

The Market Bulletin

<http://www.wvagriculture.org/>

Gus R. Douglass, Commissioner

Janet L. Fisher, Deputy Commissioner

Steve Hannah, Deputy Commissioner

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Sharing positive news, activities

As I toured the state this month many of the conversations I had with farm folks centered around the Governor's Special Session of the Legislature, tentatively set for November 8 and 9, relating to revisions to the state's taxation laws. On my return to Charleston, I requested a meeting with the Governor and conveyed to him the citizen's concerns. I suggested that the annual meeting of the W.Va. Conservation Partnership Conference held October 24-26 in Charleston would be a good opportunity for him to address a statewide audience on farm taxation for active farmers. He welcomed the opportunity to assure the audience that the Special Session will not include any mention of a new tax structure for farmers. The main thrust of his reorganization will be presented before the Legislature in January. His only interest is in farmland which could become subdivided into smaller acreages for development. Should this occur, the land should be reconsidered for the farm-use tax classification. I appreciate the Governor stating his position on this important issue.

The Partnership Conference got off to a great start with over 300 in attendance. Rep-

resentatives from federal and state agriculture and conservation agencies joined together to further our working relationships to benefit the farm community in this state. One of the keynote speakers for the conference was Bill Wilson, President of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). The Department has been working with this organization on the 2007 Farm Bill, and the NACD has partnered with the National FFA organization in their outreach programs.

My highlight of the Partnership Conference is announcing the Conservation Farm of the Year Award. My congratulations go to first-place winners Edison and Richard Law, Harrison County; second place, Gary Walls, Preston County; and third place, James and Jackie Michael, Morgan County. I'll have more to say about them in next month's *Market Bulletin*.

The coronation at the Forest Festival in Elkins in October was hindered by a drizzling rain. I sympathized with Queen Silvia and the ladies in her court braving the rain and chilly weather. The Governor and other dignitaries abbreviated their presentations so everyone could get out of the rain. Fortunately, the weather cleared for the other festival activities.

The Apple Harvest Festival in Martinsburg was more fortunate, as the weather did not hinder the outside activities. The parade route was crowded with onlookers and the historic Apollo Theatre held a packed house to see the coronation of Maid Pomona XXVII Amanda Agee. It has been an honor for me over the years to crown Queen Pomona. I must mention the Festival's apple dessert contest; there were so many entries Festival officials had to group them so each entry would receive fair attention. Glad I wasn't a judge with the hard job of sampling the entries.

Agribusiness development and cottage industries made the headlines in area newspapers this month for their successes. Now other burgeoning businesses will find a helping hand at the Mountain Bounty Kitchen in Huntington. The commercial kitchen is available to enhance the success of small processors, and soon 15 small agribusinesses will be in operation at the facility. There is about 14,000 square feet with three separate kitchens, one designated for



Gus' View...

recipes with meat; one specialized for baking and one just waiting to find out what would work best for the tenants. For \$25 an hour, a cook can build their commercial sales, or a family may just want to rent a kitchen themselves to cater a wedding or other special occasion. The facility also has considerable storage space available in addition to the kitchens. I congratulate the executive director of the facility Lawrence Perry and all the folks who have brought this \$2.8 million project to fruition.

For several years, our Marketing & Development Division has been working with two entrepreneurs in Webster Springs who recently made a big investment to help them keep up with the demand of their commercial sales. Dee and Angie Cowger's Custard Stand Hot Dog Chili can now be found in seven states at Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Kroger, Foodland and other grocery retailers. The Cowger's invited me to the grand opening of their new facilities. Custard Stand Hot Dog Chili produces 2,200 pounds of sauce every day, with the future capacity of over 4,000 pounds. I can vouch that it is very tasty. I'm told it's also good on baked potatoes, cheese fries, taco salads, and with a few other ingredients it makes a wonderful bowl of bean chili. Dee and Angie has come a long way since transforming a three-bay car wash into a cooking facility for their special chili. Their product meets all the standards required by the United States Department of Agriculture and West Virginia Department of Agriculture. The future is bright for this couple and their family.

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FARM MUSEUM LIGHT SHOW DATES SET

The West Virginia Farm Museum Christmas Light Display will open December 8 and will run through December 18, from 6-9 p.m. nightly, according to Museum Manager Lloyd Akers.

As in the past, admission is free, but donations in support of the nonprofit museum are greatly appreciated. The Museum's Country Store will be open each night and will sell cookies, coffee and hot chocolate. Santa will also be on hand to collect all the kids' Christmas wishes.

This year's exhibit will feature approximately two million lights and is being erected by a team of dedicated volunteers. Roughly 8,500 visitors passed through the gates last year and organizers are hoping for even more this year, Akers added.

