



BRIEFS TO AG EDUCATORS

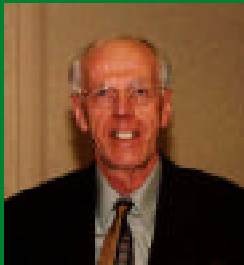
March 2001, Volume IX, Issue 7

NEW/BEGINNING TEACHER COLUMN

by: *Dr. Phil Ogline, Adjunct Professor*

Great Yell!!!

In my family when someone accomplishes a major feat, we always say "Great Yell"!!



Phil Ogline

Great Yell, one-half of the school year has passed and I survived!! It wasn't as bad as I anticipated. Apparently, I did some things right! And now to tackle the remaining school calendar year. I can do it; maybe an occasional contact with my mentor, a kind word from a student/parent/administrator, or a snow day to help me catch up will help make the spring flowers sprout and June arrive. But wait, I could attend the beginning teacher meeting in March. That would help. Oh, yes, then FFA Activities Week and career event competition. Well at least I will get to interact with some of my other 'new teacher friends' and discuss our battle scars. Then I will have the summer months to reflect on my experiences and plan strategies for another challenging year. Maybe I can visit several other agriculture departments in the state and get some ideas! What other things can I ponder to assist my planning?

Did I take advantage of all the opportunities during this past year? I do have, or considered establishing, an

(continued on page 3)

IN THIS ISSUE...

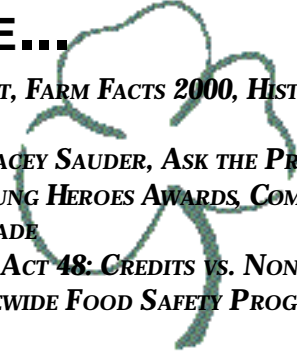
PAGE 2... WATERSHED EVENT, FARM FACTS 2000, HISTORY HAS BEEN MADE

PAGE 3... INTRODUCING TRACEY SAUDER, ASK THE PROFESSOR

PAGE 4... EDUCATION'S UNSUNG HEROES AWARDS, COMMUNICATIONS EXPERIENCE, FFA TO UPGRADE

PAGE 5 .. 2001 FIELD DAY, ACT 48: CREDITS VS. NON-CREDIT

PAGE 6... CALENDAR, STATEWIDE FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM, CAREER INFORMATION



The Best Kept Secret

Eastern Lebanon HS, Myerstown



Dominic Centoze

If you like antique tractors, then visit Dominic Centonze at Eastern Lebanon County High School, a place that could just be the best kept secret in the county for agricultural mechanics buffs. He displays two of his antique tractors outside the school to enhance his agricultural mechanics program. The old machines are used as class demonstrations since their parts are often larger than newer models. Old tractors also are turned into FFA projects and sold to FFA members at cost when overhauled.

In addition to having an exemplary agricultural mechanics program, Dominic also has impressive aquaculture, hydroponics and greenhouse facilities. His students are doing many controlled feeding and water quality experiments with

(continued on page 2)

(The Best Kept Secret...con't from p. 1)

Talapia which have shown excellent feed efficiency. The waste from the fish tank is cycled into a hydroponics environment where peppers, tomatoes, lettuce and cucumbers are grown. At the unit's end, the students have a dinner consisting of a *Talapia* fish fry and hydroponic salad.

Student SAE programs include raising pheasants, sheep and steers, as well as taxidermy. At this year's Farm Show, Kyle Fleener, a student, received the junior show champion Hampshire ewe. Also in the junior show, Kyle's shorthorn heifer was the reserve grand champion. Although Lebanon County is rural, Dominic also sees a lot of non-farm SAEs at local businesses.

Dominic says that the uniqueness of his program lies not just in his tractors but in his "laid back style." After more than 13 years at Eastern Lebanon County High School, Dominic has seen his program grow considerably. The school now has "intensive block scheduling" which gives Dominic 80-minute periods where he can teach them more in one block period. The curriculum offers Intro to Agriculture in the first year, Agricultural Me-

chanics in year two, and Vet Science and Plant/Soil Science courses are offered on alternate years for juniors. Since there is no senior level course, Dominic says "some of the seniors at East Lebanon often work as student aides who assist with grading, feeding, greenhouse maintenance and FFA chapter work." A few of the seniors opt to go to the vocational-technical school and major in landscape design or diesel mechanics.

