

## Extension in Beaver County

Winter 2009

### Marcellus Shale and Our Communities

by Jon Laughner, Interim County Extension Director and Ag Entrepreneur Educator

**T**ractor trailer loads of heavy equipment. Tri-axle water trucks. Bulldozers. Cranes. Increased traffic. No-vacancy hotels. Pot-holed roads. All of these things impact our local communities when natural gas well drillers come to town. Are we ready?

Beaver County sits on the very edge of a large amount of drilling activity to our south in Washington County, and to our north in Butler and Mercer Counties. These counties are experiencing the increased needs of infrastructure required of this new drilling activity into the Marcellus Shale formation that is thought to underlay at least two-thirds of Pennsylvania. At first, it was thought that roughly 10 percent, or about 50 trillion cubic feet, of natural gas was recoverable. Now, newly revised estimates from Terry Engelder, Penn State geoscientist, and Gary Lash, State University of New York at Fredonia geologist, place the shale's recoverable gas potential at around 363 trillion cubic feet, which is about the entire United States' natural gas consumption for 14 years.

According to information provided by the PA Department of Environmental

Protection as of October 24, 2008, since the year 2000, the number of oil and natural gas permits in the state has increased from 2,285 to 6,594. And since 2005, more than 406 Marcellus Shale permits have been issued in the state, with 31 of those issued between October 1 & 24, 2008.



Beaver County landowners have been contacted many times by drilling company landmen to lease their oil and gas rights. So far, we have not seen the thousand dollar per acre lease rates that had been common in neighboring counties. However, despite our economy's downturn, natural gas drilling companies have indicated that they plan to spend more on drilling during 2009 in southwest PA.

To help community leaders understand some of the issues

and have a chance to speak with others experiencing it first-hand, Penn State Cooperative Extension has conducted several workshops. Recently, we hosted a tour for local government officials to view active drilling sites and restored well sites.

Approximately 42 officials attended the program and also had the opportunity to speak with municipal officials from areas where drilling is taking place.

We also conducted our second educational videoteleconference for local officials in November 2008. This was attended by 34 township supervisors and planning officials to discuss the experiences of similar drilling activities from other communities.

Although we have seen most leasing landmen leave the county and state, drilling activity in southwest PA will continue at an increasing rate. We envision continued educational programs to meet this new change in our communities.

# Rain Barrels for Water Conservation and Storm Water Management

by Susan Boser, Water Quality Educator

Our home state of Pennsylvania is blessed with abundant water resources and averages 43 inches of rainfall each year. Every time it rains, we have the chance to practice water conservation and reduce the amount of storm water, which has the potential to cause erosion or spread pollutants from our yards and streets into local waterways. It is possible for a typical residential roof to collect 24,000 gallons of rain water each year, and our opportunity to use this water comes in the form of using a rain barrel for water collection.

Rain barrels can be constructed quite simply from any large container, such as a plastic garbage can, or from kits that are available from our local Beaver County Conservation District or various online companies. Direct your roof downspout into the barrel and attach a spigot to the lower half of the container – a soaker hose can also be added to the spigot for continuous

watering. Prevent mosquitoes, insects, and debris from entering the rain barrel by placing a screen where the water enters the barrel from the downspout. The barrel is now a ready



source of water for your plants or other outdoor uses, and runoff to surrounding waterways has been lessened!

With the partnership of the Beaver County Conservation District, a rain barrel workshop was held in August at

Fern Hollow Nature Center in Sewickley Heights. Twenty-four participants learned the benefits of using a rain barrel, and each participant received all of the components necessary to construct one, including the 55-gallon plastic barrels donated by InMetco and Welch's Foods. In addition to constructing the barrels, participants not only hoped to practice other forms of water conservation at home but also planned to more carefully manage their use of pesticides, fertilizers, and other potential waterway pollutants.

The workshop was so successful that thirty-six people are on a waiting list for another rain barrel workshop planned for this spring! For more information on rain barrels or to be placed on our mailing list for upcoming rain barrel workshops, please contact our office.