Gus' View ...

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Pilgrim's Pride Corporation, our largest poultry industry here in West Virginia, is endeavoring to buy Gold Kist, Inc., the third-largest poultry processor in the nation. Pilgrim's Pride is the country's second-largest poultry producer. If Pilgrim's acquire Gold Kist as part of their organization they will be close to being the number one producer in the country. The company is the 12th largest private-sector employer in the state, employing about 2,300 at its Moorefield operations and supports about 200 poultry farms in Hardy County. They are hoping to expand here in West Virginia and are actively looking for additional growers to supply the Moorefield operations.

With poultry production a major industry in Hardy County, the farm of Josh Frye is well suited to be the test site for a Litter-to-Gas System. The experimental system's goal is to turn poultry litter into natural gas through a process that is cost efficient, environmentally clean, and at the same time, produce a marketable fertilizer from the ash residue. The \$1.2 million experiment will run two or three years and is funded by a \$550,000 conservation innovation grant from the USDA and \$137,000 in state funds. The remaining monetary value consists of in-kind services from Coaltec Energy USA, Inc., West Virginia University, and Mr. Frye's contribution of the test site and poultry houses. I understand this is the nation's first attempt to turn poultry litter into natural gas to heat poultry houses. I personally think Josh and his partners are on the right track and if the process can be proven, it will be a great boon for the poultry farmer's bottom line in energy cost savings.

It appears the spinach contamination problem is under control. Spinach is back on the market now, with its packaging bearing the certification that it does not contain the bacteria 0157:H7. How so much of a product can be contaminated and distributed nationwide is still a mystery. The various vegetable washing solutions that have been on the market for several years are experiencing a sales boost. These citrus derived products can control most bacteria and also remove wax from fresh fruits and vegetables.

Seeking Comments on USDA Specialty Crop Grant Funds in West Virginia

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture is in the process of drafting a State Plan for approximately \$100,000 in specialty crops funding. Some examples of funding projects include: Research Promotion, Marketing, Nutrition, Trade Enhancement, Food Safety, Food Security, Plant Health Program, Education, Buy-Local programs, increased consumption, increased innovation, improved efficiency, reduced costs of distribution system, environment concerns & conservation, product development & developing cooperative.

Please send comments to bbrabham@ag.state.wv.us by November 30, 2006.

The Gelbvieh Livestock Breeder Association is organizing a chapter in West Virginia. On September 28, they held an organizational meeting in Jackson County and 17 interested breeders attended; 15 from 6 different counties, and 2 from Ohio. On October 26, they held a membership meeting. My best wishes to them.

My mail continually brings me interesting information about West Virginia and the activities people are involved in. Dr. Robert Anderson of Bridgeport recently wrote to inform me of the West Virginia Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Museum Association located near Exit 115 of I-79 in Harrison County at Quiet Dell. I personally witnessed the work of the original CCC. I know a lot of people aren't aware of the original CCC, but maybe had relatives who worked for the organization to provide for their families. Their work survives today across the nation as members built bridges, drinking fountains, developed state parks, installed water supply lines, planted trees and shrubbery, and many other accomplishments too numerous to list in this column. Many of the members were stone masons and others that left professional and durable structures of their labor. I grew up enjoying the fruits of the labor of this industrious organization. If you're in the area, visit the museum and reminisce awhile.

Down on the farm we're preparing for winter. The calves have been weaned and are on feed. We've been a little late in cutting fire wood but the woodshed is getting full. We're enjoying the turnips, the last vestige of the garden. As always, Anna Lee and I are looking forward to the reunion of all the kids for Thanksgiving as they arrive for deer season. We will then enjoy the labor of our summer efforts as we pull from the preserved foods and give thanks for the bountiful harvest.

Our families have many reasons to be thankful for the country that we live in and the opportunity to determine our destiny. On November 7 I hope you take the opportunity to go to the polls and make your views known.

Remember hunters to do your best to help reduce the deer population, especially does; wear rubber gloves when dressing them out, and if they show any signs of ill health, do not eat them. Let's be safe not sorry even though the risk of chronic waste disease transferring to humans is minimal.

Happy Thanksgiving—I hope you and your family enjoy the fruits of your labor as well.



AUCTIONEER CONTINUING EDUCATION SEMINAR

All auctioneers are required by law to complete their continuing education requirements in 2006 to get their 2007 license. If you have not received your three hours continuing education for 2006, please plan to attend one of the following seminars.

November 13, 2006

Sponsored by *W.Va. Auctioneers Association*
Appletown Auction House
Inwood, W.Va.

