

# March is National Noodle Month

A noodle is a thin strip of pasta, usually cut or extruded from some kind of dough. It is the basic unit in dishes like spaghetti, linguine, etc. The word noodle derives from Latin *nodus* (knot), via German *Nudel* (noodle, pasta). The Chinese, Arab and Italian people all claimed to have been the first to create this string-like food, though the first written account of noodles is from the East Han Dynasty. Legend has it that the noodle was brought to Italy from China by Marco Polo.

What is the difference between Pasta and Noodles?

Pasta is usually made with wheat (usually durum or semolina –extracted from durum wheat kernels) but not with eggs; by federal law a noodle must contain 5.5 percent egg solids by weight to be called a noodle. Asian noodles are made from flour usually contain eggs and are classified as egg noodles. Noodles in Asian dishes are often made from other flours: rice, buckwheat and potatoes. Sometimes they are made with other ingredients, such as yams (not to be confused with sweet potatoes) and soybeans.

You can prepare noodles in soups, stews, casseroles and with sauce. One of the most popular ways to eat noodles is in Chicken noodle soup. Egg noodles are available in Fine, Medium, Wide and Extra Wide. Noodle consumption increases by approximately 20 % during the colder months as well as during Lent, when countless people prepare meatless meals prior to Easter. Noodles are comfort food and are used to sooth a cold, a broken heart, and burst bubble or winter-time blues.

You can substitute noodles for many pasta varieties. The difference in lo mein and chow mein isn't the actual noodle, but in the preparation. In Chinese, mein refers collectively to noodles. Lo mein is a poultry, beef, shrimp or vegetable dish served over soft noodles and chow mein is a dish that is prepared by stir-frying the noodles with the other ingredients in the wok.

A half-cup serving of cooked noodles contains just one gram of fat, 106 calories, one gram of fat, five milligrams of sodium, B-vitamins, iron, and protein. Noodles are high in complex carbohydrates.

I remember making homemade noodles with my mother. First we had to clean the kitchen table and wash our hands real good. Then a mound of flour was placed in the middle of the table and was topped with a pinch of salt and an egg. We worked the egg into the flour with our hands, kneading the dough until it was well mixed. It was then rolled out with a rolling pin as thinly as possible. This was not an easy task because the dough was very elastic. We then rolled up the dough like a jelly roll and cut it into thin slices. We then unrolled the slices and spread them out on flour to dry out before cooking with whatever dish we were preparing. Later I found that my mother-in-law made her pot pie dough in a similar manner and cut the pieces into squares before dropping them into the already boiling pot of broth from ham, beans, chicken or beef. As a matter of fact we still have her kitchen table and we still make our pot pie that way when we have time.

Today most people have machines to help knead dough for pasta and bread and a pasta machine that will do both kneading and rolling dough and cut it into a variety of shapes and sizes to prepare dishes like cannelloni, tortellini, ravioli, fettuccine and lasagna. I still like to make my dough using my hands to mix it up whether I'm making pot pie or the crust for a pie.

Whether noodles are fine, medium, wide or extra-wide, they always remind me of homemade chicken noodle soup, or a tuna casserole.

Enjoy National Noodle month!

**Forum for Rural Innovation ~ New Approaches for Agriculture and Rural Prosperity**

The third annual Forum for Rural Innovation will be held Friday, March 9, 2007 at the Best Western Lee-Jackson Motor Inn & Conference Center in Winchester, Virginia. The purpose of the Forum is to showcase replicable innovative ideas, projects or programs that enhance farm or rural business profitability, conserve farm land and natural resources, or develop new approaches to rural prosperity that are viable in an expensive farmland-upscale consumer environment.

The Forum will feature a series of presentations, with an emphasis on farming for high-profitability by using innovative and sound business approaches particularly suited to the Mid-Atlantic region. Topics have been chosen to present practical examples of successful innovative operations that could be adapted to area farms. The program will feature some of the most progressive and recognized farmers and researchers in the United States.

