that has happened with COVID is that it has increased the demand for fresh produce, and especially local produce," said Jeff Stoltzfus, farm food safety educator for Penn State Extension in Lancaster County. "That's because people aren't eating out as much, and they're cooking at home more often, and we're finding a lot more more business at roadside stands this year.

"Growers tell me there's a 40% increase in some of their sales this year," Stoltzfus said.

Bruce Eberly, manager of Weaverland Produce Auction, said, "Prices, especially in early spring and early summer, everything was crazy high. A lot higher than normal. This is definitely our best year, ever, here at the auction. Even the volume is higher than normal."

Mike Snyder, who manages the Leola auction, said prices have been higher for the sellers at his auction, as well.

Auction days

On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, farmers drive to the auctions with their tagged boxes of produce, and are assigned a consigner (seller) number, Snyder said.

AUCTIONS, page 9

SUZETTE WENGER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER PHOTOS

Produce to be sold at Weaverland Produce Auction in New Holland includes pumpkins, Stanley plums, Roma tomatoes and apples.

SUZETTE WENGER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sara Eby, of East Earl, left, and Monica Ross, of Mohnton, look over the peaches to be sold at the Weaverland Produce Auction in New Holland.

Auctions: *Sales are up*

Continued from 8

"The product is mostly brought in within a 30-mile radius of the produce auction," Snyder said. "It's picked fresh and brought in that day to sell. We sell all kinds of vegetables and fruit."

Leola can draw 300 to 400 sellers and 75 to 100 buyers on an average auction day, Snyder said.

Eberly said on a brisk auction day, 600 to 800 of those cardboard bins of produce might be sold — and even as many as 1,000 during pumpkin season in the fall.

"Buyers can be anyone from supermarkets to roadside stands to farmers markets," Snyder said.

At Weaverland, Eberly said, "we have some big grocery stores, like Shady Maple Farm Market, and then we have some produce retailers, restaurants, roadside stands, all different kinds of people" as buyers.

"We have customers from New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland," Eberly added. "Probably 60% are local, though."

Eberly said COVID-19 precautions the produce auctions added this year have included asking people to wear masks — especially during the chillier months of the spring, when the roll-up doors and canvas side of the Weaverland building were closed.

"And we limit the number of people coming into the office to pay," Eberly added.

Auction season

Snyder said the auction season starts in February, with a "plug" sale — small flower plants that will be repotted and later resold by the buyers.

"Then we start with flowers in March, and then we go from flowers into produce (in

AUCTIONS, page 10

PRODUCE AUCTIONS

- Leola Produce Auction, 135 Brethren Church Road, Leola. For hours and to hear the market report of produce prices from a previous day's auction, call 717-656-9592.
- Weaverland Produce Auction, 1030 Precast Road, New Holland. For hours and the market report of prices, call 717-355-0834.
- At this time of year, the auctions run Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday — less frequently late in the season.
- The auctions begin selling flowers in the spring, produce in the summer, pumpkins in the fall and Christmas trees, wreaths and greens before the holidays.
- The auctions are owned by groups of member farmers — many of them Plain — who sell what they grow at the auctions. They're run by market managers and by boards elected from the membership.

Auctions: *Surging*

Continued from 9

summer), and then from produce into pumpkins and then finish up with cold crops, like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage in November," Snyder said. "And then we do a Christmas sale" with wreaths, swag and other fresh greens.

Eberly said auctions start around the same time in the spring at Weaverland and end right around Thanksgiving.

Pumpkins are a big crop in the fall at both produce auctions.

Both Eberly and Snyder note that their auctions are owned by groups of farmers, and run by elected boards made up of those farmer members.

Both said many of the farmers are from the Plain community.

Each auction contracts with a small group of regular auctioneers who sell the produce.

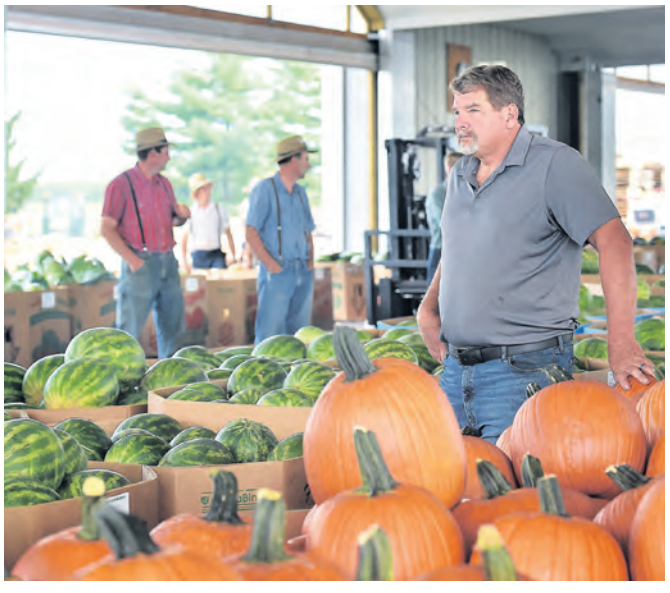
The Leola auction started in 1985, and Weaverland in the late 1990s.