5:30 p.m. Registration ~ 6:00 p.m. Seminar
Contact Randy Burdette 304/445-2897;
randy@riverbendauction.com.

November 17, 2004

Sponsored by
W.Va. Professional City Park Pavilion Auctioneers Association
Parkersburg, W.Va.

8:30 a.m. Registration ~ 9:00 p.m. Seminar
Contact Madison Williams,
304/428-4967; 482-3944.

November 28, 2006

Episcopal Church
Sponsored by
Upshur County Extension Office
65 S. Kanawha Street
Buckhannon, W.Va.

5:30 p.m. Registration ~ 6:00 p.m. Seminar
Contact Gary Rapkin, 304/473-4208.

December 5, 2006

Sponsored by
W.Va. Auctioneers Association
Stewart's Auction Center
Jane Lew, W.Va.
5:30 p.m. Registration ~ 6:00 p.m. Seminar
Contact Robert Stewart, Jr., 304/884-7925;
randy@riverbendauction.com.

December 6, 2006

Moorefield Middle School
Sponsored by
Hardy County Extension Office
Moorefield, W.Va.
5:30 p.m. Registration ~ 6:00 p.m. Seminar
Dave Workman, 304/530-0273.

December 7, 2006

WVU Tree Fruit Research Education Center
Sponsored by
Jefferson County Extension Office
Kearneysville, W.Va.
2:30 p.m. Registration ~ 3:00 p.m. Seminar
Contact Craig Yohn, 304/728-7413, Ext. 2.

December 13, 2006

Doddridge County Park
Sponsored by
Doddridge County Extension Office
Snowbird Road
5:30 p.m. Registration 304/873-1801
6:00 p.m. Seminar
Contact John Murray 304/643-2164;
John.Murray@mail.wvu.edu.

Agriculture Commissioner

Gus R. Douglass

at home on his

Mason County Farm



Commissioner Gus R. Douglass as National FFA President — the only West Virginian ever to serve as president of the national organization.

Part 2 of the three-part profile

Adapting to the times

The drought this year not only decimated Douglass' corn crop, but also reaffirmed for the family that the money from farming most likely won't be made the way it was in the past.

The family has about 150 head of cattle, which they'll start marketing this fall as organically raised animals.

"You have to go where the market takes you," Douglass said. "People will pay extra to know there's no medication or anything being used with these cows. That's a profit we need now."

The costly new baling facility will help the family produce more hay for local horse stables and other farms.

"There is indebtedness that comes with that, but there's a market there," Douglass said. "And you just can't rely on the straight farming anymore. We have no choice but to keep up with the technology."

For Tom to be able to make the baling business work as a one-man operation (it's just him and his father now running the entire farm), he had to invest in state-of-the-art equipment. A mammoth baler costs in excess of \$100,000.

Gus isn't making those kinds of investment decisions on his own anymore.

Among his four children, Tom, the youngest, is the only one who was interested in taking over the family farm, much like Gus was the only boy in his family who wanted to make a career living off the land.

It's a problem faced by farmers across the country whose offspring are looking elsewhere for their life's work.

This profile on Commissioner Douglass was originally published October 19, 2005 in the *Charleston Daily Mail* and was written by reporter Kris Wise.

The profile won "Best Lifestyle Feature" at the West Virginia Press Association's annual convention held in August 2006.

It will be reprinted in three parts in the *Market Bulletin*.

"I would just hate to see this farm turned into something else someday," Douglass said. "Because once you lose it, it's gone. You convert it from farmland, and you're never really going to get it back."

Douglass and son now have a limited liability partnership in the farm, but Tom is pretty much the one in charge.

"This is his livelihood now," Gus said. "We're here trying to help him, to guide him. If he needs a tractor driver, I'm here."

A difficult choice

Years ago, Douglass was faced with the same choice his son had to make and one that many young people in farming families are shying away from today.

Gus loved farming, but that love bred other aspirations. Years spent raising cattle gave him hope for a successful career in veterinary medicine.

But he also felt the stirrings to try his hand at athletics. The tall beanpole was thought to be a sure bet for his high school basketball team.

The farm, once again, played a part in sealing his fate.

With the farm a good 15 miles from Point Pleasant High School, it was too far for Douglass to walk each night after basketball practice, and practice ran so late he would always miss the school bus.

"I had to either hitchhike or catch the passenger train," Douglass said.

The train didn't show up near the school until after 8 p.m. each night. He took to riding it so frequently that the train conductor would slow down near the Douglass farmhouse so Gus could jump off there rather than having to walk back a mile from the train depot.

The late nights and hectic schedule started to take their toll on the high school sophomore and almost eliminated the possibility for much participation in Future Farmers of America, the activity still closest to his

heart.