Forum topics will include:

- **“USDA Beltsville Research and How it Directly Affects Your Production”**, Dr. Phyllis Johnson, Director, USDA Beltsville ARC. Dr. Johnson will highlight the educational and research efforts at Beltsville ARC. Learn how USDA research is being conducted to support agriculture production, and examples of current projects that may have impacts to local farm practices.
- **“Small Fruit and Specialty Crop Markets in Virginia – Results of a Statewide Survey,”** Dr. Denise Mainville, Assistant Professor, Agriculture and Applied Economics, VA TECH. Specialty crop production and direct marketing efforts continue to grow in the mid-Atlantic region. Learn how a market survey was developed and conducted in Virginia, and what the results were. You may be surprised about marketing practices.
- **“Internet Tools to Grow Your Business,”** Janet Childs, Owner and Marketing Director of BreedersWorld.com. Should you use the internet as another marketing tool? What should your website include? How much does it cost? Get a professional overview from a nationally recognized webmaster about internet marketing.
- **“Preview of Summer 2007 Twilight Tours,”** See three innovative agriculture businesses that will be highlighted with twilight tours this summer.
- **“Marketing Opportunities and Alternative Enterprises for Small Scale Farming,”** Andy Hankins, Virginia Cooperative Extension Specialist, Virginia State University. Andy Hankins is recognized as one of the most innovative specialist in alternative agriculture. Learn about enterprises that show market opportunities in this region. From organic poultry and eggs, to natural beef and pork, to fresh cut flowers and specialty ethnic fruits and vegetables. Andy will share his experience and expertise.
- **“Wildlife Management – Developing a Plan for Your Operation,”** Dr. James Parkhurst, Associate Professor, Fisheries and Wildlife Science, VA TECH. Dr. Parkhurst is a foremost authority in wildlife management. He will be addressing one of the most common problems (or resources) to agriculture in this region. While Dr. Parkhurst may refer to other wildlife challenges, deer management will be the focus of this session.

In addition, exhibits by agricultural suppliers, support agencies, and area innovative businesses will be featured the entire day. Area agricultural businesses are encouraged to participate with exhibits and displays.

A registration fee of \$35.00 per person will include the forum program, morning refreshments, and buffet lunch featuring local foods. Registration information is available on-line at [www.LoudounFarms.org](http://www.LoudounFarms.org) or by calling 703-777-0426. Pre-registration by March 2nd is required.

*The Forum for Rural Innovation is a cooperative educational effort by the offices of Cooperative Extension and Agricultural Economic Development in Loudoun, Fauquier, Clarke, and Frederick counties of Virginia, and Jefferson and Berkeley counties, West Virginia, and the Potomac Headwaters and Shenandoah RC&D.*

### **Pat Bowen Speaker for March 22nd Dinner meeting**

Pat Bowen, Natural Resource Conservation Service Assistant State Conservationist, will be the featured speaker at the educational dinner meeting to be held at the Berkeley County Youth Fair on Thursday, March 22nd at 6:30 p.m.

Pat will talk about Farmland Protection Options. We will have local representatives on hand to help answer questions for the Tri-county area.

The dinner is free with a reservation that is made by noon on Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup> by calling the Berkeley County Extension Office at 304-264-1936. The meal is possible thanks to sponsorship from Potomac Headwaters RC&D Project, and the WVU Extension Service. For more information, call 264-1936.

### **Poultry, Dairy, Rabbits and Small Pets Workshop**

We will be holding workshops for Poultry, Dairy, Rabbits and Small Pets Workshop at the Berkeley County Youth Fair starting at 5:30 on March 22. The workshops are geared towards youth fair participants but are open to anyone wanting to learn more about the livestock. Attendees of the workshop are strongly encouraged to attend the dinner. Reservations are required for the dinner and can be made by calling the Berkeley County Extension Office at 264-1936 by noon on Thursday March 15<sup>th</sup>. People attending the workshop are welcome to stay and listen to the presentation on Farmland Protection Options that will be given following the meal. Please call and make a reservation if you plan to eat. There is no charge to you but we have to pay for food that is prepared and have enough for everyone. Thank you.

### **Eastern Panhandle Conservation District Tree Seedling Sale**

The Eastern Panhandle Conservation District is accepting orders for tree seedlings until March 27, 2007 or while supplies last. Tree Seedlings being offered are: **Conifers** - Colorado Blue Spruce, Norway Spruce, Canadian Hemlock, Northern White Pine seedlings and transplants. **Hardwoods:** Pin Oak, Red Oak, Sawtooth Oak, Sugar Maple, and Japanese White Birch, and Black Walnut. **Wildlife Habitat:** Chinese Dogwood, American Hazelnut, and Black Chokeberry. New this year -- **Accessories & Seed Mixes** as follows: Tree Shelter Tubes, Annual and Perennial Wildlife Food Plot Mix, and Northeast Perennial and Annual Wildflower Mix.

