

New Curator Guides Expansion of Pasto Agricultural Museum

As Penn State's Pasto Agricultural Museum marks its thirtieth anniversary at this year's Ag Progress Days exposition, a new volunteer curator is helping guide the museum through a building project that, when completed, will more than double exhibit space.

Daryl Heasley of State College, professor emeritus of rural sociology who recently retired after almost 37 years of service to the College of Agricultural Sciences, began as volunteer curator in January 2008. He replaced Darwin Braund, a college alumnus and retired professor of dairy science at North Carolina State University who had been the volunteer curator for a decade.

The Pasto Agricultural Museum is known for having one of the nation's finest collections of dairy antiques.

Heasley is the third curator of the facility, located on the Ag Progress Days site at the Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center at Rock Spring, nine miles southwest of State College. The first was Jerome Pasto, associate dean emeritus in the college who stepped down as curator after 20 years in 1998.

"As a result of Jerry Pasto's foresight, his successors have had a solid basis for expansion and growth," Heasley says. "His vision to exhibit the advances in agricultural technology only through the period of animal and human power provided a unique foundation. With scant resources at his disposal, his dedication and determination provided the original building, collec-



tion, and the funds to ensure the preservation of our rich agricultural heritage.

"I see myself continuing what Jerry Pasto started and Darwin Braund expanded," adds Heasley, who has been a volunteer guide at the museum for several years. "I have great admiration for both previous curators, and I plan to build on the heritage they've provided by bringing a major educational focus to the museum."

Heasley, who grew up on a farm not far from Sandy Lake in Venango County, believes it is a quirk of fate that he ended up presiding over an agricultural museum. "Many of these antique implements we are displaying, I used way back when I was growing up on the farm," he says with a chuckle. "This is a good fit for me with my background and after teaching a vo-ag course at Slippery Rock Area High School for five years."

It is a challenge managing a museum with a part-time volunteer curator, Heasley points out, but the "common thread" running through

the decades of the Pasto facility operation is museum office manager Vinnie Scanlon. "She's the glue that has held this together," he says. "We really appreciate what she does for the museum. I am going to be relying on her experience and perspective, as well as those same qualities from Pasto and Braund. It is because of the dedication and expertise of all the volunteers and donors that the museum functions."

The new addition, which was partially finished as this went to press, is 52 feet wide by 100 feet long, adding 5,200 square feet of floor space to the existing 40-foot-by-80-foot museum. The project includes extensive renovations to the existing structure, allowing it to be heated and air-conditioned and better display the agricultural antiques in the collection. In addition, the museum will be available year-round once the building is completed.

"When it's finished, we'll be able to put about 90 percent of our holdings on display," says Heasley. "Right now, we are able to ex-

The three volunteer curators who have served at the Pasto Agricultural Museum over the years are (from left) Darwin Braund, Daryl Heasley, and founder Jerry Pasto.

hibit only about 40 percent of the collection."

The Pasto Agricultural Museum—known for having one of the nation's finest collections of dairy antiques, thanks largely to former curator Braund—has nearly 1,200 rare and unusual pieces used for farming and homemaking in the era before electricity and gasoline power reached most farms. The museum's collection spans over 6,000 years, but the focus is on Pennsylvania and the Northeast from the 1800s to the early 1940s, with links to modern agricultural methods.

To learn more, visit the museum's Web site at pasto.cas.psu.edu. To arrange a group tour, call 814-865-2541 or send e-mail to pastoagmuseum@psu.edu.

—Jeff Mulhollem