

## Twin Valley FFA Competes at Kutztown

The annual Kutztown Fair was held this past week and members of the Twin Valley Future Farmers of America participated in it. On Friday, August 23, the county FFA dairy and livestock judging contests were held as well as the tractor driving contest. In the livestock judging contest, contestants had to

judge a class of market steers, a class of breeding swine, and a class of market swine. Twin Valley President Robert Stoltzfus finished third in this contest, with Darrel Stoltzfus, tenth grade secretary, finishing fifth. Other Twin Valley participants were: Ronald Smoker, David Hammons, Melvin Houck, and Kathie

Hart. No Twin Valley members participated in dairy judging.

In the afternoon the county tractor driving contest was held. Each chapter in the county is allowed one participant in this contest. Twin Valley was represented by its ace tractor driver Robert Stoltzfus. In the contest, each participant must

complete a safety check before starting the tractor. He then hitches to a manure spreader and drives it through an obstacle course and then backs it into a stall with two inches of clearance on each side. After unhitching the spreader he hitches to a four-wheeled wagon and pulls it from a stall and then must back it into an adjoining stall with six inches of clearance on each side. Contestants are scored for safety throughout the contest. In the spreader and wagon stalls, they are penalized for having the implement off-center and more than two inches from the rear of the stall. Throughout the contest, they are penalized for touching the sides of the stalls or obstacle course and for each time they change direction. Robert finished first in a fairly close contest. He, along with second place driver James Adam, of Hamburg will represent Berks County in September against drivers from Lebanon and Schuylkill County.

The Twin Valley window display - "SOYBEANS - FOOD, FEED, FUTURE" finished fourth in the vocational window display class. The exhibit explains the many uses of soybeans for food and feed purposes and in industry. The purpose of window displays is to present educational material in an attractive and eye-catching manner. This week the exhibit will be on display at the Reading Fair. Also this week, chapter members Terry Murray and Larry Stoltzfus will exhibit their dairy animals at the regional FFA dairy show in Harrisburg.

## Economics Of Grape Pickers

In a moonlit vineyard, a harvester pulls up to a row and begins beating the vines, shaking loose the grapes. As they fall, they're conveyed and blown into a gondola that's being pulled alongside by a tractor.

This is one of the latest scenes in California, where more than 100 machines now harvest grapes sold to wineries.

Machine harvesting of grapes in California started 5 years ago, and an ERS preliminary report indicates that machine owners—at least in the Fresno-Madera area—are satisfied with them.

Growers in the ERS survey indicated they felt they should receive a premium price for mechanically harvested grapes. The grapes had fewer stems and leaves in them than hand-harvested grapes, they said, and thus, more grapes per ton were delivered to the winery.

Thompson Seedless grapes were the main variety the machines harvested, for they tended to shake more easily from the vine than many other varieties.

Much of the machine harvesting was done at night when cooler temperatures aided both the crew and the

grapes, which shake from the vine more easily when the thermometer reads below 90 degrees.

The 37 machine owners in the survey operated 54 machines in 1972, and averaged about 238 acres harvested per machine. The short crop that year put tonnage below normal for many of the growers.

Capital investment for the operation ran around \$40,000. The harvester cost about \$33,000 to \$35,000, and the gondolas ran around \$3,000 each. Two gondolas were usually used—while one was being unloaded, the other would be in operation in the vineyard.

About a fourth of the owners did extensive contract work. Another fourth did some contracting, usually for neighbors or relatives.

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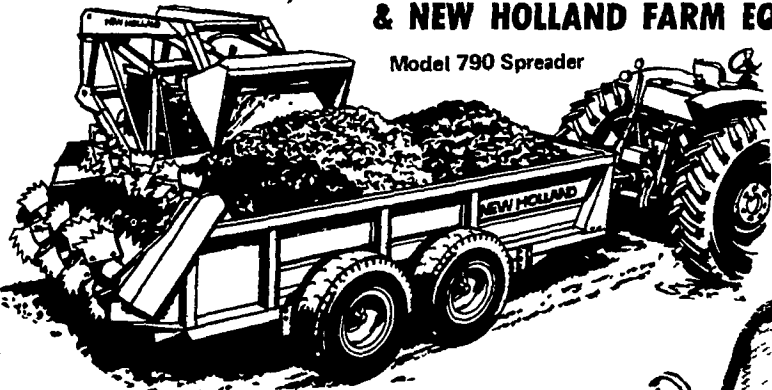
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