Order forms can be picked up at the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District Office located at 151 Aikens Center, Ste. 1, Martinsburg or online at [www.berkeleyextension.com](http://www.berkeleyextension.com)

### **2007 Appalachian Grazing Conference**

The 2007 Appalachian Grazing Conference runs March 9-10, 2007 at the LakeView Resort, Morgantown, W.Va. with presentations targeted towards increasing profitability for livestock producers in Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

The nominal registration fee of \$75 covers presentations, breaks and meals. A reduced LakeView lodging rate of \$66 for a single room is available for conference participants who call for reservations before February 2, 2007.

With varied topics for livestock producers of cattle, sheep, horses and goats, the Grazing Conference speakers represent many organizations and backgrounds.

The topics include:

- \* Forage Quality,
- \* Invasive Species and Their Control,
- \* Management Strategies,
- \* Soil Sampling and Fertilizer Records, and
- \* Multi-Species grazing.

The complete schedule and registration form is available online at [www.wvca.us](http://www.wvca.us)

Featured speaker include:

Kit Pharo of the Pharo Cattle Company (ranch and seedstock company) in Colorado is presenting information on grassland management. Pharo's philosophy of "optimum product for optimum profit" focuses on increasing production without increasing expenses as well as reducing expenses without reducing

production. Raised on a ranch and educated at Colorado State University, Pharo and his wife, Deanna, began ranching in 1985. More information about the Pharo Cattle Company and philosophy is available at <http://www.pharocattle.com>

Troy Bishopp of the Bishopp Family Farm in Deansboro N.Y., is lecturing about how to improve grassland. With a degree in Animal Husbandry from Morrisville College, Bishopp serves as the Madison County (New York) Soil and Water Conservation District's Grazing Specialist. Operational since the 1890's, Bishopp's farm seasonally custom grazes grass-finished beef, stocker calves and dairy heifers on 500 acres of owned and leased land. Additionally, the farm raises egg layers and has a small flock of registered Alpine goat.

The conference organizing committee is made up of volunteers and staff of West Virginia University Extension Service, The Ohio State University Extension Service, University of Maryland Extension Service, USDA Agricultural Research Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (Ohio and West Virginia), West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts, West Virginia Conservation Agency, and West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

For more information or to register, contact Becky Casteel from West Virginia University Extension Service at 304.293.6131 ext. 4231 or [Becky.Casteel@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Becky.Casteel@mail.wvu.edu)

Limited scholarships are available by many local Conservation Districts. Call your local Conservation District for more information. District contact information is available in the phone book or at [www.wvca.us](http://www.wvca.us)

#### **Berkeley/Jefferson Counties Winter Fruit School March 14, 8:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

Berkeley/Jefferson Counties Winter Fruit School at the WVU Tree Fruit Research and Education Center , Kearneysville, WV. Registration fee is \$12 by March 5 or \$15 at the door. Recertification credits will be provided for pesticide applicators. For more information go to the newsletter at <http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/orchardmon/om020507.htm>, contact the WVU-KTFREC at 304-876-6353 or at [Libby.Nestor@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Libby.Nestor@mail.wvu.edu).

#### **Washington County Maryland Sheep and Goat Short Course**

The Washington County Extension Office (Boonsboro, MD) will be hosting a Sheep and Goat Short Course this winter/spring. Four classes will teach the basics of raising sheep and/or goats for meat, fiber, or dairy. The classes are targeted towards new and beginning producers. The schedule of classes is as follows:

March 6 - Meat Sheep 101

March 22 - Dairy Goats 101

April 3 - Wool Sheep 101

Each class will run from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The instructors for the classes will be Jeff Semler, Washington County Agricultural Extension Agent; Susan Schoenian, Sheep & Goat Specialist at the Western Maryland Research & Education Center; and various experienced producers.

Each class will be independent of one another. The registration fee is \$5 per class, which will cover handouts and refreshments. The registration deadline for each class is the day before the class. For more information or to register for a class, contact the Washington County Extension Office at (301) 791-1404 or [jsemler@umd.edu](mailto:jsemler@umd.edu) or visit <http://www.sheepandgoat.com/programs/07shortcourse.html>

#### **Garden Tips**

- Plant onion sets
- Order strawberries
- Plant broadleaf evergreens
- Prune raspberries and fruit trees

***Until next time ... Happy Gardening, and Farming!***