

Two Successful Soil Health Field Days Highlight Summer Activity

Wonderful host farms, perfect weather and a timely and varied agenda combined for two successful field days on July 23 and 25. The week kicked off on the 23rd at Mike and Sheilah Reskovac's Resokovac Farm in Uniontown, Fayette county. A first-generation farmer, Mike raises corn, soybeans and small grains with sunflowers and pumpkins for added diversity.



Mike and Sheilah Reskovac and their sons welcome attendees to their farm.

Activity continued on the 25th at Jeff and Sue Frey's Future View Farm where Jeff raises corn, soybeans and wheat with help from his son Ross and nephew Jeremy Raines. They also finish hogs and do custom manure hauling and spraying. Sue also has greenhouses on the farm where she specializes in cut flowers.

Both days were kicked off by keynote speaker, Dwayne Beck, who managed the Dakota Lakes research farm in Pierre, South Dakota for many years. He outlined the history of soil depletion around the world over many centuries, concluding by saying "we have to stop this cycle now" and outlining his experience with doing so through no-till, cover crops and thoughtful crop rotations.



Dwayne's relaxed style and pointed observations set the stage for further discussions.

Breakout Sessions

As always, breakout sessions played a major role in the day's agenda. These included:



A representative of Hoover's explains the drone demonstration to PDA Secretary Russell Redding as Mike Roth from the State Conservation Commission and Steve Groff look on.



The drone on display before being used for the cover crop seeding demonstration.



David Hunsberger explains the attributes of various cover crop mixes before the crop was rolled down.



Watching the rainfall in action as Bill Chain explains the different soil profiles was a new experience for many in Fayette County.



Lisa Blazure describes characteristics of healthy soil in a pit at Reskovac Farm.



Jeff Frey proves that you don't need all the latest equipment to successfully plant green with a nearly 60-year old retro-fitted planter.

More Summer Activity for the Alliance

In June members joined Oregon Dairy Family Farm Days, an event intended to educate the public about the “hows and whys” of agriculture. The display included the rainfall simulator and the raised bed no-till and covered cropped vegetable boxes used at the Farm Show.

The Alliance was also present at PSU’s Farming For Success field day at the research farm in Lancaster County and the Farming for the Future event in Union County.

Finally the Alliance’s tent at AG Progress Days was a popular stop as it featured the rainfall simulator, educational displays and State Conservation Commission programs. We also partnered with APD management and Penn State extension for a planting green demonstration each day with a combined attendance of nearly 70 farmers, indicating growing interest in this practice.



Display at Oregon Dairy Family Farm Days in June.

Opportunities for Farmers and Agricultural Businesses to Receive Free Legal Services from the Penn State Law Rural Economic Development Clinic

The Penn State Law Rural Economic Development Clinic provides law students with practical legal experience in the food and agricultural sectors. Working under the close supervision of law faculty and staff attorneys who are licensed Pennsylvania attorneys, student attorneys can provide assistance to farmers and agricultural businesses in a variety of legal matters.

The Rural Economic Development Clinic is now accepting applications for its Fall 2024 semester. This semester, the clinic is looking to assist farmers and agricultural businesses

with legal issues, including the following:

- Agricultural labor issues arising from children and youth working on-site;
- The provision of worker housing for agricultural laborers;
- Liability protection for agritourism operations;
- Compliance with the American with Disabilities Act in agritourism operations / accommodation of service animals;
- Solar leases;
- Carbon contracts; and
- Liability protection for farm or value-added

products sold at farmers’ markets or other direct sales outlets

To take advantage of this opportunity, interested individuals and organizations should send an email to Ross Pifer at rhp102@psu.edu providing a detailed explanation of the specific legal services desired along with appropriate background information. The Clinic may not be able to provide services to all who request, but we will do our best to serve the greatest number of clients possible, consistent with our resources and the legal expertise of the student attorneys.

Troy Ott named Dean of Penn State’s College of Agricultural Sciences

Troy Ott, interim director of the Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences, has been named dean of the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences.

As dean, Ott will oversee all aspects of Penn State’s oldest college, which awarded the nation’s first baccalaureate degrees in agriculture in 1861.

“Dr. Ott’s deep connection to Penn State, gained through his tenure as an administrator, faculty member and former undergraduate student, has enabled him to develop a strong vision for the future of the College of Agricultural Sciences as the cornerstone of the University’s land-grant mission,” said Tracy Langkilde, interim executive vice president and provost. “His ability to communicate his passion and vision will allow him to engage broad audiences, including Pennsylvania’s legislature, which is essential to Penn State’s success. • am delighted that Dr. Ott has accepted the role of dean, and • am confident that the college will thrive under his leadership.”

