

GYF MAY NEWS

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GYF and FFA Members Celebrate Banner Year in Ag Education

On the evening of Friday, April 17, 2015 members of the Battlefield FFA, Gettysburg Young Farmers, and friends and families gathered for the annual Spring Banquet. Over 160 were in attendance including local school administrators, state and local politicians and Pa. Dept of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding. After a satisfying meal prepared and served by the Gettysburg High School cafeteria staff the assembled were dismissed to the auditorium for the awards presentations.

Mr. Redding shared some memories of his days in the FFA with the students and guests. He highlighted the many ways in which the leadership, public speaking and parliamentary procedure skills he learned in FFA have served him through the many years since high school. He urged the students to recognize the concern and commitment exhibited by teachers and families who enabled the students to have these FFA experiences.

Most of the Battlefield members present received either the Greenhand, Apple, or Keystone degree certificates. Students were commended for outstanding salesmanship, academics, leadership and improvements. The Gettysburg Young Farmers awarded a \$500 scholarship to Gettysburg senior and Battlefield FFA president, Matthew Wagner. Matt has an outstanding high record in academics, community service, 4H projects and FFA participation. Matt plans to attend Penn State University to study Ag and Extension Education. In his scholarship application essay Matt expressed his hope to be able to motivate and inspire high school students to develop their agricultural interests into successful SAE projects and beyond high school into careers.

The evening concluded with a wonderful slide show highlighting the year's activities, lots of hugs and tears on the cheeks of some of the FFA senior members as they passed the officer responsibilities on to their successors.



GYF President Carl Wilkinson congratulates FFA senior Matthew Wagner, 2015 scholarship winner.

DATES TO NOTE.

June 28, 2015

GYF Picnic at Ed Brown's
Details to follow in June
NEWS

July 14-15, 2015

PYFA/PAAE Summer Confer-
ence. Tyrone and State Col-
lege, Pa. See article for de-
tails.

SAVE THE DATE

**Summer GYF Picnic
Sunday June 28, 2015**

**Hosted by Ed, Barb and Charlie Brown
1365 Georgetown Road, Littlestown
More details to follow**



SPRING SAFETY REMINDER

Before you head out this season

Don't forget to double check all of the safety features on your equipment including SMV symbols, shields, guards, and ROPS.

**PYFA/PAAE Summer Conference
July 14-15, Tyrone, Pa.**

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

- 8:30 – 12:30 AgEduCamp,
Dr. Daniel Foster
- 12:30-1:15 Lunch
- 1:15-3:15 Prof. Dev. Workshops
- 6:00-8:30 Dinner picnic and Dave
Hershey's Percherons

Wednesday, July 15, 2015

- 8:00-9:15 PYFA Board meets
- 9:30-10:15 travel to PSU
- 10:30-12:00 tour of PSU barns
- 12:15-2:00 Lunch, self guided
tour PSU Arboretum
- 2:30-4:00 Tech Workshops
- 4:15-5:00 travel to Tyrone HS
- 6:00-8:00 Awards Banquet and
auction (Marzoni's Altoona)



Tech Workshop Options

- ◆ Food Science: K-12 STEM Curriculum, Dr. Catherine Cutter, Penn State
- ◆ Renewable Energy, Leah Bug, Center for Science and the Schools (PSU)
- ◆ Landscape Stormwater Management/Green Roofs, Dr. Robert Berghage, Penn State
- ◆ Drones in Agriculture and Environmental Science, Dr. H.J. Sommer, Mech. Eng. (PSU)
 - ◆ Climate Change and Agriculture, Eberly College of Science Faculty
 - ◆ Animal Science or Turf Science or Pest Management

HOW DROUGHT VULNERABLE ARE PA. CROP FIELDS?

Includes information from "From Feast to Famine-Running out of Water!" posted May 5, 2015 by Sjoerd Duiker, PSU Associate Professor of Soil Management and Applied Soil Physics

As farmers we are more dependent on weather than many other industries. Not having any control over such a important variable can be maddening! Agronomists tell us that the major reason for poor crop yields in Pa. is insufficient summer rain. That's no new news!

Although we are just a bit behind normal rainfall for this time of year, things are definitely dryer than our typical wet spring. In fields with shallow soils and therefore limited water holding capacity, drought conditions are never farther than a few weeks away. So you may wonder, is there anything farmers can do to maximize the available rainfall?

If you remember the water cycle from high school science, there are only a few pathways for precipitation to follow. Rain falling from clouds will either be intercepted by vegetation or land on the ground. Water falling on impervious surfaces such as pavement or highly compacted fields will become "runoff" and make its way into the surface water system of streams and rivers. Water falling on pervious surfaces will percolate into the ground until the ground is saturated and then begin to run off. In the soil, pores fill with water until the profile is saturated. With no restrictive horizon, the moisture slowly wicks into the ground water. This ground water recharge is critical for areas such as Adams County which has no large perennial creeks or rivers.

The ideal soil moisture condition for plant growth is when the soil has reached "field capacity." This is the condition in which excess water has drained through the profile, downward water movement has nearly stopped and there are some soil pores filled with air. Sufficient water is available in the root zone for plant use. Obviously soil type, as well as amount of precipitation, is a big factor in being able to maintain this ideal condition. The water absorbed by plant roots is eventually transpired by the plant back into the

atmosphere or water may return directly to the atmosphere through evaporation.

When there is concern about sufficient water for crop production, practices which reduce runoff, evaporation and transpiration conserve water. Practices which promote infiltration and water storage in the soil also preserve this important resource. Widely used field practices such as cover cropping and reduced tillage help to hold the water on the field and promote infiltration. Another management decision which farmers might make this spring in the interest of conserving soil moisture is the early termination of cover crops. Many producers may customarily let cover crops grow to harvestable size for forage, but some of these crops, especially cereal rye takes up a lot of water. Killing the crop at an earlier stage reduces water losses through leaf transpiration and can be left on the field surface to also reduce evaporation.

Considering soil type in crop selection can impact water resources. A crop which is a heavy water user, corn or alfalfa for example, can release 0.3" of water per day through transpiration on a hot summer day. This monthly water loss of 9" exceeds average monthly precipitation for most of Pa. The water stored in a deep, loamy soil with adequate organic matter will make up the deficit. On shallow stony soil your crop will show the deficit. Additional management practices to conserve soil water include keeping pH and fertility at optimal levels, maximizing soil organic matter, and reducing plant population levels. Timely planting encourages deep root growth early in the season which can better support plants when moisture is limited.



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*"Young farmers are any farmers
willing to learn"*



*NOTE THESE UPCOMING EVENTS:
Sunday, June 28, 2015 GYF Picnic*