

● Young Farmers

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 co High Schools. The program at each school is supervised by a teacher of vocational agriculture, with each school permitted considerable leeway in developing its program to meet the needs of farmers in its area.

How do Lancaster County young farmers compare with other areas? A survey of young farmers in the mid-west revealed a severe lack of training in economics and farm management according to Noble Clark, farm management expert and former associate director of the Agr. Expt Station at the University of Wisconsin. Clark reported that most of those farmers had had little or no systematic instruction in business aspects of farm operation. Considering the size of the investment needed by today's farmers, Clark says that infinitely more managerial skill and judgment are necessary for success than was true a generation ago, and this will be increasingly true in the future. Our look at the local YFA program suggests that they are well on the way toward acquiring the needed skills and knowledge for success. Most of the county YFA members are high school graduates, some with vo-ag training, some without. But they have a common goal — to acquire greater agricultural knowledge. This is the basis for the state association motto that stresses the relationship between "youth" and a willingness to learn. Although some of their classes are held during the day, most are in the evening. The subject matter of the classes ranges from short, one-shot studies to intensive series on one subject such as livestock marketing, land use management, or quality milk production.

To gain a better understanding of the YFA activities and goals in the county, Lancaster Farming consulted teachers in each of the six schools involved in the program. Several teachers felt that, in addition to the formal classes and the on-farm phase of the program, just the act of getting together regularly in discussions with fellow-members who shared the same problems was very helpful. One teacher reported that many of the older, established farmers in his area were harder to enroll in the program than new men moving into the area. Many of the latter were attracted by the spirit of participating in local activities and welcomed the chance to get better acquainted with neighbors who were in the same business.

One teacher commented that "on-farm instruction is a major phase of the young farmer educational program. Teaching done on the farm of the learner has the advantage of a setting where needs are most readily recognized and where the interest of the farmer is keenest. The teacher of agriculture visits each student a minimum of ten hours per year, in at least five visits."

The various county groups hold some joint meetings as in the case of their recent livestock series which covered marketing and buying livestock. Several teachers expressed an interest in seeing more such cooperative meetings. Opinion was divided, however, on the merit of an active county organization. Some felt the state YFA was sufficient.

Most of the Young Farmer groups meet in their local

USDA Reviews Opportunities In Farm Recreation

Farmers can raise incomes by operating recreational facilities but they have to plan carefully, says a report issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The report, by USDA's Economic Research Service, looks at reasons for the success or failure of 12 types of outdoor recreation business. The report is based on a survey of 254 enterprises in New England, Ohio, South Carolina, Arkansas, Missouri, and Oregon.

Some recreational enterprises such as children's camps, minnow farms, shooting preserves, and dude ranches can support an operator and his family. But these businesses usually require the full-time efforts of at least one worker and an investment of over \$50,000, the report points out.

Satisfactory returns for part-time effort are more frequent in picnic areas, campgrounds, vacation farms, hunting areas, and guide services. Usually, these can be run in addition to farming. Most require a capital investment of less than \$15,000, the report states.

Some findings on three of the enterprises analyzed:

Picnic areas — Success usually depends on nearness to population centers. Most peo-

ple picnic within an hour's drive of their homes. Frequent, often daily, trash collection is a must. Substantial investments in improvement of picnic grounds with drinking water, playground equipment, toilets, and other equipment often do not pay off because of lack of customer volume.

Riding stables — The market looks promising. Horseback riding is expected to rise nearly 50 percent between 1960 and 1976. The major problem riding stable operators face is getting liability insurance at reasonable rates. One solution is incorporation to limit liability.

Live bait production — Collecting earthworms, crayfish, and grasshoppers — does not pay very well. Neighbors offer too much competition. Minnow production formerly was a small enterprise on many farms. Now it takes great technical skill and large amounts of capital. Successful operators have over 50 one-acre ponds per employee. Ponds cost \$750 to \$1,000 each to build. Production and marketing problems of minnows are as serious as those for most farm commodities.

The public is fickle in its desire for recreational facilities. Operators have to change and upgrade their facilities frequently. The report advises a rapid depreciation schedule on most recreational facilities.

Three-fifths of the enter-

high school agricultural rooms once a week over the winter, although this is not a rule of the organization and field trips often replace the regular classroom meeting. From March to November an effort is made to get together monthly. Some of these meetings are social, such as an annual picnic, etc.

If you are young in age, or just young in heart, and are interested in learning more about the changing field of agriculture with other farmers who share many of your problems, why not consider talking to your local vo-ag teacher. If his school doesn't offer the Young Farmer Program perhaps your interest could help get one started.

Gruber Named Chapter Star Farmer At E'Town FFA Annual Banquet

Donald Gruber, Elizabethtown High School senior, was named as Chapter Star Farmer at the 5th annual FFA Parent-Son Banquet. Gruber, chapter treasurer, also received the dairy award.

Other award winners were: Ed Nye, Star Green Hand; James Schwanger, electrifica-

tion; Donald Hershey, public speaking; Leon Rutt, best record book; Samuel Myers, John Ness and Peter Gererd were made honorary chapter members.

Gererd, the speaker for the evening, is a native of Ceylon. He illustrated farm life in his country with films. Gererd was presented with an official FFA jacket by Dale Berrier, chapter news reporter. The jacket was a gift from the junior and senior classes. The sophomore class awarded him an official notebook and an honorary degree pin. These were presented by Donald Hershey. Representing the freshman class, David Garber presented Gererd with a tie pin, cufflinks and an FFA tie.

Following the meeting the chapter's new station wagon was exhibited in the Ag. room, along with the boys' projects, for the fathers to examine.

prizes surveyed showed a profit. Most of the businesses returned less than \$10 a day to the operator and family labor.

The report cites four major causes of meager returns — small size of the enterprise, low use in relation to peak capacity, short season, and use only on weekends.

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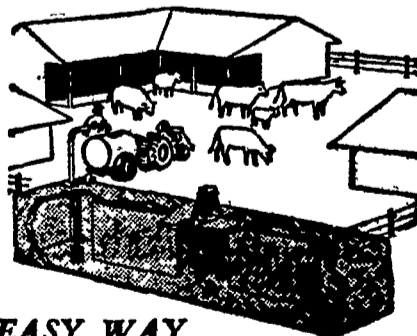
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