In his new role as dean, Ott will oversee the college’s administrative employees, nine academic departments and Penn State



Dr. Troy Ott

Extension, which delivers science-based information to people, businesses and communities. “The College of Agricultural Sciences is at the core of Penn State’s land-grant mission to serve the citizens of the commonwealth,” Ott said. “Having grown up in a rural community in upper Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where • participated in 4-H and was employed in production agriculture from a young age, • experienced firsthand how the college can transform the lives of Pennsylvanians and how this impact radiates out across the country and around the world. The opportunity to work with such an accomplished team of faculty, staff and students to build upon that legacy is both humbling and energizing.”

“To maintain our relevance, we will need to invest in our most impactful programs, while staying at the forefront of advanced and emerging technologies. The college must continue to match the pace of change in Pennsylvania, and indeed the world, if we are going to remain an innovation engine for the commonwealth.”

More OTT, page 3

FIELD DAYS, from page 1

A new topic for the field days was a discussion by meteorologists of changing weather patterns and trends and how they may affect farmer's crop, planting time and sequence and rotations decisions in the future.

Other elements of the program included Dr. John Tooker of PSU presenting the latest information on IPM and answering numerous questions about the slug damage many experienced this spring. This was followed by him moderating a farmer panel on their experience using untreated seed.



Erik Finkenbinder who when not head meteorologist for ABC27 news in Harrisburg farms with his brother in Perry County discusses changing weather patterns.



OTT, from page 2

"As a student at Penn State, outstanding faculty members helped point me toward opportunities that matched my interests, challenged me, and provided me with the transformational experience of working in a research lab," Ott said. "This put me on the path that led to my wonderfully fulfilling career. Now • can give back to the college that gave me so much, to ensure that other students are provided with this same opportunity."



Alliance president Jim Hershey congratulates Troy Ott on his appointment as dean at Ag Progress Days.

Register Now for the 2024 Keystone Crops and Soils Conference (KCSC)

When:

October 31 & November 1, 2024
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Where:

Holiday Inn Grantville
604 Station Road, Grantville PA

Register:



Visit, <https://bit.ly/3z7Lukh>
Scan, the QR code
Deadline, October 23

More Info.:

Email, Jennifer at jrharry@pennag.com

3 Kernels of Crop Advice for Growers

By Courtney Love
*PennAg Industries Association
for Lancaster Farming*

For many farmers and growers across Pennsylvania, this has been a questionable summer, and many are still determining what their corn and soybean harvests will bring. "Since late spring and summer, there's been a lack of precipitation for many areas in Pennsylvania," said Jennifer Reed-Harry, the Seed and Agronomic Product Council liaison at PennAg Industries Association. "This crop year has become unknown, so many farmers and agronomists are concerned but are actively watching their crops."

Among the agronomists watching corn and soybean fields in their intermediate to mature growing stages are Lew Frame, a certified crop adviser and lead agronomist with TeamAg in Lancaster, and Courtney Walter, a certified crop adviser and agronomist with Growmark FS in Leesport. Walter and Frame are also Seed and Agronomic Product Council members of PennAg. Walter and Frame say they are scouting farmers' fields daily. Despite unfavorable growing conditions, such as intense heat and lack of rain, the corn and soybean crops are displaying early signs of recovery. "Currently, both crops look good, considering the conditions experienced in late spring and early summer—recent weather events of heat, humidity and shots of rain throughout the growing season," Walter said. "Everything looks good for the most part."

Walter and Frame offered this advice for growers to help them navigate the next few weeks and months of the growing season for corn and soybeans. Timing is everything. Corn and soybeans have specific growth stages that give you opportunities to make a difference before the crops are ready for harvest. "One of the most important times to scout fields is as your crops are emerging," Walter said. "This window of opportunity helps any grower identify any issue that could hinder crop growth early on."

Another good time to start scouting is the middle of summer. "This window—late June and July—is our last chance to improve the crops significantly," Walter said. Frame said he walks fields in a W or zigzag pattern on each of his visits, which gives him a glimpse of the variability in the field. "I try to accurately get a representation of each field from what • see for disease, weed or insect pressure. • take that information and apply it to either whole or portions of the field to make a management recommendation to the grower," he said. Wet and humid weather increases the risk of disease. Disease pressure isn't intense in corn and soybean fields at this point. However, that could change as meteorologists predict an increase in tropical (wet and humid) weather conditions in August, Walter said. "With more rain and warmer temperatures, I'm expecting to see an increase in diseases," she said.



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Pennsylvania No--Till Alliance

Our Vision: *"Using no-till systems to improve our soil and water quality, productivity and profitability for future generations."*

Our Mission: *"To promote the successful application of no-till through shared ideas, experiences, education and new technology."*