"Coach came to me and said I had to make a choice," Douglass said. "It was just clear that (basketball) was not where I needed to be."

So he picked FFA, eventually working up to the job of president of his high school's chapter. He got heavily involved in the leadership aspect, quickly picking up public speaking skills and parliamentary procedure.

"At the time, there was that financial incentive for me," Douglass said.

Before he was 10 years old, his father had given him a tiny plot of land to cultivate on his own. He grew potatoes and sold them at the farmers' market before he realized there was more money to be made off cattle.

A leader early on

The farming experience led him to the highest ranks of the FFA, and Douglass became the only West Virginian ever to serve as president of the national organization.

He started the first FFA newsletter and took the lead in asking the agriculture industry to help fund youth farming projects.

"There I was, this 20-year-old walking into Kraft, and I met John Kraft," Douglass said.

"There I was walking into Firestone, met all them and ending up forming this long relationship with the whole family. I met John Deere. I stayed in touch."

The connections helped solidify Douglass' position in the farming community and opened doors he didn't know existed.

He wound up being the youngest person ever to have an International Harvester franchise. He was 25 years old and running the million dollar enterprise in Mason County, and he was doing it while trying for the first time to run a farm by himself.

"I begged and borrowed to make that work," Douglass remembers, noting that his health suffered because of the stress of it all.

Nuisance Lady Beetles Plague West Virginia Homeowners

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture has never released Asian lady beetles and is not responsible for the hordes of insects that have been plaguing many West Virginia homes, according to Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass.

Also known as the "Halloween" or "Japanese" lady beetle, the first established population of this insect was discovered in Louisiana in 1988. Since that time, the beetle has increased its distribution to include most areas of the United States and parts of southern Canada. It was first reported in West Virginia in 1992.

"Although several states attempted to release and establish the beetle as a biological control agent for fruit and nut tree pests, most of these release attempts were considered failures and it remains unclear exactly how the beetles entered the country. No such releases have ever been attempted in West Virginia, and their movement here was part of a natural expansion from other states," said Commissioner Douglass.

"My office has received numerous calls and e-mails over the past few days asking us to do something, but there is little that can be done on a wide-scale basis. At present, control remains limited to those tactics that prevent the beetles from entering the home during fall."

Commissioner Douglass noted that he has approached the U. S. Department of Agriculture about the complaints he has received over the years, but little progress has been made in finding a more effective control method for these insects.

For limited Asian lady beetle control, in and around the home, consider the following tactics:

Summer Months: Seal all logical entry points on the exterior of the home with caulking, weather-stripping, screens, etc. Concentrate around doors and windows, under eaves, around the foundation, attic vents, seams in siding, or where pipes and wires enter the structure. This practice is often easier said than done, but at present, is the only reliable long-term solution. Seal interior entry points to individual rooms. Concentrate around windows, vents, light fixtures, electrical outlets, etc.

Early/Mid-October: Consider treating the exterior of the home (at logical entry points) with an insecticide labeled for "structure-invading" insect pests (e.g. Bayer Advanced Home Pest Control, Ortho Bug-B-Gone, Ortho Home Defense, Spectracide Bug Stop, Suspend, Tempo) or look for products with these active ingredients: Bifenthrin, Cyfluthrin, Deltamethrin, Esfenvalerate, or Tralomethrin. Follow labeled directions. This treatment works best if performed just before beetles arrive.

Winter Months: Periodically remove individual beetles in the living portions of the home with a vacuum cleaner. Empty and dispose of vacuum cleaner contents after each session. Place sticky boards or fly paper near select lights to attract and capture active beetles. Insecticide treatments are of little value at this time.

Dry Weather Leaves State's Honeybees Hungry

Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass is warning the state's beekeepers to begin emergency feeding for their bees because the dry weather the state experienced this summer has caused a shortage of natural nectar.

"Although the worst of the dry weather came late enough in the season to spare the agricultural community the worst drought effects, the state's honeybees have not fared as well," said Commissioner Douglass. "If beekeepers are seeing problems with their bees, the first thing they should do is make sure they provide enough food to sustain all their hives."

State Apiarist George Clutter said he has seen an unusual amount of starvation throughout the state. "We've been inundated with calls from people wondering if their bees have some kind of disease, but the vast majority of these cases are simply starvation," said Clutter. "And what's unusual is that we're seeing it

throughout the state, from border to border." Incidence of disease and parasitic mites has actually been quite low, Clutter added.

Recent rainfall has been "too little, too late" to revive nectar sources. The result will be a poor year for local honey production, but at this point, Clutter is more concerned with protecting the state's population of honeybees.

