

**From Local Ag Teachers:**



# Thoughts in Passing



The article this week was prepared by Dr. Robert D. Herr, chairman of the department of agriculture at the Eastern Lancaster County School District.

**The Community and the Agriculture Program**

Perhaps no other curriculum area in a school program is as closely related to the immediate community as the agriculture program. It is the one area where it is essential to develop a program to meet the needs and expectations of the community.

Many programs throughout the state are being phased out while others are healthy and growing. An examination of the healthy programs of agriculture will disclose that the teachers involved, working closely with the school administration and members of the community, have developed agriculture programs relevant to the situations found in that community.

Since the agricultural community, indeed the entire community, plays a key role, it is desirable that the community recognize its functions and contributions to a successful



Dr. Robert D. Herr

agricultural program. In the Eastern Lancaster County School District the support of the entire community has contributed immeasurably to the success of the agriculture program throughout the school and adult phases.

The community has a responsibility to expect and demand practical and relevant agricultural programs; however

it must contribute ideas, inspiration and support for their development. It must also assist in providing opportunities for young people involved in the programs to have meaningful learning experiences. Field trips, directed work experience and resource persons for classroom participation are but a few examples of community support. These activities are not possible without contributions of time and effort from various segments of the community.

Why should merchants or businessmen or housewives be concerned about the quality of the agriculture of the agriculture program in their school district? A well developed agriculture

program will touch many members of the community.

For example, in the Eastern Lancaster County School District all children in the elementary school have access to a wide variety of materials related to agriculture and the environment made available through the Agriculture Department. And on the sixth grade level, 350 pupils participate in the elementary agriculture program, a course in safety around the home, school and farm; sanitation; and conservation of our natural resources; as well as an exploration of careers related to agriculture and the natural resources. The junior high program is offered to 250 pupils who are members of the Junior Agriculture Club. The high school has two programs involving 150 pupils, one in vocational agriculture and another in environmental agriculture. Thus, a total of 750 children are directly involved in agricultural programs. In addition another 70 persons are involved in an adult farmer program and 30 more persons employed in area agribusinesses are enrolled in a welding program each year.

In a community the size of

Eastern Lancaster County, a majority of the families have some direct contact with at least one phase of the agriculture program. They have an obligation to concern themselves about the program because their children are involved. And when a program touches such a large segment of the community, the entire community will surely be affected by it sooner or later.

Concern, obligation and responsibility of both the community and the teachers of agriculture are essential then to the success of any program. The best teacher in the world cannot develop a sound and successful program without the cooperation and understanding of the community.

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