# Beaver County 4-H Endowment

by Cindie Searight, 4-H & Youth Educator

The Beaver County 4-H Program is collaborating with Penn State University to grow an endowment to benefit Beaver County 4-H youth. Donors have the unique opportunity to become members of the Pennsylvania 4-H Keystone Society. The Keystone Society is a giving organization whose purpose is to ensure the existence of "4-H Forever" in Pennsylvania. This is accomplished through endowed support, and individuals and businesses are recognized for this important donation commitment.

Individuals may become a member of the 4-H Keystone Society by giving to the 4-H endowment fund through

Penn State with a 5-year pledge of at least \$2500, and those aged 25 and under, with a 5-year pledge of \$500. Donors receive a 4-H Keystone Society recognition pin, a window



cling for businesses, invitations to select stewardship events for 4-H and Outreach, and recognition during events in Beaver County throughout the year.

On behalf of Beaver County 4-H & Youth Endowment Committee, we would like to ask you to consider making a donation to the Beaver County 4-H Program at any level with which you feel comfortable. We encourage Beaver County's strong supporters from agribusiness, commodities, businesses, and industry to be a part of this endeavor and directly involved in keeping "4-H Forever" in

Pennsylvania! All donors will be recognized appropriately and all gifts are tax deductible. To learn more about the Beaver County 4-H Endowment as well as donation and payment options, please contact the extension office.

## On the Road to Living Well with Diabetes

by Mary Alice Gettings, MS, RD, CDE, LDN., Nutrition and Health Educator

**D**iabetes now affects nearly 24 million people in the United States, an increase of more than three million in approximately two years, according to estimates released in June 2007 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This means that nearly 8 percent of the U.S. population has diabetes at a total cost to the U.S. of \$174 billion (**direct medical costs** are \$116 billion and **indirect costs, i.e.** disability, work loss, premature mortality, are \$58 billion). Some of these costs can be attributed to the various complications of diabetes, which include heart and kidney disease, blindness, and poor circulation.

*On the Road to Living Well with Diabetes* workshops were offered at two Beaver County sites – YMCA of Beaver County and Monaca Senior Center. Each session included four 2.5-hour sessions and a three month follow-up class. Each class consisted of nutrition and exercise information, educational activities, and a 30-minute exercise session. Dr. Derrico Quattrone, a local podiatrist, spoke

with both groups about proper foot care at the follow-up session. During the first session and the three-month



*Showing fat and muscle models each weighing 5 pounds, Nutrition & Health Educator Mary Alice Gettings explains how gaining muscle and losing fat will reduce body inches but may not show up on the scale.*

follow-up meeting, those with diabetes had their HgA1c (a measure of one's blood sugar control over a three-month period) and blood pressure measured.

Twenty-one (15 with diabetes and 6 family members or friends) attended

and 18 (13 with diabetes) attended the three month follow-up. At the end of the fourth class, all (21 of 21) participants reported:

- ▶ an increased knowledge of how to better control their blood sugar or to support their family member in controlling his or her blood sugar;
- ▶ an enhanced confidence in their ability to manage their diabetes or to help their family member manage their diabetes;
- ▶ at least one change they made in the last month to improve their diabetes control or to support their family member in improving their diabetes control.

Thirty-three percent (4 of 12) reduced their HgA1C, with one person decreasing from a 7.0 to 5.5, and 75% (9 of 12) reduced their blood pressure. A grant from the Joslin Diabetes Center provided funding for this program.

A new program, *Dining with Diabetes*, will be offered in Beaver County starting in March.

## M is for Moo!!!

by Dorothy Barker, EFNEP Nutrition Education Adviser

When it comes to cows and all the good products they provide, speak to Melissa Kowalsky, the 2008-09 Beaver County Dairy Princess. Her *Moo-velous Milk Activities* made learning the facts about calcium fun for 4<sup>th</sup> graders at Midland Elementary School.

Melissa brought a mini-jug of milk for each student, and she used the Nutrition Facts label on the jugs to show the amounts of calcium and sugar in milk. Five varieties of popular drinks were also included in the label reading to compare nutrients and sugars, both natural and added.