Dominic has good support from his community and administration, especially when placing students. His program is not a "dumping" ground for unmotivated students. FFA members are involved with everything, but they especially love building floats for community parades. Last fall the students designed a float for their homecoming parade that displayed community safety messages.

Next year he will add a college preparatory course in veterinary science that provides science credit. In the future, Dominic wants to see more college-bound students, more elective courses that have science credit and perhaps another agricultural science teacher.

Watershed Event

For the most complete information about the Allegheny watershed, visit the website <http://www.alleghenywatershed.org> which offers a complete on-line Watershed Atlas of the Allegheny River watershed to enable exploration of the watershed.

Resources on this site are impressive and will be especially useful for teachers near any of the Allegheny River tributaries. Some of the best features are a watershed timeline that begins 10,000 years ago with the last glacier, and a resource center with maps of the natural resources, such as fish populations, coal fields and limestone deposits, plus information about forests and wetlands.

On another note, the PA Environmental Council is holding the Allegheny Watershed Network Conference on April 18 at the Penn Stater, University Park. For information call 412-481-9400 or visit their website.

History has Been Made

For the first time in history, a female, Ann M. Veneman holds the top position in the U.S.

Department of Agriculture.

Her appointment highlights the increasing role and influence women have in the field of agriculture.



Farm Facts 2000

Farm Facts 2000 is now available from the American Farm Bureau Federation. This publication provides educational farm information for all ages.

To receive a copy contact Rita Walaszek, 847-685-8858. The cost is \$3.50 per booklet or \$1.50 each for quantities of three or more. Order forms are also at www.fbstore.org

Introducing... Tracey Sauder



“Try, try and try again. Don’t ever give up your dream!”

Tracey Sauder lives by those words. She never lost focus of her goal to become an agricultural educator through all her years at Penn State. After graduating in the spring of 2000, Tracey was employed with the Centre County Extension Office but still searched wanted to be an educator. She reached her dream later that summer and is now in her first year of teaching at Shippensburg Area SHS.

Currently Tracey motivates her students through interactive curriculum, which focuses on agricultural power systems, agricultural structures, animal science, natural resources and plants/soil science. On any given day Tracey can be found out in the

shop area up to her elbows in grease or in the classroom instructing on the basics of a specific topic related to agricultural mechanics, animal science, plants science and more.

Tracey commented that most of her agricultural background came directly from her family’s large Holstein Farm. She gained experience from daily milkings, fieldwork and everyday management of the operation. She also explained that Penn State provided her with the exciting teaching techniques. Tracey also commented, “I have often used many of the equations and formulas that I learned in my chemistry courses. Connecting the curriculum to other subjects and students’ lives has motivated the students over the months.”

When you meet Tracey Sauder you will find that her motto is, “Try, try and try again. Don’t every give up on your dream.” This is exactly how she promotes learning within her classroom.


The Center welcomes Tracey to the agricultural family and encourages her to always reach for her dreams. Best wishes for future endeavors.

(A New/Beginning Teacher Column...con’t from p. 1)

Agricultural Education Advisory Council. Maybe now is the time to pull them together and bounce around ideas for curriculum development, SAE programs, community service activities (and possibly have them qualify for some of my senior students’ graduation projects) or field trip sites. We could also discuss ideas for facility development/enhancement. If I identify the “key” people to include on this council, it will provide support in securing the needed changes toward program improvement. Ascertaining the community needs for the Agricultural Education curriculum and activities, my Advisory Council should include representatives from parents, students, administration, guidance counselor (middle school and senior high), farmer(s), alumni, sportsmen/service clubs, conservation organizations, and agribusiness. By identifying several potential council members, I can then secure suggestions from them in identifying other members. This council is required for my program, so possibly the principal will support a luncheon for the meeting. This could enhance other ideas for vocational/academic inclusion.

I also need to consider activities that include time for myself, family, socializing and spiritual renewal. This means I do have to put other dates in my little “black planning book” that will get me out of the teacher mode. Myself, the family and the community will all benefit by “time-out” activities. If I can get all these things to fall into the correct order I can continue to say Great Yell!!

Briefs to be On-Line Soon

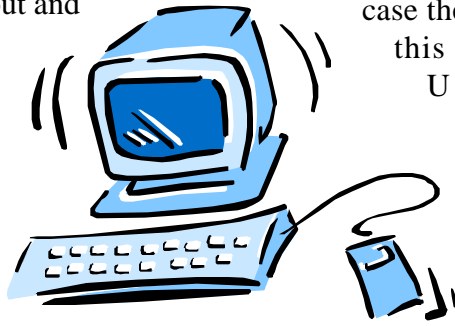
In the next month, you  should be able to see the *Briefs* newsletter at <http://agexted.cas.psu.edu/center.html> under publications.

