Brothers Win Farmer Degrees

Two Frederick county brothers are among five young Maryland agribusinessmen with both farm and nonfarm backgrounds who have been nominated by the National FFA board of directors to receive the youth organization's highest membership degree.

They will be among 642 persons receiving the American Farmer degree during this year's National FFA convention, set for Oct. 15-18 in Kansas City, Mo.

The two brothers named for their achievements in agriculture and leadership are Allen K. and Edward L. O'Hara, both of Frederick. Allen is a senior in agricultural education at the University of Maryland in College Park, and Edward, the younger brother, helps operate the family dairy farm south of Frederick.

They are believed to be the first pair of brothers from the Old Line State ever to receive the American Farmer degree in the same year, according to James L. Pope of Gaithersburg, executive secreatary of the Maryland FFA Association.

Two other central Maryland residents also are in line to receive the high honor accorded to only one out of every 1,500 FFA members in any given year. Both are Montgomery county residents in nonfarm agribusiness occupations.

Michael W. Harrington of Gaithersburg is a horticulture junior at the University of Maryland. He has been employed part-time in university greenhouses at the College Park campus, and he helps his father operate a lawn-mower repair business.

Timothy W. Beall of Germantown is a part-time student at Montgomery Community College. He currently works full-time as a tractor mechanic for a Damascus implement dealer.

Bruce M. Schrader of Chestertown represents the Eastern Shore on this year's roster of American Farmer degree winners. A graduate of Queen Annes county high school at Centreville, he is now a full-time dairy farmer. Like Edward O'Hara, his Frederick county counterpart, Schrader has a herd of Holstein cows.

Schrader, Beall and Harrington are all past state presidents of the Maryland FFA Association.

Growing Degree Days

In Lancaster the average temperature was 75 or 4 degrees over the normal. For crops starting at 40 degrees the days totaled 3808 being 48 days over the normal.

For crops starting at 50 degrees the days totaled 2384 being 24 days over the normal.

Rainfall for the week was 2.38 inches and measured from April 1, 20.91 inches .46 inches over the normal.

Forage Crops Field Day Planned

Newest developments in managing perennial forages and potatoes will be among the features at an agronomy field day to be held September 17 at the Agronomy Research Farm of The Pennsylvania State University, located 12 miles west of State College, on Route 45 in Centre County.

Wagon tours will get underway at 9:30 a.m. with a second tour at 1:30 p.m., announced Lynn D. Hoffman, field day chairman and superintendent of the field crops research center. Morning and afternoon tours will show different aspects of field crops research, without repeating any plots. Lunch may be purchased at the farm and a brief noon program will follow.

Research is in progress to increase the efficiency of forage production, the nutritive value of forage, and stand persistence of forage crops used for pasture, green chop, silage, and hay. New seedings of alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, red clover, timothy, orchardgrass, smooth brome, reed canary, and tall fescue will be on display.

Three new alfalfa varieties -- Arc, Saranac-AR and Waterman-Loomis 311 – that carry resistance to alfalfa anthracnose will be harvested weekly from August 15 through November 1 to determine the best time to remove the third cutting of alfalfa in the fall without injury to stand. Several varieties of sudangrass and sorghum - sudangrass hybrids are being compared with corn for forage production in a green chop program.

Hay packaged in large round bales and stacks will be available for inspection. Research is underway with organic acids for hay preservation when packaged at 30 to 35 percent moisture. One day of drying time can be saved with this method of hay preservation.

Pennscott red clover is being subjected to a two-week harvest schedule on different plots from August 1 through October 1 to obtain more hay from the crop in the seeding year as well as in the second year.

Alfalfa varieties are being tested in small plot seedings. These trials are part of a regional testing program in which several northeastern states are participating. Alfalfa breeding stock is being developed for resistance to several diseases, of which anthracnose and bacterial wilt are the most important ones. New varieties may be developed by these efforts.

Creeping-rooted alfalfa is also being bred. The ability to creep is not found in presently available alfalfas and new varieties with this habit could be used in long-term stands for hay, and possibly for pasture. Red clover is being improved for resistance to several plant disease pests. This old standby legume would produce more forage if plants were not attacked by anthracnose diseases and mildews, the diseases presently being studied.

Primary emphasis is placed on the breeding and development of improved orchardgrass varieties. Two varieties have been released, Pennlate and Pennmead. A program is currently underway to develop varieties for the future on the basis of forage quality as well as greater yield and disease resistance. Selected plants with superior agronomic and quality characteristics are being combined and tested to produce varieties for the future.

"Blightcasting" will be discussed by plant pathologist. This is a fairly new technique of forecasting the spread of late blight among potato crops. By using certain pieces of monitoring equipment on the farm, and then conferring with Penn State plant pathologists regarding weekly temperature and relative humidity levels, the farmer receives a "spray or no spray" answer.

Such a forecasting system should decrease the amount of fungicides used, including fewer spray applications during the growing season.