


**BECK'S HYBRIDS**



**Did you know?**  
 Scott Beck was recently recognized as one of the 2007 Master Farmers awarded by Indiana Prairie Farmer and co-sponsored by the Purdue University College of Agriculture. This is the first time that a grandfather (Francis, '72), father (Sonny, '79), and grandson, Scott have all received the distinction.

B-17/797

**THIS WEEK**

**Farm Women**



Two honored with Women in Agriculture awards at recent Indiana State Fair.

Page A3

**Soybean Yields**



Company strives to develop soybean varieties that will be competitive in growers' rotations.

Page A6

**Corn Checkoff**



Corn council election slated Aug. 27 at county Purdue Extension offices.

Page C3

**Mail To**

## 'Margaritaville' Purdue Extension honors 35-year veteran

By **KATIE NICKAS**  
 AgriNews Publications

INDIANAPOLIS — Jokes about Hawaiian shirts and parrots lightened up the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service's tribute to retiring director Dave Petritz.

He was recognized for his behind-the-scenes work ethic and steadfast pursuit of excellence for state agricultural initiatives.

Though Petritz remained modest and admitted to always having difficulty accepting awards and praise, the true excellence of his career with the Purdue Extension was evident in the words, gestures and gratitude of his colleagues and friends throughout the recent presentation at the Indiana State Fair.

"Dave is absolutely committed to getting everything right all the time," said Purdue Glenn W. Sample dean of agriculture Randy Woodson. "All of us in agricultural administration have gotten many emails from Dave.

"You know that once you respond to an email he sends, he's got you," Woodson joked, provoking widespread laughter from the audience.

"He leaves really big shoes to fill, and his work has not just been for the people at Purdue, but for the state of Indiana," he said.

"His work is one of the reasons we have so much confidence in the Purdue Extension Service."

Petritz became the director of the Purdue Extension in 1999, and his potential was instantly realized.

In the 1980s, he set up the Family and Agricultural Resources Management project, which provided assistance to farm families in financial difficulty and uncertainty about land issues. He created issue-based teams to provide land use education across the state.

He also created an endowment to fund educators that has drawn money from more than 60 donors and will be used at his discretion when a new director is hired.

Petritz offered heartfelt thanks to his colleagues at Purdue, support networks across the state and gratitude to his wife, Cornelia, saying he was surprised at how quickly a person can grow into a career when they find something they are truly passionate about.

Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman presented him with the Distinguished



AgriNews photo/ Katie Nickas

Retiring Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service Director Dave Petritz humbly accepts the praise of his colleagues in the Indiana agricultural community. When he's not completely immersed in his work, he avidly enjoys Jimmy Buffett albums and collecting pins.

Hoosier Award during her speech at the ceremony. "I think anyone who knows Dave knows how much he has done for the Extension," she said. "But these accomplishments have been overshadowed by his exceptional character."

"He has earned the admiration of everyone who's worked for him," she said. "Folks like Dave Petritz have invested a lifetime into the future of agriculture."

"It's not an accident that our livestock industry is growing, and we are already reaping the benefits of producing a hot commodity."

In addition to his recognition at the banquet, Petritz will accept the

2007 National Distinguished Service Ruby at the Epsilon Sigma Phi National Conference in Charleston, S.C., in September.

It is the highest and most prestigious award granted for extraordinary leadership in Extension Service.

"He deserves our praise for setting a new standard of excellence for the Extension programs and for advocating leadership development," Skillman said.

When all was said and done, guests formed a long line to meet the retired director on stage, take his picture and thank him in person.

## Farmers push for tax relief

By **KATIE NICKAS**  
 AgriNews Publications

INDIANAPOLIS — Members of the Indiana Farm Bureau rallied for property tax relief and alternate sources of revenue, displaying a petition signed by more than 3,000 indignant taxpayers and fairgoers on Farmers Day at the Indiana State Fair.

"I see a system that's broke, a system that's impossible for the average person to understand," said IFB Vice President Randy Kron, also a township trustee and assessor in Vanderburgh County.

"I've been paying property taxes as both a farmer and an assessor, and I've seen how much time and effort goes into it."

Kron said his property taxes had risen 40 percent, but he knew other people who had it even worse.

"It doesn't make sense to have a tax that can rise 50, 75 or 100 percent in one year," he said. "Legislators have been trying to fix the property tax for the last six years, and I think it's time to move on from this tax source," he said.

The system is stymied further when tax bills are sent out late, putting county government behind on its budget and forcing it to borrow money and pay additional dues on top of property taxes, Kron said.

Kendell Culp, IFB District 3 director and a livestock farmer from Jasper County, expressed equal dissatisfaction in the system.

"We've witnessed one failed attempt after another," he said. "The state doesn't have enough fingers to plug all the holes in the dike to fix this problem. When is it going to end?"

Culp said local option income taxes that relieve future and present taxes will replace the current implementation.