"The bees have not made enough honey to feed themselves, much less produce a surplus for human consumption. I expect heavy losses unless they [beekeepers] do some emergency feeding," he said. He recommended that beekeepers set out feeders stocked with corn syrup or invert sugar (sugar and water mixture) if each colony does not have at least 50-70 pounds of stores for winter.

For more information, contact George Clutter at 304-257-0251, Apiary Specialist Paul Poling at 304-257-0252 or Apiary Specialist Wade Stiltner at 304-550-0589.

2006 West Virginia Recipe Challenge Winners Announced

West Virginia State University (WVSU) Extension along with the State Fair of West Virginia, Mountain Bounty Kitchen, BIZASIST, Tamarack, and the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, proudly announce the winners of the 2006 West Virginia Recipe Challenge. The event took place August 19 at the West Virginia State Fair in Lewisburg, W.Va. Six judges, from professional food service and product marketing professions throughout the state, selected winners in the categories of existing entrepreneur and new entrepreneur.

In the professional or existing entrepreneur category, Frank Goines of Kingwood, W.Va., won first prize for his entry titled "Ms. Mary's Corndog Kit." Goines' entry was selected by the judges based on taste, aroma, presentation and product marketability. Mr. Goines, a truck driver from Preston County, explains that the recipe is a family tradition. "It's mom's original recipe, and we've been preparing our corndogs now for about 37 years at the Preston County Buckwheat Festival. This is her recipe and her face is on the container. Entering the competition was really for her." The existing entrepreneur prize is \$1,000 worth of goods and services to refine product marketing and production.

Winning the new entrepreneur category was Mr. Darrell Vowell of Glenwood, W.Va. The judges applied the same criteria to the amateur category, ultimately selecting Mr. Vowell's Smoked Pork Ribs as the best in class. The amateur prize is valued at over \$10,000 worth of goods and services to bring the product to market.

When asked how he felt about winning, Mr. Vowell explained that the product really sold itself. "With more and more families working two jobs, convenience in the kitchen is what it is all about. The aim was to create a quality entrée that can be cooked to taste and ready to serve in about ten minutes." As witnessed and confirmed by many who enjoyed a sampling of the winning product, Mr. Vowell has filled a need within the market.

Both winning products will go through the prize winning refinement process and are headed for market shelves in West Virginia in the very near future.

For details on how to enter the 2007 West Virginia Recipe Challenge please contact Ms. Stacy Turner, Rural Business Services Program Coordinator for WVSU Extension, at (304) 466-7113.

Partnerships, Persistence Pay off for Vegetable Farmer

Meandering along the Ohio River, the roads in Washington, W. Va. might lead wanderers to a prominent sign, shaped into a barn silhouette, reading "Butcher Family Farm." The sign alone might warrant an impromptu pull-over for travelers hungry for fresh produce.

The roadside stand offers not only the predictable gamut of summer vegetables, but also some of the most perfect round "Candy" onions you've ever seen, purple "Islander" sweet peppers, heirloom tomatoes and more. Depending on the time of year, you might find fresh strawberries, blackberries, flowering mums, hanging baskets, or buses full of schoolchildren paying a visit to Butcher Farm's chickens, goats, sheep and llamas. The man behind this 110-acre operation, which also wholesales its fresh vegetables, is Rob Butcher, the grandson of the original owner of Butcher Farm. But he's not alone.

Rob, like other members of his immediate family, has facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy. Its progression has dramatically impacted his leg strength in the last ten years, and consequently his mobility. He and his wife reside on the family farm. "I am very fortunate that my family is so supportive," he says. The farm belongs to his parents, and the whole family works to keep it in production.

In 1999, Mr. Butcher worked with the W. Va. Division of Rehabilitation Services, who helped him purchase a platform lift for his John Deere 5410. Much like a simplified elevator, the lift allows him to stand at ground level and be lifted, via hydraulics, up to the level of the tractor seat. "I honestly cannot imagine life without it now," he says, obviously grateful both to DRS and to the National AgrAbility Project, which helped put him in touch with the company who designed the lift. At the time, this was not an easy option. "That was one of the hardest things I have had to face," he says. "I am the typical, stubborn, full-of-pride farmer."

When it comes to pride, accepting help when he needed it wasn't the only obstacle. "I believe that if I quit using my legs, I will lose them for life. The physical therapist told me four years ago that he could not explain how I had the physical strength to even walk. And here I am still trying to walk." Watching him hustle from task to task on foot or in his Jazzy Powerchair to give directions to his team of local teenage workers, Mr. Butcher's mobility is impressive by anyone's standards. Recently, though, he admits to feeling "unstable and wobbly" when walking around the packing shed or transferring from chair to chair.

