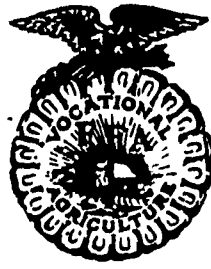


From Local Ag Teachers:



Thoughts in Passing



The article this week was prepared by Clifford Day, teacher of agriculture at Garden Spot High School.

A NEW WAY OF LEARNING

The dates of April 18 and 19 of this year may stand out as two of the most interesting days of school to students at Garden Spot High School. Students in grades 9 through 12, totaling 1200, embarked on activities that they might not have an opportunity to participate in again. McCaskey calls their program Life Week. Garden Spot calls their program SEAK—Students in Education for the Advancement of Knowledge. The stated purposes of the program were: to offer educational and recreational experiences which students believe to be relevant; to open new avenues of learning to students; to better student-teacher relationships by placing them together in an educational environment; and to bring the school in a closer union with the community.

There were about 50 activities sponsored by 80 faculty members of the

school ranging from gourmet cooking to fire fighting, to study of local government, overnight hiking and horseback riding. Students were given the opportunity to add other interest areas if advisors could be found. The sign up for different activities took place one period early in March. Most students were placed in their first or second choice. The size of groups were limited based on the nature of the activity to 15-18 students. Once the students had made their choices, the groups were allowed time together to plan the finer points of their activity.

Activity No. 6 was described as a Horse Trail Ride with Overnight Excursion and I was the sponsor. Our activity called for prior planning. On Wednesday evening all the equipment that would be needed for the overnight excursion was taken to the school and then trucked to the place of destination, a distance of about 22 miles from the starting point. Equipment, sleeping bags, food for human and feed for



Clifford Day horses was all hauled to our destination point. We planned to ride as light as possible. Boys having a long distance to travel brought their horses to the beginning point on Wednesday evening or early Thursday morning.

Early Thursday morning before most students were in school (actually 7:15 A.M.), a group of 16 headed for the HorseShoe Trail. A beautiful day to begin a trail ride and a beautiful day to see nature was before us. Chirping birds, budding trees, wild flowers and flying fish displayed the signs of a beautiful spring day. The experiences that were gained by the group working together and the feeling of just being out close to nature can never be measured by pen or pencil. The learning processes worked as much as if students were in school, but the environment made learning much more enjoyable.

When the sun was still high in the sky, we arrived at our destination with little more

than some sore bodies and tired horses. The students were responsible for the preparation of meals and undertook the project with unmatched zeal. Cooking proved to be a different experience for most of the boys and the first meal could testify to that fact. Breakfast was a better experience as the cooks had some prior experience in the kitchen.

On Friday, the trail ride was more realistic as the group had the ill fate of riding in a windy, freezing downpour of rain. Although the boys were dampened physically, the rain did not dampen their pioneering spirit to complete a ride that had been planned for months. When the weather got so cold that it was difficult to hold the reins in your hands, a fire was started. As two of the boys were eager to warm themselves, they forgot some horse sense and neglected to tie their horses. One experience that was not planned or appreciated was running after the loose horses. Within three hours after catching the horses, our somewhat bedraggled band were back at our starting point.

The experiences gained on this particular trip were valuable. There is no way whereby a day, or a week, or

a month in a classroom could match those experiences or the learning that took place on those two days. In the short time since the SEAK experience, most teachers and students express the opinion that the program was an overwhelming success. One individual even

suggested that an experience of this kind one day each month would do more to help keep students interested in school than any other activity. Education can be very exciting and under the proper guidance both teacher and student can experience it.

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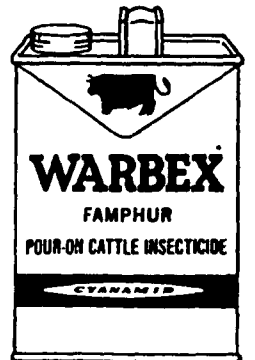


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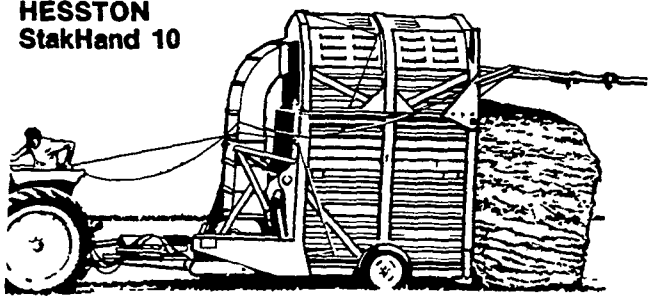
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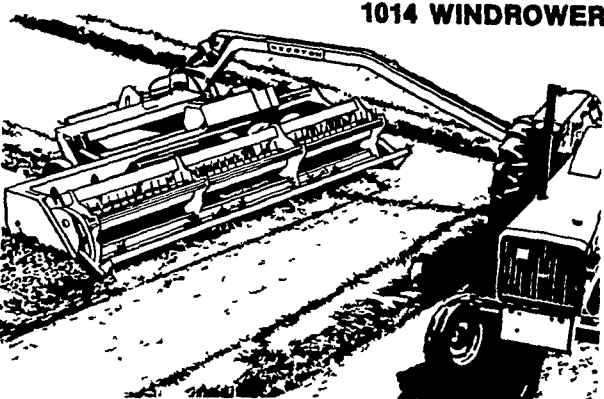
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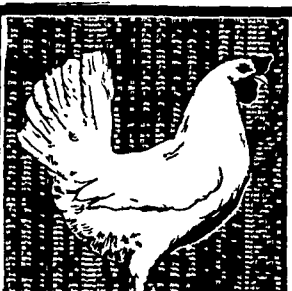
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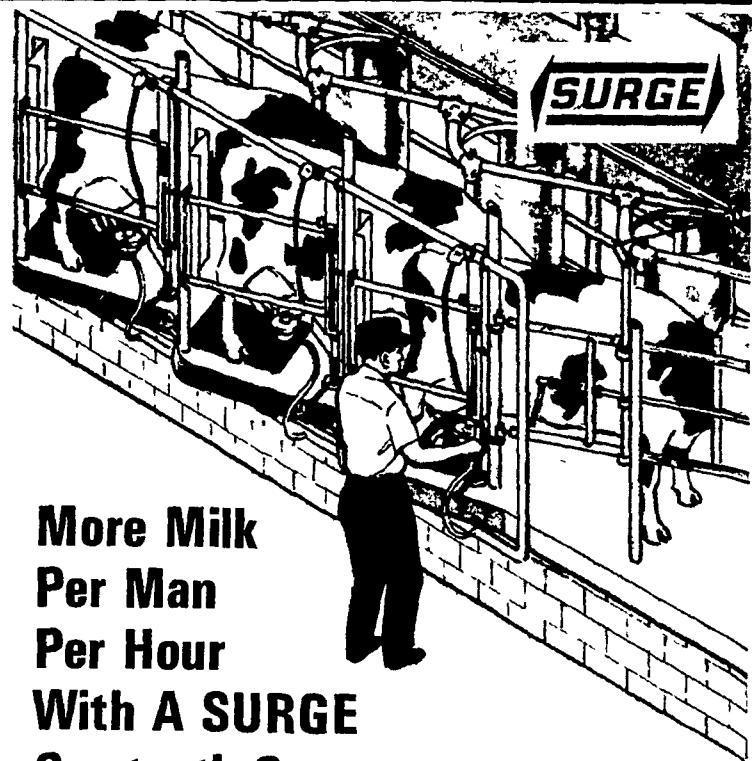
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