Ask the Professor

Ask Professor Science is a website developed by Penn State just for high school students and their teachers. Found at <http://scat0.phys.psu.edu/ask> students may pose questions or search the archives on topics such as Biology or Earth and Environment.

FFA to Upgrade Information Technology Systems

Imagine registering for national conferences and workshops through the Internet. No paper forms to fill out and track, no running to the post office or overnighting documents to beat a deadline. Simply log on to national FFA's website, enter the information, click a button and BAM ... you're done.



Online registration will soon be a reality, along with many other benefits, as the National FFA Organization implements a three-year, \$3.2 million upgrade of its information technology systems and procedures. These improvements will help develop a closer relationship between the national organization and FFA members, teachers, state staff and other key customers. As these connections evolve, the quality and delivery of programs and services will flourish.

One of the first tangible items, installation of sophisticated servers that can run the upgraded computer system, is nearly complete. With the help of outside consulting experts, a review is underway to select the optimum software packages to run the programs FFA will need. This top-of-the-line equipment will meet FFA's current requirements and can adapt to meet the organization's future needs.

This massive project is unlike any in the 73-year history of the organization. To showcase the benefits of this initiative, U P D A T E newsletter will profile a different component of the project each month. In the next edition, learn about the extensive research and feedback gathered from the agricultural education community which led to the development of the project.



Communications Experience

Agricultural Communication Pre-Professional Experience is being offered by the National FFA Organization in cooperation with Rhea & Kaiser Marketing Communications. This pilot program is offered to interested high school seniors planning to major in agricultural communications and current college freshmen majoring in an agricultural communications related field. Participants must be members of the National FFA Organization.

Applications are available on the FFA website at <http://www.ffa.org/activities/agcommunications/agcom.html>. For more information contact Kevin Keith at kkeith@ffa.org, 317-802-4254.

Education's Unsung Heroes Awards

Deadline: April 30, 2001
Northern Life Insurance Company's Unsung Heroes Awards recognize K-12 educators who are pioneering new methods and techniques to improve student learning. All full-time education professionals employed by an accredited K-12 public or private school are eligible to apply.

The program will award \$2,000 each to 100 finalists. The top three finalists will receive additional awards as follows: \$25,000 for first place, \$10,000 for second place, and \$5,000 for third place. Applications are available online.

Contact: Education's Unsung Heroes Awards sponsored by ReliaStar and Northern Life c/o Citizens' Scholarship Foundation of America, Inc.
1505 Riverview Rd, PO Box 297, St. Peter, MN 56082
Tel: 800-537-4180

RFP Link:
http://www.unsungheroes.com/unsung_info/about.html
For additional RFPs in Education, visit:
<http://www.fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/education.html>

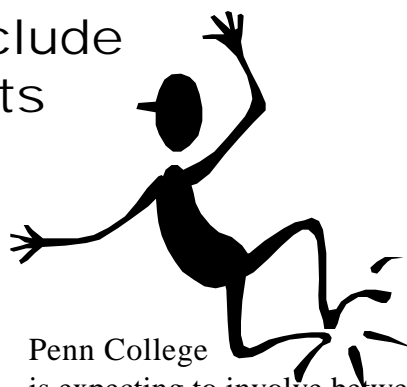
2001 Field Day May Include High School Students

In 1985, Temple University hosted the first Field Day. Usually 10 to 14 colleges from across the Northeastern U.S. come together to compete in 14 or so different areas of Horticulture and Landscape.

The faculty of Penn College discussed asking some of high school AG and Horticulture programs to attend to observe the proceedings on April 7, 2001. There would be a nominal fee for each student and advisor, as a T-

shirt and lunch would be provided. They also discussed having a few contests open to high school students. They thought Outdoor Plant ID and perhaps Indoor Plant ID. These contests would be open only to high school students and would take place after the college contests.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please email Richard Weilminster at Rweilmin@PCT.EDU or by phone 570-320-8038 ext. 3534.



Penn College is expecting to involve between 12 and 20 colleges in the 2001 Field Day. There should be approximately 450 people involved. There will also be a number of equipment displays and companies tabletop displays.