"Jasper has saved over \$6 million for its 31,000 residents because of this option," he said.

See **TAX**; page A2

## Madison County panel approves 6,000-cow dairy

ANDERSON, Ind. (AP) — A livestock farmer who immigrated from the Netherlands six years ago has won approval to expand his north-central Indiana dairy farm to 6,000 head of cattle.

The Madison County Board of Zoning Appeals unanimously approved the expansion of Willemsen Dairy LLC, ending a yearlong process that included public hearings on the project.

The zoning board's meeting room was nearly full with the audience roughly split between the farm's supporters and detractors, including neighbors who argued the expansion would worsen their quality of life.

Owner Tejo Willemsen assured the board and audience that his farm would benefit the county.

"I live in front of the dairy operation. I'm responsible for it," he said. "My intent has always been for this to be an asset for the community."

He said his farm's expansion from 1,800 dairy cattle to 6,000 could be completed by fall 2008 at the site about 40 miles northeast of Indianapolis and would create about 40 jobs.

Jack Appleby, whose property is close to Willemsen's, told the board said he plans to move because of the dairy operation. He called the smell unbearable and said he worries that the increased herd will spread E. coli bacteria.

"It now becomes evident that, after 42 years, I'm going to have to sell my home and move my farm," Appleby said.

Willemsen said he and his wife, Alberdine, moved to the United States to pursue their "American dream" of owning a dairy farm.

He also has opened dairy operations in Kentucky and Oklahoma, where he owns 4,000 cows.

The board included several stipulations, including requiring that the farm, which is a CAFO or concentrated animal feeding operation, cannot expand beyond 6,000 head.

The board also directed Willemsen to ensure that the waste generated by his cattle be "properly disposed of" and that the manure cannot be within 40 feet of neighboring property.

## State fair is place to see and be seen

By **WHITNEY COLE**  
 AgriNews Publications

INDIANAPOLIS — Blue ribbons and awards aren't just for 4-H members at the Indiana State Fair.

Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman honored many Hoosiers at the fair for their many different contributions to Indiana agriculture.

Five outgoing members of the agricultural advisory board received Distinguished Hoosier awards. They included: Richard Halderman of Wabash, Linda Schanlaub of Rochester, Jim Schriver of Montpelier, Howard Unger of Carlisle and Richard Wertz of Franklin.

The new members of the agricultural advisory board are: Jeremy Mullins with Louis Dreyfus of Warsaw; Barry Jordan, a beef producer from Rensselaer; Greg Huber of Huber Winery from Borden; Indiana Corn Growers president Matthew Gibson from Morocco; and Gary Reding with Langeland Farms in Greensburg.

Skillman also honored Sonny Beck, Beck's Superior Hybrids president, as the first AgriVision award winner. The award was designed to help recognize someone "whose leadership maximizes Indiana agriculture's potential and secures the state's future as a global leader in agriculture," she said.

Beck, who hails from Atlanta, said he was — and appeared to truly be — surprised by the honor.

"This is a neat award, and I really had no idea," he said. "You



AgriNews photo/ Whitney Cole

Sonny Beck is surprised as Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman calls his name as the recipient of the first AgriVision Award. The award goes to someone who uses their leadership position to further Indiana's agriculture potential.

know, you accept these things yourself, but you do it knowing it's your family and your family of employees that help you get them."

Beck's Superior Hybrids is the largest family owned retail seed business in the United States. Sonny's grandkids mark the fifth generation of Becks on the farm.

Not to be outdone, Indiana State Fair Queen Nikki Harris

competed for some recognition during the Farmer's Day cornhusking contest at Pioneer Village.

She competed against Indiana First Lady Cheri Daniels, local radio hosts Wank and O'Brien from 97.1 FM and other Pioneer Village notables.

The contest, however, was considered a draw, and all of the participants received blue ribbons.

**Inside**



Pages B11-B12

**Weekly Poll**

**Vote Online**

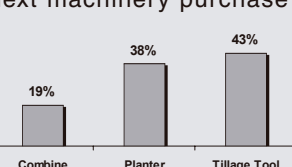
What do you predict will be your biggest challenge at harvest this year?

- Equipment
- Marketing
- Storage

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**Previous Poll**

What likely will be your next machinery purchase?



**INDEX**

Agri-Business . . . . . C6  
 Agri-Trucker . . . . . B6-B7  
 Antiques . . . . . C2  
 Auction Calendar . . . . . A3  
 Calendar . . . . . B5  
 Classifieds . . . . . B4, B9-B10  
 Close-Up . . . . . B1  
 Farm Progress Show . . . . . A11  
 From The Fields . . . . . A14  
 Lifestyles . . . . . C1  
 Livestock . . . . . B2  
 Market Data . . . . . B3  
 MoneyNews . . . . . A2  
 Opinions . . . . . A4  
 Seed Review . . . . . A5-A9  
 Weather . . . . . C3