Drinking the cold milk after reading the Nutrition Facts label was a tasty treat for the class, with one student commenting, "We are milk tasters and milk shakers. If we drink three glass of low-fat milk a day, we can build strong muscles that will keep us Mooving!"

Thanks to Melissa for participating with EFNEP in presenting a lesson on calcium. The milk group is one of the food groups from Professor Popcorn, a curriculum teaching MyPyramid to elementary schoolchildren.

## Annual Smart Gardening Workshop

by Peggy Adams, Master Gardener Coordinator

The annual Smart Gardening Workshop is the most far-reaching educational opportunity provided by the Penn State Master Gardeners of Beaver County. In March 2008, the workshop was a rewarding experience for 75 attendees, including 33 Penn State master gardeners.

Liz Ball, the featured speaker and noted author, captivated the participants with her presentation, “Perennials for All Reasons”, which focused on selecting perennial plants, keeping low maintenance and maximum pleasure in mind. Using the horticultural concept of the “better plant”, Liz discussed ways of evaluating the current residents of the garden and which might prosper better under the growing conditions of light, moisture, and climate that are

unique to a specific garden. Liz kept all involved with her “My Better Plant Quiz”, stumping even the most experienced gardeners at times. She continued to fascinate her audience



with her workshop session “Photographing Your Garden”, suggesting that photography can make one a better gardener by focusing on garden composition.

Susan Boser, Beaver County Extension Educator, introduced the participants to the new concept of

“Rain Gardens,” collecting rain water runoff to control storm water and prevent erosion while developing a beautiful garden area as a bonus. Kevin Soergel taught participants about “Water Gardens”, specific water features created for the sole purpose of relaxation, by discussing the basics of design, installation, and maintenance of water gardens in three different sessions. Gwen Lutz rounded out the program with her “Perennial Tips”, including how to research, plan the layout, and install one’s own perennial garden.

This year’s Smart Gardening Workshop will be conducted on Saturday, March 7, at Penn State Beaver Campus in Monaca. For more information and a brochure, please contact the Extension office.

## Youth Engaged in MyPyramid

by Melissa Pevac Program Assistant, and Mary Alice Gettings, MS, RD, LDN, CDE, Administrator

The number of hungry Americans has risen by nearly one third since 2000, from 8.5 million to 11.9 million according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). More than 36 million people lived in food insecure households in 2007, compared to slightly over 22 million in 2000. To help those facing hunger, we deliver programs through the PA Tracks nutrition program grant, funded by the USDA, exclusively to Food Stamp recipients and those eligible for Food Stamps.

While youth and senior programs are conducted in community and senior centers, program instructors visit Gateway Rehabilitation’s Tom Rutter and Moffett Houses to provide education. Here, we highlight the Tiger Pause After School Program at Morado Dwellings and Pleasantview

Homes in Beaver Falls.

To meet the educational needs of various age levels, students were divided into two groups – kindergarten through third and fourth through sixth grades. Four ninety-minute classes were conducted with



each group. While the younger group classes were conducted in the early fall, the older ones were asking and anxiously awaiting their turn. The children were actively engaged in lessons on MyPyramid, physical

activity, and healthy drink and snack choices. Each week they prepared a snack that highlighted the lesson taught. They were then asked to take the recipe home and talk with their families about it in the hopes that will be prepared at home. Hands-on-learning, including experiments and games, provided an exciting learning environment.

At a pre-program visit to Pleasantview Homes, a parent of a boy who was taught in the spring of 2008 said her grandson came home after the lesson on whole grains and proceeded to educate *her* on what foods are considered to be whole grains and why they are important to health. Another student used the information and lost 12 pounds since the classes this past spring by eating healthier and moving more .

## ~ Featured Programs ~

### ***6th Annual Smart Gardening Workshop***

Penn State Master Gardeners of Beaver County are proud to sponsor the 6th Annual Smart Gardening Workshop on Saturday, March 7, at Penn State Beaver Campus.

