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## **Diamond State BBQ Championship**

**Dover DE**

**What's with Mother Nature, doesn't she like to Que? I thought this was supposed to be fun!**

The first two years we competed on the BBQ trail we cooked in a total of 11 contests. Out of those events, with the exception of a brief shower at Dover in 2007 during a wind storm, we were operating in dry conditions. We had a lot of fun, 2009 was quite different.

April found us in Salisbury, no rain, but we had a huge wind gust come out of nowhere Friday afternoon and destroy a bunch of equipment including our brand new 10x20 canopy. In May we cooked in Green Lane PA, heavy rain the week before the event made the contest grounds a sponge, no rain fell while we were there, but it wasn't for lack of trying., and boy was it muddy.

June we signed up for an event to be held in a horse arena in Upper Marlboro MD. Again heavy rain preceding the contest day played heck with the set up conditions. Late Friday night we received torrential rain for about 1.5 hours, making for some interesting waterways and ponds around the entire contest area including our site.

Our next contest was Bel Air MD in August, nearly perfect conditions, that was fun. Then came New Holland PA, the party was over. It rained all day Friday and on and off during Saturday morning and afternoon, the skies clearing just before awards. Most of the gear was put away wet and had to be dried after returning home, a royal pain.

Harrisburg PA was in early October, showers Friday evening and overnight caused a few minor adjustments, but overall, most of the equipment was dry before being packed. Dover DE was next on the list and up to be our last event for 2009. Looking at the forecast the week before the event would have one questioning ones sanity. Jo, my wife, even went as far as suggesting that we scratch, stay home and stay dry. "Never", I think was my reply, besides, the weatherman is usually wrong in my book. What does he know?

To say it rained at Dover this year would be an understatement. It rained, it blew, then it rained some more. Couple the rain and wind with temps in the mid 40's and you've got yourself some miserable conditions. Oh and did I mention the wind, steady at 10-15, gusts 25 to maybe 30, everything had to be tied down. At

times, I felt the entire operation was going to lift off and sail into space, fortunately for us, it did not.

My point here is, this was not fun. We set up in the rain, cooked in the rain, slept in the rain, walked to the bathrooms in the rain, tore down in the rain, well, you get the picture. It even rained Sunday and Monday following the contest. The first dry day was Tuesday where things could be spread out to dry.

Now, don't get me wrong. We made the best of the circumstances, but to say that this was an enjoyable weekend would be like saying it is fun to stand around in the same damp clothes for 2 days, fun, it ain't. My question is, when would a forecast be dismal enough to say, "we aren't going, we're going to sit this one out". I guess I will answer my own question, "never". We like to cook too much, we enjoy the camaraderie, the friendship, the competition, if we are signed up for an event, we are going, no matter what. Some might say we have more heart than brains, and you know, I think that some would be right.

Even though it took a week or so to dry out all of our equipment, we are all looking forward to next April when the BBQ season begins around these parts with the Pork in the Park contest at Winterhaven Park, Salisbury MD. Let's just hope that Mother Nature decides to smile on us Quers and give us a sunny weekend!