

SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

The Earth Beneath our Feet By, Rueben Stoltzfus of Lancaster Ag.

His years of engagement with farmers practicing the unique and challenging art of farming, years of observation and personal experience with plants, soils, soil amendments, and the human body, with the vast array of professional resources he has drawn upon over the years to educate himself and others, Rueben is uniquely qualified to lead a discussion about this thing we call dirt, earth, soil. Thinking about the earth as habitat for vast myriads of living things, things that represent life for all of God's creatures, will be the topic of this presentation.

The Greenfield Farms Story

The year was 2003 and a group of Amish farmers and business men thought the time might be right for them to embark on an endeavor that had the potential to impact their Agri Cultural community in positive ways. The goal was to put in place a system of growing things that resulted in good tasting, healthy food grown without synthetic chemicals and crutches, food that would be sought after, resulting in a restored and vibrant local farming economy. Stop by to hear the story and maybe learn about some of the early struggles inherent in launching this kind of effort.

The PA raw milk story

Leroy Miller of Bird in Hand has been on the forefront of the raw milk movement in PA for quite a number of years. Why is raw milk such an emotional issue for milk drinkers in the US and Canada when at the same time many advanced European countries, in the last couple of years, have taken to installing self-service raw milk vending machines that are kept supplied by local farmers? Then again, why would anyone want to drink raw milk anyway? And what did it take for PA to become a state that allows the sale of raw milk from licensed and permitted farms to any retail outlet inclined to offer it to their customers? Participants in this presentation will have opportunities to learn things they may not have been aware of.

Noon International guest recognition

This is a time for Horse Progress Days participants to hear from horse farmers and enthusiasts who have traveled from distant places and to meet and greet them. This is an informal time that has proven to be of great interest to those who have participated in prior years as they interact with guests from outside of North America.

Mechanical no-till systems, the I & J roller

Ross Duffield is farm manager at Rodale Organic Farm in Kutztown, PA. In 1954, according to the Rodale web site, R. I. Rodale wrote "Organics is not a fad. It has been a long-established practice-much more firmly grounded than the current chemical flair. Present agricultural practices are leading us downhill." Indeed. For the past number of years I&J Manufacturing has been working with Rodale on a mechanical no-til system that uses a steel roller to roll down cover crops so that the conservation benefits of chemical no-til farming touted so loudly by major chemical companies and many farming academics can be practiced organically. The roller will have been demonstrated earlier in the day in the fields.

The Horse Progress Days 2017 French Connection

Horse Progress Days is excited to welcome Sylvie Buschoff of Sellerie Percherons and her assistant Mona Latie from Saint- Agile, France. These two ladies are heavily involved in the Draft Horse and light horse culture in their native country. They will be bringing collars and harness from their harness shop to display and talk about. The literature from this company claims 70 possible adjustments in height and width for their collars. The materials used to make them include neoprene, leather, stainless steel, and titanium. This seminar will be of particular interest to harness makers and anyone who uses horses for work or pleasure.

Produce marketing by Auction

Jeff Stoltzfus is a local produce guru with connections far and wide in the produce business. His expertise as an extension agent of Penn State, built on his 23 years as an Ag educator, makes him a valuable resource to the local produce growing culture. There are now 16 wholesale produce auctions operating in Pennsylvania. Leola Produce Auction was first and has been a resource for many other start-up auctions. This seminar will help you to learn about the impact of produce auctions in local and distant places and will include some ideas and ways to manage best to take advantage of auctions as a means of getting produce to market.

Beekeeping

Stephen Stoltzfus is a beekeeper. He has thought a lot about bees and how they work and why they are important. We like to eat their honey, yes, but what about the real work that they do; pollination. What can each of us do to treat them like the essence of life that they are, and what can we do to feed them better. Why is beekeeping so much harder now than it used to be? And really, why does it even matter?

Horse care seminar

Jeffrey Edelson VMD, a local veterinarian has a long and successful career working with horse people in Lancaster County and beyond. Horse Progress Days is very interested in helping horse farmers learn as much as possible about signs of distress and fatigue in working horses and mules as they carry out the work of food production on horse powered farms. How does a horse farmer best care for his animals when they are at rest, getting ready for heavy spring work. How long can a healthy horse be expected to work on a given day without a rest. What is a safe respiratory rate for a working horse when working at full capacity? How does it compare to a respiratory rates in a human athlete, are there similarities? And what is a safe heart rate?

Finishing beef on a grass only diet

Tim Fritz of King's Agri-Seeds, a local seed company, has first-hand knowledge of grass. And as an added bonus, first-hand experience with growing out beef cattle to dress and age to best advantage. Tim and his crew are on the forefront of finding and marketing improved grasses for the benefit of animals who spend their lives in the great outdoors and the farmers who tend to them. A recent exercise for Tim has been to raise his own cattle, have them butchered, with recorded weight gains and dressed weights. There will be lots of things to learn about grass from this seminar.

Working Horses in Europe Horse Progress Days welcomes Pit Schlechter and his wife Marie-Jeanne to the 2017 event. Pit has been deeply involved with supporting and encouraging the use of working animals for farming in western Europe and beyond, serving for a time as chairperson of the Ardenne breed of Draught horses in his native country of Luxembourg and giving meaningful support to the Federation du Cheval de Trait pour la promotion de son Utilisation or FECTU, a federation given to the task of promoting the use of horses for farming, logging, and in other commercial and pleasurable ways. With his years of travel experience, years of work as an educator, and his personal experiences with his own horses to draw on, Mr. Schlechter's presentation is sure to be interesting and encouraging to those who able to participate in it.

Food Security by way of Animal Traction

Tim Rendall is project manager for an Appropriate Scale Mechanization Consortium working in cooperation with USDA that it is pursuing, with help from USAID, Kansas State University, NC Ag and Tech State University, University of Illinois, and Michigan State University an effort called Feed the Future Innovation Lab. This is a program that takes into consideration the nature of the land, the cultures represented in the people who live there, and the type of animals on hand for working. The consortium also includes the well-known to HPD organization Tillers International. Human agricultural activities and growing systems that mimic nature; natuculture, is a new way of thinking about how humans interact with the earth. Joining Tim for this presentation will be Ruth McDaniel, director of "Natuculture in Schools Program" at Southern High School in Durham, NC. This seminar will be of special interest to manufacturers of small horse drawn equipment and farmers who grow and wish to grow lots of food on small plots of land. Participants can expect to be engaged with a robust exchange of thoughts and ideas.

Outside cows managed for docility, heritage grain bread baking, cheese making, marketing

Come and listen to Jonathan and Nina White as they talk about their unique farming operation in Milford, NJ and their farmers markets in New York City. Their Bob o Link farm is uniquely different from any farm you will encounter in Amish country. While it has a character all its own, there is much to learn from sitting with individuals as motivated and gifted as these two who have given their lives to producing the best kind of food possible. Lots of interaction and time for questions will be the mark of this seminar.