

'Top dog' earns \$250

LOAD your camera — or recharge its battery — and start clicking for the 18th annual Northeast Rural Living Photo Contest. This year's theme heads into a whole new field: "Our favorite farm dog."

We're looking for great pictures of Ol' Shep in action, Bonehead doing his thing, a cuddly moment with Sweetie Pie or just a doggone good mug shot. We also want to know why that dog is your favorite.

Top prize is \$250; winners will be published in September's issue. Entries must be received by July 20. Choose a high-quality film like Fuji or Kodak, and film speeds of 200 ASA or lower. We'll also consider high-resolution digital



images (jpegs or tiff files). No Polaroids or digital prints under 300 dpi will be considered.

Contest entry rules

- You must be a subscriber or family member of an *American Agriculturist* subscriber.

- Photos must have been taken by the entrant within the

past 18 months.

- Submit only photos of Northeast rural subjects.

- Submit images on CD, slides or prints, color or black and white. Prints must be at least 4 by 6 inches. Save your negatives!

- Include a copy of the entry blank with each photo.

- Print your name, address, phone number and Social Security number on each entry blank. Attach an address label.

- Include a short story about why that farm dog is your favorite.

- Send no more than five photo entries per person.

- Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want your entries returned.

2007 Northeast Rural Living Photo Contest

Photographer: _____
 Soc. Sec. No.: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____
 Phone: _____ E-mail: _____
 Photo description: _____

Mail entries to: Northeast Rural Living Photo Contest, *American Agriculturist*, 5227B Baltimore Pike, Littlestown, PA 17340.



Northeast News & Notes

Biomass ethanol still not a sure thing

You've no doubt heard of plans for developing cellulosic ethanol plants. And land-grant universities across America are "pumping up" the promotion about their research and development efforts. But both hinge heavily on state and federal grants, which is what they're aiming for.

Ed Wene, a biofuels expert at the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute at University of Minnesota-Crookston, recently reported that being able to economically produce ethanol from switchgrass, cornstalks or even forest biomass still isn't a sure thing. Wene should know. He has been working on it for years.

Cellulosic sugars are locked up in a complex chain of molecules, he explains, that scientists have been trying to extract efficiently since the 1950s. Even today, cellulosic ethanol processing is still almost twice as expensive as corn-ethanol processing, he adds. The cost of building a biomass ethanol plant is roughly triple that of a comparable corn dry mill.

That says nothing of the cost of getting biomass prod-

ucts to the processor's gate — and paying farmers for it. Dan Petrolia, a Mississippi State University ag economist, says he doubts farmers will be able to harvest and deliver crop residues for cellulosic ethanol for less than \$50 per dry ton, even if they already own balers.

Petrolia wonders how much crop residue can be removed from corn or grass fields without hurting soil quality and organic matter, and causing soil erosion. And there's a competing opportunity cost to consider once carbon credit payments become mainstream.

Wine and Web work well

For more than a year, New York state wineries have been able to direct-ship wines to consumers in other states. Close to 25% of the state's 230 wineries already are direct-shipping.

Ag Commissioner Pat Brennan fully expects wine sales to quickly surpass the current \$420 million mark.

Ag and Markets is providing nearly \$266,000 to help 114 state wineries build and improve Web sites to enhance marketing with matching grants for up to \$2,500.

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