Act 48: Credit vs. Non-credit



As teachers check their Act 48 hours, questions have

arisen about credit courses taken last summer not showing up. Credit courses might not show up on the PDE website since they are not submitted to PA Department of Education in Harrisburg the same way as non-credit workshops/programs. The course record is at the institution you attended on your official university transcript. Assuming the credit was obtained from an approved higher education institution after January 1, 2000, all college courses should apply to Act 48 requirements.

Be careful not to overload yourself with courses or programs. Extra credits or hours will not carry over from one five-year

time period to the next. Please keep your own records of all professional development activities.

How can I check my hours?

Through the PA Department of Education website, you can check Act 48 hours on line. All hours are tracked by your social security number. Whether your hours come from your school district, Penn State or elsewhere, they all are entered in one place at PA Dept of Education in Harrisburg. Hours usually are reported to PA Dept of Education by the Center within 30 days of completing an event.

Here's how it works:

1. From the PDE home page at <http://www.pde.psu.edu>,

click on "Continuing Professional Education

under Act 48," which is listed along the right side of the page.

2. Next click on "Act 48 Professional Education Record Management System."
3. Then under "Educator Options," click on "Check an Educator's Continuing Education progress."
4. Enter your social security number in the designated field & click "submit." You should see a table of your activity.

If you have difficulty and still need additional information, please contact the Bureau of Curriculum and Academic Services at 717-772-4944.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS.....

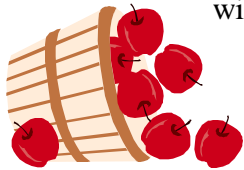
- March 11-13..... SLLC, Holiday Inn, Grantville
 March 23-24 New & Beginning Teacher Workshop, PSU
 March 27..... PAAE Western Spring Regional Mtg., Hoss's in Greensburg, 6:30 p.m.
 March 29..... PAAE Eastern Spring Regional Mtg., Conrad Weiser HS, Robesonia, 5:00 p.m.
 April 3..... PAAE South Central Spring Regional Mtg., Hoss's in Carlisle, 5:00 p.m.
 April 6..... FFA Association Board of Directors Mtg., 301 AG Admin. Bldg., PSU, 6:30 p.m.
 April 7..... State Proficiency Evaluations, AG Admin. Bldg., PSU
 April 19..... PAAE North Central Spring Regional Mtg., Restless Oak Restaurant, McElhattan, 6:00 p.m.
 May 18..... FFA Association Board of Directors Mtg., 301 AG Admin Bldg., PSU, 6:30 p.m.
 June 12-14 FFA Activities Week, PSU
 June 20 - 21 2000-2001 State Officer Orientation, PSU (D. Schafer)

TEACHER DEADLINES.....

- March 12..... American FFA Degree Applications Due, VSO Office
 April 2..... Proficiency & Entrepreneurship Applications due to regional coordinators
 April 15..... Dairy Showmanship Applications due to Doug Brown, Central Columbia
 May 5..... Regional Contest Quota Results due to Regional Coordinators
 May 9..... FFA Week/Entries, including full-payment, due at Penn State
 June 12..... Chapter Award Applications due at the registration desk, Activities Week, PSU

Statewide Food Safety Program

About 95 percent of all food-borne illnesses are caused by mishandling of food. The result is an estimated 76 million cases of food-borne illness in the United States each year. Many food-handling practices that cause illness are related to poor temperature control or poor sanitation.



Penn State is offering this nationally recognized 16 hour certification program about how to provide safe food to consumers. The National Restaurant Association

will certify participants who complete the ServSafe® course and pass the exam in food safety and sanitation. Persons who pass the ServSafe® exam may also apply for the PDA certificate required by the Food Employee Certification Act.

The Food Safety program is offered at several locations around the state. See the website <http://www.outreach.psu.edu/statewideprograms/> for a listing of locations and dates.

Career Information

This database contains information on more than 330 agriculture related career fields. Each record contains information about salary, required education, job availability, working locations, working conditions, related occupations, and necessary skills. There are also listings of additional resources so you can pursue more information about the career field you're interested in. Visit <http://208.150.202.114/careersearch.cfm>

Briefs to Ag Educators is a publication of the Center for Professional Personnel Development, Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, The Pennsylvania State University, 323 Agricultural Administration Bldg., University Park, PA 16802. Editors: Tiffany Roberson, Carol Hodes and Thomas Bruening. Phone: 814-863-7876; Fax: 814-863-4753; email Tiffany at tmr175@psu.edu

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