Stoltzfus said produce auctions have been a game-changer for area farmers.

"It's been huge in terms of providing a market for produce," Stoltzfus says.

"The farmers take pride in what they grow and what they sell," Snyder said.

SUZETTE WENGER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER PHOTOS



Clockwise from upper left, pumpkins and squash are a sign of the changing season at Weaverland Produce Auction in New Holland; women and men set produce in place for the morning auction at Weaverland; Weaverland market manager Bruce Eberly surveys the watermelons and pumpkins; and Mike Snyder (wearing mask), market manager at Leola Produce Auction, waits for squash to be auctioned.

Feeding cows right is a delicate balance

Dairy nutritionists provide right proteins, carbs to keep animals healthy, clean environment

PHILIP GRUBER | LANCASTER FARMING

When it comes to their cows, dairy farmers take seriously the old adage "you are what you eat." What a cow eats affects her health and how much milk she produces. To keep cows at their best, many farmers turn to a dairy nutritionist like Jeffrey Swartz of Homestead Nutrition. The Earl Township-based consulting firm, where Swartz is the director of nutrition, serves farms from northern Maryland to State College. A dairy nutritionist's job is to balance the protein and carbohydrates cows consume. That's not as simple as it sounds.

Using computer software that models the functioning of a cow's rumen, Swartz can factor in the digestibility of a feed, an animal's needs based on its stage of life, and a farmer's desire to increase the butterfat content of the milk.

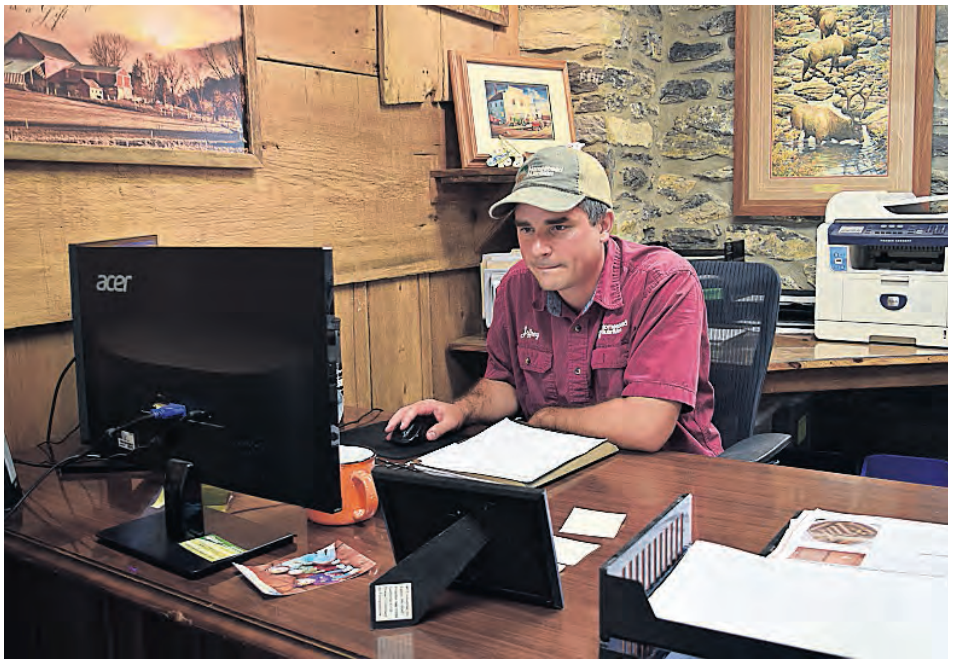
"There's a lot of numbers behind the scenes," Swartz said.

As ruminants with four stomach compartments, cows require a different nutrition program than single-stomach animals like pigs, chickens and humans.

When farmers feed a cow, they are also feeding tiny organisms that live in the animal's gut and play a major role in the digestive process.

"Rumen nutrition is all about the

DAIRY, page 12



PHILIP GRUBER

Jeffrey Swartz works on a dairy ration in his office at Homestead Nutrition.

Dairy: *Feeding cows the right way*

Continued from 11

microbes first, the animal second," Swartz said.

Adjusting cows' diets

Most of a cow's ration is grain and fibrous materials such as corn silage and alfalfa. The feedstuffs are tested by a laboratory to give Swartz the numbers he needs for his calculations.

Farms in Lancaster County are relatively small, so dairy farmers try to grow at least the silage and hay they need. They grow corn and soybeans if they have the acreage.

Farmers buy minerals and whatever feeds they can't grow themselves, Swartz said.