Concerned about navigating the farm as his M.D. progressed, Rob e-mailed West Virginia AgrAbility in the early winter months of 2006. Since then, Inetta Fluharty, Field Operations Manager for WV AgrAbility, has made several visits to Butcher Farm to conduct safety assessments, and to help him evaluate mobility options.

"Rob was concerned that in the future he might need assistance getting up out of the tractor seat and rising to standing position to allow him to utilize the lift," said Fluharty, who works with the Northern West Virginia Center for Independent Living (NWVCIL). She recommended some additional handholds for the tractor, as well as something called a Standing Chair, which enables the user to sit or stand with the legs and back supported. According to The Standing Company, which manufactures the Standing Chair, 'passively standing' improves circulation, reduces swelling, and prevents bone loss, all of which can be problems with long term wheelchair use. Such a chair would allow him to get into a standing position all by himself, simply by pulling a lever on the chair.

devices available for free loan to farmers with physical limitations across the state.

With one of his electric power chairs designated solely for farm use (and the other for the house), Butcher navigates the gravel roads circumnavigating the fields almost as easily he does the concrete floor of the packing shed. Getting in between rows of vegetables, however, is a different story, and Rob regrets that his power chair can get stuck in mud or high grass easier than he'd like.

Together, Fluharty and Butcher are looking into some options that will help him move from a sitting to a standing position as well as access his crop rows to inspect for pests, assess quality and monitor ripeness. Fluharty, who has worked with WV AgrAbility since it began in 2001, is a West Virginia farmer herself, and understands how important these tasks can be for a produce farmer. "There are some really neat options available for all-terrain power chairs these days. I'm helping find the right one for Rob's situation."

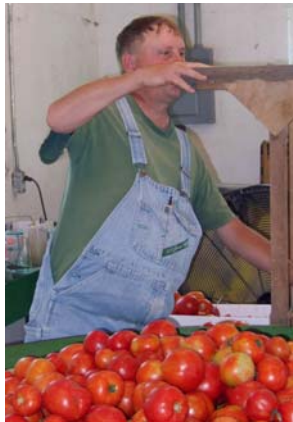
One option is the Ventrac Freedom 300, which she brought to Butcher Farm in July to demonstrate. The unit is a gas-powered machine that travels up to 15 miles per hour and features a bed and ramp just large enough to accommodate a wheelchair.

This eliminates the need to transfer between seats, as a manual or electric chair can be wheeled right up the ramp and locked in without any assistance from others. With thicker tires and a more rugged design, the vehicle is ideal for traveling in between rows. Butcher hopes to have his friend (who happens to own a welding shop) use the Ventrac's design as template for a custom-made device that provides slightly more leg room.

With a large part of his day during the busy season spent standing and sorting tomatoes and other vegetables on the small conveyor in the packing shed, Inetta suggested that, at some point, he mount paddings along the metal edge of grading station that he sometimes leans on for support. This would also give his wrists a place to rest as he packed produce.

Rob's wife Ina does everything she can to assist Rob when he needs it, either in the house or on the farm, where she also works. He worries, however, about the toll it takes on her back. **"We often joke about what we are going to do when we are 80. I am still waiting on the Acme Company that the coyote used in the road-runner cartoons to come install the rocket on my back to help me up."**

It might take some degree of imagination to see a rocket when looking at Butcher's support network of family, friends, and AgrAbility. But it comes pretty close.



Left: Rob Butcher, owner of the "Butcher Family Farm" grades tomatoes in his packing shed.

Below: Inetta Fluharty of the Northern West Virginia Center for Independent Living installs an AgCam on Rob's John Deere for trial use.



Fluharty also loaned and temporarily installed an Ag Cam, a camera that allows individuals to see what's going on behind them at ground level without turning around and potentially exacerbating neck and back problems. This is potentially useful because Rob's particular type of M.D. results in a weakening of the shoulder muscles. Being able to use the Ag Cam for free allowed Mr. Butcher a trial period before deciding to invest in the technology himself. AgrAbility makes similar

KIDS Dr. Lois E. Swoboda – Entomologist and Head Lice

Fall in the Mountain State brings colorful leaves, cool weather, a new school year and sometimes head lice (*Pediculus humanus capitis*). Head lice are not dangerous and do not spread disease, but they are annoying and can be extremely embarrassing to the affected person. Lice infestations most commonly strike children between the ages of three and twelve and their families. Girls are more likely to become infested than boys. The first indication of a problem is usually an itchy head or a tickling sensation, but irritability, head sores and even swollen glands can indicate a lice infestation as well.

