

Across the Editor's Desk

A recent edition of Nation's Agriculture strongly denounced what is considered an effort to downgrade vocational agriculture and FFA in schools. The article, in part, is as follows:

After more than half a century of enviable achievement in equipping young people for meaningful careers in agriculture through training in high school, vocational agriculture is facing its most serious challenge.

This challenge stems from an apparently deliberate effort on the part of policymakers in the US Office of Education (USOE) to de-emphasize vocational agriculture.

In the case of the vo-ag program, de-emphasis has become a two-edged sword. Along with downgrading agricultural education, USOE administrators have taken a lusty swing at the Future Farmers of America, which over the years has become an integral part of vocational agriculture.

Basis of this "Operation Downgrading" is the Vocational Education Act of 1968, which authorized funds for vocational education. This Act doesn't mention vocational agriculture as has previous implementing legislation. On top of this, it simply allocated "vocational

education" funds to the various states in a lump sum — to be used for training or retraining of people, either in or out of high school, so long as the program is "realistic in the light of actual or anticipated opportunities for gainful employment . . ."

Consequently, several states — Iowa to mention one — are reorganizing vo-ag into overall training programs known as career education. The inevitable result: Less money and time going into vo ag training.

Evidently taking their cue from the 1968 Act, administrators in the USOE have been hacking away at vo-ag in what appears to be a determined effort to cut it down to the size of programs of training for other endeavors.

What formerly was the Agricultural Education Branch, with a staff of 10 full-time people and headed by an Assistant Commissioner of Education, all but lost its identity in the re-vamping.

The efforts to de-emphasize vo ag did not go unchallenged by farmers and their organizations, including Farm Bureau.

effective basis was prompt and vigorous. Efforts currently are being focused on three major points calling for the following:

1. Re-establishment of the identity of vocational agriculture in the U.S. Office of Education and in the states.

2. Adequate staffing in USOF and in the state departments to conduct effective agricultural educational and FFA programs.

3. Assurance by federal and state educational officials that vo-ag and FFA will have a place in the overall program.

Lines in the conflict over retention of vo ag and FFA identity are clearly drawn. Once a bureaucratic mind is made up it's hard to change. Similarly, once farmers set their minds on an objective, their determination packs a powerful punch. Both the USOE and the respective state departments of education are involved, so support must be both nationwide and state-by-state.

But, the stakes are high. The outcome will determine whether proper training continues to develop the young leadership essential for American agriculture and for the U.S.; or whether vo-ag is shuffled to the bottom of the pile.

Fulton Grange 66 Holds Semimonthly Meeting

Fulton Grange 66 held its semimonthly meeting April 27 at Oakryn with Richard Holloway, Master, presiding at the business session. First and second degrees were conferred upon seven candidates. A \$5 donation was voted to the Arthritis Foundation, Lancaster County Chapter.

Some more work on improving the Grange hall grounds has been done, such as removing trees on the boundary line and planting more shrubbery. James Huber and Clifford Holloway III will keep the lawn mowed this summer.

The trustees are having a new septic tank installed. Go-To Church Night will be held May 17 at the Grange Hall, preceded by a covered dish supper.

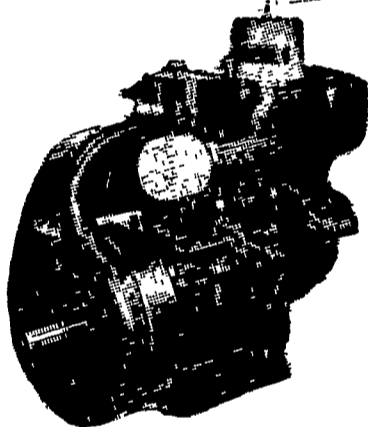
Fulton Grange will present a program on Japan at White Horse Fire Hall at 8 p.m. May 12, for the regular meeting of Salisbury Grange. Mrs. Benjamin Heit, Quarryville, will show colored pictures of Japan. Mrs. W. Harold Graybeal is preparing a map of Japan which is part of the visitation meetings this year. Colerain Grange officers will open and close the meeting.

A memorial service will be held at the next meeting of Fulton Grange May 11 and the dresses entered in the National Grange sewing contest will be judged and modeled. The Junior Grange will also meet May 11.

Guernsey Cow Produces

Penn Del Darimost Maple a senior three year old, Registered Guernsey cow, owned by Raymond F. & Louise A. Witter, Willow Street, has completed an official DHIR actual production record of 13,360 pounds of milk and 666 pounds of butterfat, in 305 days two times a day milking, according to The American Guernsey Cattle Club.

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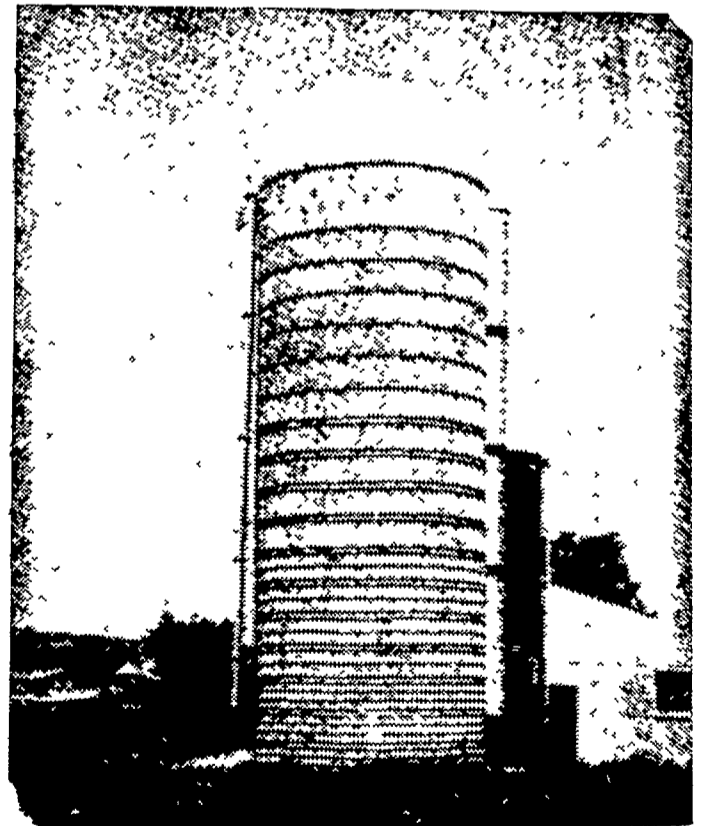
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