How often a ration needs to be adjusted depends on the nature of the feeds.

If a farm is feeding corn silage, which is harvested all at once, big changes may not be needed too often.

But hay is cut five times a season, and the ration should be revised every time the farm starts feeding hay from a different cutting, Swartz said.

Rations also sometimes change based on the cost or availability of inputs. That's what happened this spring with dry distillers grains, a popular feed that is a by-product of ethanol production.

As consumers cut back their driving at the beginning of the pandemic, ethanol production fell off. Distillers grains became hard to find.

"The price really went up for a while, so people started switching away from it, but it's actually come back in range again," Swartz said.

Balancing act

Adding to a nutritionist's duties, each dairy farm usually feeds several different rations.

There's one for the milking herd, another for the young heifers, and one or two more for the dry cows, which have finished giving milk but have not yet had their next calf.

No wonder, then, that nutritionists have a fair amount of training.

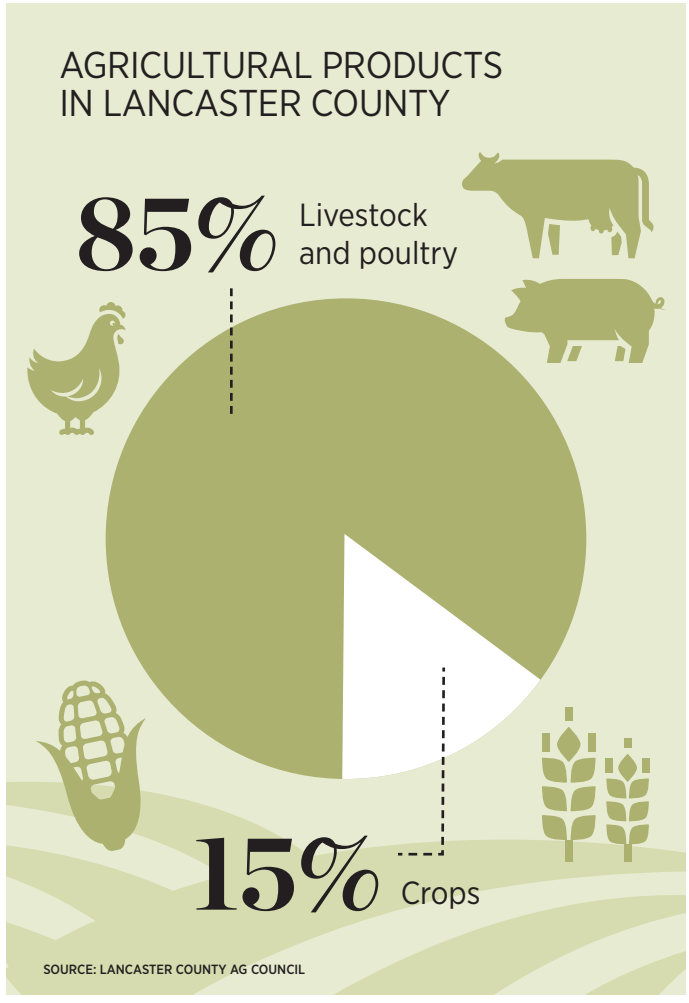
Swartz, who grew up in eastern Lancaster County, has a master's degree in animal science from Montana State University.

Nutritionists may have more or less academic training than Swartz. The more you have, the better you understand the science of the rumen, he said.

While precision feeding obviously helps the farmer, Swartz said, it benefits the environment as well.

Careful ration management minimizes overfeeding of nutrients like phosphorus, which come out in the manure and urine if the cows don't absorb them.

By minimizing that waste, nutritionists reduce the risk of nutrient runoff, thereby protecting local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.



Plain sect farmers change thinking

TeamAG helps small farm owners navigate environmental issues, obtain PENNVEST funding

DICK WANNER | LANCASTER FARMING

There was a time when Lancaster County's Plain sect farmers would never even think about using government money. Programs to help pay for conservation practices, for example, have been around for a long time but are only recently being embraced. "Twenty years ago, when I started working with farmers, I wouldn't even mention cost-share programs to an Amish farmer. I knew what the answer would be," said Jeremy Weaver, a project manager for TeamAg Inc. in Ephrata. The answer has changed.

TeamAg's engineers help farmer clients who want to build new barns, expand their dairy herds, manage animal manure, improve streams on their properties and more. Every project Weaver and his colleagues take on involves planning, money, complicated drawings,

FUNDING, page 14

ANDY HIBBS PHOTOS

Before and after photos of a TeamAg and PENNVEST project in West Cocalico Township. The photo on the left, just outside the dairy barn, shows a muddy path used by the farm's cows to walk to pasture. In the right photo, gravel has been placed on the path, gutters have been installed to capture runoff from the roof, and the runoff has been directed to the storm inlet seen at the corner of the barn.