If you suspect your child has head lice, inspect the scalp, concentrating on the area behind the ears and the nape of the neck. A bright light and magnifying glass are helpful. Head lice are the size of a sesame seed or smaller, wingless and light-to-dark brown in color. Adult lice and nymphs are normally rare and move quickly, but nits (eggs) may be very plentiful. Nits are comparable in size to a knot in thread. They may be confused with dandruff but, unlike dandruff, nits are firmly glued to the base of the hair and are not easily removed by washing or brushing. On close examination, nits are oval and yellow or white in color. Unhatched nits are usually within ¼ inch of the scalp.

If you find evidence of lice, immediately contact the child's school and inform the school nurse. In some cases, it is possible to treat head lice with over-the-counter preparations. If you are attempting to treat this problem on your own, be sure to read the label completely and follow

the directions exactly. Failure to do so will lead to incomplete control and could even injure the person being treated. All lice control preparations are insecticides and should be treated with caution and respect. Several rules of thumb apply to all preparations whether they are sold as prescriptions or over-the-counter:

- **No chemical treatment is safe for use on children under two years of age. Hand pick the lice and use a comb to remove the nits.**
- **Never use a hair dryer after application of a louse treatment. Some products are flammable.**
- **Do not wash hair or apply any shampoo or conditioner for at least two days after treatment.**
- **Check hair by hand and with a nit comb every two-to-three days for three weeks after a chemical treatment.**
- **Never use more than one type of treatment at the same time.**

Lice are spread almost exclusively by physical contact between individuals (usually head to head). Pets cannot harbor lice and do not require treatment. Lice die very rapidly after leaving the host, so it is unnecessary to treat the house for lice. Other members of the household should be checked every two-to-three days until the infestation has ended, but never treat anyone unless lice are seen to be present.

Potentially infested bedding, clothing and plush toys should be washed in hot water and dried at 130°F for 30 minutes. Articles of this type

that cannot be washed should be stored in sealed plastic bags for two- to three weeks while the infestation is being treated. Combs, brushes, hair ties, barrettes, etc., should be soaked in rubbing alcohol for one hour or discarded.

If the lice do not appear to be dying after two weeks it may be because:

- **Not all nits are being removed.**
- **The child is still being exposed to an infested person.**
- **The treatment you are using is ineffective, probably because the lice are resistant.**

At this point, it's time to contact a doctor, your school nurse or the health department.

It is important to remember that lice are not a sign of poor hygiene. Make sure your child understands that he or she has not done anything wrong to cause this problem and that treatment is not punishment. Explain how lice pass from person to person and gently caution the child to avoid swapping or sharing clothing, hair ties, combs and other personal items. Try to make the time you spend on extra grooming, a time to bond with the child, who may feel ashamed or dirty. Be patient, but be sure to carefully follow whatever treatment regimen is required to keep your home and family free from lice.

State Fair Horse Pull



FIRST PLACE (l-r): Handler for the Yoder-Hatfield Team, Commissioner Douglass, Chris Hatfield (driver), handler for the Yoder-Hatfield Team with horses Schmuck and Roger.



Second-Place (l-r): David Musser (driver), Commissioner Douglass, Ira Green of Rural Retreat, Va. with horses Duke & Duke.

Webster Springs Hot Dog Chili Producer Cut Ribbon on Expansion Project

Custard Stand Food Products owners Dee and Angie Cowger hosted a grand opening celebration October 12, for their new warehouse and facility expansion that will more than double the company's current cooking, storage and freezer space.

Among the dignitaries attending were representatives of Governor Joe Manchin's office, numerous local officials, representatives of the Natural Capital Investment Fund (NCIF) – which helped to finance the expansion – and long time Commissioner of Agriculture Gus R. Douglass.

Custard Stand Food Products was launched in June of 2003, following repeated requests for a take-home version of the hot dog chili sold at the family's ice cream/snack carry-out restaurant. Just three years later, their frozen hot dog chili is available at more than 200 outlets in eight states.

Custard Stand, continued on page 7



L-R: Lynn Phillips (Governor's Office representative), Angie Cowger, Guy Cowger, Dee Cowger, Commissioner Douglass, Linsey Cowger and Alissa Cowger prepare to cut the ribbon on their expanded facility.