Join us for a fun and informative day that will offer something for every gardener and will help you get a jump start on creating your perfect outside spaces to enjoy this year! Workshop topics include, Container Gardening Through the Seasons, The Use of Herbs as Medicine, Hostas in the Landscape, and Ask “Trapper John”.

Registration is \$35 per person, which includes an information packet, lunch, and beverages throughout the day. Pre-registration is required by February 27. For more information and a registration brochure, please call the Extension Office.

### ***Dining With Diabetes***

Learning that you have diabetes can be overwhelming at first. There are many new things to learn and it can be difficult to know where to start. ***Dining With Diabetes*** will help you to understand some of the most important things you need to know to manage your diabetes.

Registered Dietitians and/or Certified Diabetes Educators will discuss issues such as planning healthy meals, healthy food preparation, physical activity, and more. If you have been told that you have Type 2 diabetes, you will want to attend this class.

Classes are offered weekly for four weeks, with a three-month follow-up class. Each class offers food demonstrations and tasting, physical activity and ideas to take home, and discussions about important information to help you manage your diabetes.

The first session of Dining With Diabetes will be offered in Beaver County on March 10, 17, 24, and 31. Registration is \$35 per person or \$50 per family, and paid pre-registration is required by March 3. You will receive a \$25 gift card if you attend at least three of four sessions and the follow-up session.

For more information and a registration brochure, please contact the Extension Office.

## Penn State Cooperative Extension in Beaver County

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**Mary Alice Gettings, MS,RD,LDN,CDE, Extension Educator**

*Nutrition, Health, and Food Safety*

**Cindie Searight, Extension Educator**

*4-H & Youth Development*

**Susan Boser, Extension Educator**

*Water Quality and Natural Resources; West Nile Virus*

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## ~ Extension Calendar of Events ~

*Penn State Cooperative Extension in Beaver County is proud to offer the following educational opportunities that are open to the general public. While many programs are offered free of charge, some require a fee to help offset the costs of speakers, handouts, materials, etc. If you would like additional information, please contact us at 724-774-3003.*

*This calendar was current as of the date of publication. For the most up-to-date information, visit our website at <http://beaver.extension.psu.edu> and click on CALENDAR at the top of the page. We look forward to seeing you!*

**\*\* Tune In! \*\* Extension News Radio Talk Show \*\* Call in! \*\***  
Tuesdays, 9 - 10 AM, 1230-WBVP/1460-WMBA

### **February**

- 25 Brownbag Lunch Dairy Series, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM, Extension Conference Room
- 26 Winter Crops Meeting 10 AM–Noon, \$5 at the door, Beaver County Conservation District, Independence Twp.; call 724-774-3003 by February 24 to register.

### **March**

- 5 Regional Dairy Day, Greensburg, PA
- 7 Smart Gardening Workshop, 8:30 AM–3:00 PM, \$35; call for registration brochure
- 10,17,24,31 - Dining With Diabetes 4-week series; 6:30–8:30 PM, location TBA. Call for information.
- 18 Pesticide Update Meeting (2+2), 7–9 PM, Penn State Beaver; \$5 at the door; please call to register.
- 19 Wetland Walk, 10 AM, Beaver Co. Conservation District Environmental Center, Independence Twp.

### **April**

- 10 *Good Friday, Extension Office Closed*
- 13,15,20,22,27,29 - Strong Women Exercise and Nutrition Class, Beaver County Christian School, Beaver Falls. Program fee and registration required. Call for information.
- 17 Wetland Walk, 10 AM, Beaver Co. Conservation District Environmental Center, Independence Twp.
- 25 Wildflower Walk, 11 AM, Ed Calland Arboretum, Brady's Run Park

### **May**

- 4,6,11,13,18,20 - Strong Women Exercise and Nutrition Class, Beaver County Christian School, Beaver Falls. Program fee and registration required. Call for information.
- 9 Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale, 8 AM–Noon, Irvine Park, Beaver
- 23 Pond Workshop, 9:30 AM–Noon, location TBA; please call the office to receive a registration brochure when available.
- 25 *Memorial Day, Extension Office Closed*

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