Funding: *Helping small farms navigate environmental issues*

Continued from 13

computers, local, state and federal permits and, particularly with Plain sect farmers, personal philosophy.

Lancaster Farming met by phone with Weaver, TeamAg professional engineer Andy Hibbs and their client, an Amish dairy farmer whose farm totals 61 acres in West Cocalico Township. Indian Run, which empties into the Cocalico Creek, borders his property. The Fish and Boat Commission includes the stream in its annual trout stocking program.

The farmer, who requested that his name not be used, grew up on the property and has owned it for about five years. He maintains a Holstein dairy herd that includes about 45 milking cows, plus dry cows, heifers and calves. He also has eight mules that power his equipment. That totals about 120 animals — big animals — living on his farm.

In April of this year, he received a $361,500 grant from PENNVEST, Pennsylvania's infrastructure investment authority, to improve his manure storage facilities and to install other conservation best management practices. The grant was the result of a two-year collaboration with TeamAg on designing, permitting and financing an environmentally friendly project that, the farmer expects, will help the next generation of his family reap the benefits of his conservation planning when they are ready to take over the operation.

> So the feeling was that if society wants environmental (best management practices) on farms, then society should be willing to pay for them.
>
> **Jeremy Weaver,** *a project manager for TeamAg Inc. in Ephrata*

But why do it now? Even though the work is being paid for with the grant, it's sure to disrupt the farmer's daily life.

"Mainly I wanted to clean up the water," he said. "When it rains, we have barnyard contaminants and mud flowing toward the creek.

"I wasn't impressed with that."

The farmer's milk inspector was also not impressed with the way manure was being handled on the farm.

The milk inspector's job is to visit the dairy farms in a territory twice a year, mainly to take milk samples for lab tests and inspect the milking and housing facilities to see if they meet safety and sanitation specs. Milk inspectors are a kind of dairy police and a vital part of the dairy industry. But for many dairy farmers, it's hard to feel a lot of love for the man or woman who comes around twice a year to check up on you.

The TeamAg-guided project includes new storage facilities for both liquid and solid manure, an exercise paddock for the mules, rain gutters and downspouts on the buildings, underground drains, gravel-surfaced lanes and other projects that call for moving tons of earth, pouring truckloads of concrete, occasional looksees from the township zoning officer and PENNVEST money changing hands.

PENNVEST looks to farming

PENNVEST is an independent government body formed in 1988 to help Pennsylvania municipalities pay for sewer, storm water and drinking water projects. That is still where the bulk of the authority's money goes, but about 10 years ago, Weaver said, the PENNVEST board of directors decided to allocate part of their annual budget to agricultural projects.

"They want to help these small farms survive," Weaver said.

But the cost of implementing conservation practices can put environmental best management out of reach for farmers who traditionally operate with thin profit margins.

Since taking an interest in agriculture, PENNVEST has funded dozens

FUNDING, page 15

Funding: *PENNVEST grants*

Continued from 14

of projects similar to the one in West Cocalico Township. That project was actually a milestone. It was the 100th project paid for with authority money.

TeamAg has been the engineering/planning/permitting/coordinating force behind 65 of those ag projects, and 60 of those have been on Plain sect farms, many of them Amish.

Weaver said he and other TeamAg reps met with Amish steering committees as attitudes about government assistance began to shift. The community came to accept the fact that farmers would come increasingly under the eyes of environmental watchdogs, both in and out of government.

Changing attitudes

Gradually, community leaders accepted that their farmers would face more and more scrutiny, more and more regulations, and more and more expense to bring their farms into compliance.

"So the feeling was that if society wants environmental (best management practices) on farms, then society should be willing to pay for them," Weaver said.

Which raises the question of who gets paid how and when. Farmers do not want to be burdened with the paperwork involved in a sizable contract with multiple vendors, 1099s, sales tax charged/not charged, delivery schedules, etc. And they would certainly rather not see the fair wage labor costs involved in their projects.

"All the farmer has to do," Weaver said, "is give permission to have the work performed. The general contractor submits bills as the work is done, TeamAg verifies the billing and the conservation district issues the checks. That saves the farmer a lot of headaches."

When the West Cocalico farm project is completed later this year, the farmer will have a more environmentally friendly farm, he'll have capacity for seven months' worth of manure storage, barnyard working conditions will be a little tidier, there'll be a lot less mud, and a cleaner Indian Run.

LANCASTER COUNTY FARMING: **BY THE NUMBERS**

Number of farms

5,108

Down 10% since 2012*

Land in farms (acres)

393,949

Down 10% since 2012

Average farm size (acres)

77 **Down 1%** since 2012

3,697

farms are **between 10 and 179 acres**

*USDA, NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE, 2017 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE COUNTY PROFILE

SOURCE: LANCASTER COUNTY AG COUNCIL