Pleasing Pumpkin Recipes

Jean Smith, Director, Marketing and Development Division

The Holiday Season is just around the corner and what better way to add new family favorites than by including some new pumpkin recipes. Pumpkin packs a big nutritional wallop and is available throughout the season in both fresh and canned varieties. Don't forget that butternut squash makes a great substitute for pumpkin if you have a surplus. Be sure to take advantage of the sales at local groceries and discount stores to be ready for holiday baking and last minute guests who drop in. – *Bon Appetit!*



What's Cookin'

November 2006

Recipes

Granny's Harvest Pumpkin Cake

First-Place Cake

Rebecca Thompson, South Charleston, W. Va.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 2½ cups cake flour | 1 cup vegetable oil |
| 2 teaspoons baking soda | 4 eggs |
| 2 teaspoons baking powder | 1 15-ounce can pumpkin |
| 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon | 2 cups crushed pecans |
| 1 teaspoon salt | |
| 2 cups crushed pecan shortbread cookies | |
| 1 cup chopped pecans | |
| ¾ cup butter or margarine, softened | |
| 2 cups sugar | |

Vanilla Cream Cheese Frosting

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1 package cream cheese, softened
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 pound box powdered sugar (4 cups)

Heat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour three, 8" round pans. Mix cake flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon and salt; set aside. Beat cookies, one cup chopped pecans and butter in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed, scraping bowl frequently, until crumbly. Divide among pans; press evenly on bottoms of pans. Beat sugar, oil, eggs and pumpkin in same bowl on medium speed 1 minute, scraping bowl constantly. Gradually beat flour mixture into pumpkin mixture on medium speed 2 minutes, scraping bowl occasionally. Pour over pecan mixture in pans; spread evenly. Bake 30-35 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes; remove from pans to wire rack. Cool completely. **Frosting:** Beat all ingredients in medium bowl with electric mixer on low speed until smooth and spreadable. Fill each layer with ⅓ cup of frosting, placing layers with pecan sides down. Frost sides and top of cake with remaining frosting. Press crushed pecans around sides of cake. You may serve like this or decorate the cake for the season. Store covered in refrigerator.

Recipes

Pumpkin Pudding

First-Place Dessert

Fonda Hammack, Kenna, W. Va.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 29-ounce can pumpkin | 3 eggs |
| 1½ cups sugar | 2½ cups milk |
| 1 teaspoon salt | ⅓ cup cornstarch |
| 1½ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice | 2 tablespoons butter |
| | 1 tablespoon vanilla |

Place pumpkin, sugar, salt, and spice in heavy saucepan over low heat. In blender, place milk, eggs, and cornstarch, blend on high until well mixed. When pumpkin mixture starts to steam, mix in the milk mixture; turn heat to medium. Stir until mixture comes to boil. Add butter and vanilla. Cool; serve with cool whip.

Recipes

Pumpkin Gingerbread Pie

First-Place Non-Traditional Pie
Mary L. McClure – Barboursville, W. Va.

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 slightly beaten egg
- ½ cup half-and-half or light cream
- 1 4.5-ounce package gingerbread mix
- Whipped cream, optional

Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat 10" deep-dish pie plate or 8x8x2" baking dish with cooking spray; set aside. In small mixing bowl, combine pumpkin, sugar and pumpkin pie spice. Add egg; beat lightly with rotary beater or fork just until combined. Gradually stir in half-and-half; mix well.

Prepare gingerbread mix according to package directions. Pour batter into prepared pie plate or dish. Lightly spoon pumpkin mixture over gingerbread batter; swirl gently using a table knife. Bake for 50 minutes for pie plate or 60 minutes for baking dish or until a pick inserted in gingerbread portion comes out clean. Cool slightly. Serve warm or at room temperature with whipped cream. Serves 8.

What's Cookin'
continued on page 8



Custard Stand, continued from page 6

The current production capacity of 2,500 pounds a day will grow to 4,400 pounds a day thanks to the new 30'x50' building that includes a 16'x22' storage freezer.

For more information on Custard Stand Food Products, visit www.custardstand.com, or phone 304-847-2942.

Pumpkin Roll

First-Place Pumpkin Roll
Betty Enslin – Ona, W. Va.

Cake:

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup pumpkin
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon

- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Filling:

- 1 cup powder sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup softened butter
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla
- 2 tablespoons sweetened condensed milk

Heat oven to 350°F. Spray 15½x10½x1" baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Line bottom of pan with parchment paper.

In medium bowl, beat eggs at high speed for five minutes. Gradually add sugar, pumpkin and lemon juice. In separate bowl, mix flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg; add to pumpkin mixture. Pour into pan. Sprinkle with pecans.

Bake 15 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

Generously sift powdered sugar onto clean dish towel; invert cake onto towel. Carefully peel off parchment paper and lightly sift powdered sugar over cake. Roll up cake with towel from narrow end; let cool at least 30 minutes.

Filling: Beat powdered sugar, butter, cream cheese, vanilla and condensed milk in large bowl at medium speed until smooth. Unroll cake; spread with filling. Roll up again and dust with powdered sugar. To serve, cut into 1" thick slices. Store in refrigerator.