

## Ag sponsors needed

AKRON, PA. - Farms and agricultural business firms are being sought to sponsor 35 Polish agriculturists when they arrive in this country in March, 1976. These young men and women - all between the ages of 22 and 30 - are part of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Exchange Visitor Program for Polish Agriculturists.

The Polish exchange program was begun in 1971, according to Doreen Harms, the MCC coordinator in charge of the project. "Next year's group will be the sixth since the program started," Miss Harms said. "I think it's helped build a tremendous amount of goodwill between individuals in our country and young people in Poland."

"The Polish visitors get a chance to work here in agriculture, they get a chance to live with American families and to see our country. Their American sponsors, on the other hand, learn about Polish customs and culture, and they get highly qualified people willing to work for the legal minimum wage."

The program has earned the praise of many agricultural leaders in its five years of existence. For example, Don Parke, Executive Vice President of PennAg Industries Association, Ephrata, Pa., noted that his organization's Board of Directors had decided to help publicize the program to PennAg member firms as well as to the agricultural community at large. PennAg is a trade

association composed of Pennsylvania agribusiness firms.

Miss Harms said they are always on the lookout for agribusiness sponsors as well as good farming operations. "Our visitors come to us with excellent qualifications, and their backgrounds, education and work experience cover the whole gamut of agricultural technology," she noted.

The MCC conducts the program under a cooperative agreement with Poland's Scientific Technical Institute for Agriculturists (SITR). The SITR nominates the visitors, all of whom have baccalaureate or master's degrees. Some have PhD's, and nearly all have spent some time working in their specialties. Exchange visitors have included specialists with training in animal science, agronomy, horticulture, ichthyology, agricultural engineering, mechanical engineering and veterinary medicine to name just a few disciplines.

During their year in the U.S., visitors ordinarily stay six months with one sponsor and six months with a second. While they may have held very responsible positions in their homeland, the Polish visitors come here expecting to spend a full year as ordinary laborers. The brevity of their stay makes it impractical for them to assume important decision making roles. And, while all of them have been schooled in English,

The Ag Day Foundation has been established to fund Agriculture Day - the nationwide effort that promotes better understanding between rural and urban Americans - according to A. J. Adolfi, President of the National Agri-Marketing Association. The American Ag Day

language can often be a problem.

Many of the Polish visitors work as farmhands. Of the 34 who came over in March, 1975, 22 were working on farms as their year was coming to a close. Of the remaining 12, the largest single group was composed of those working in greenhouses. Two exchange visitors had jobs as helpers on ag research teams at Cornell and Purdue.

Exchange visitors are paid the minimum hourly wage by their sponsors. Sponsors are expected to furnish room, board and shelter, and they withhold an agreed upon amount from the visitors' wages to pay for these necessities. There is no other cost to the sponsors. They are expected to serve, though, as bridges for their visitors to church and community activities as well as points of interest.

Although the Mennonite Central Committee operates the program, Miss Harms said that sponsors of all faiths are more than welcome. For more details on sponsoring an exchange visitor, write to Doreen Harms, Mennonite Central Committee, 21 South 12th St., Akron, Pa. 17501 or call 717-859-1151.

## Ag day funded by special means

Foundation Committee includes Chairman Emmett Barker, Executive Secretary of Farm & Industrial Equipment Institute, Chicago, Richard Babcock, President of Farm Journal, Philadelphia; Parke Brinkley, President of National Agricultural Chemicals Association, Washington, D. C.; Ray Kremer, Executive Director of National Association of Farm Broadcasters, Florida; Oakley Ray, President of American Feed Manufacturers Association, Washington, D. C.; Jim Roe, President of Jim Roe & Associates, Chicago; and Ed Wheeler, President of The Fertilizer Institute, Washington, D. C.

"Ag Day has been essential," said Adolfi, Director of Communications for Ciba-Geigy, Greensboro, North Carolina, "because the farmer must now more than ever before rely on consumer understanding and support on issues that vitally effect his production and in turn the entire nation's wellbeing."

The 1976 Agriculture Day program of advertising, promotion and special events is scheduled for March 22, the first Monday after the first day of spring, when the nation's attention will be focused on agriculture.

In its second nationwide

sponsorship of Ag Day, the National Agri-Marketing Association calls on all segments of agri-business to tell agriculture's story through advertisements and materials furnished to all who will use them. The 1975 radio, television and print campaign dramatized to urban consumers the importance of agriculture through the message, "Almost Everything Starts on a Farm." The Today Show featured ten minutes on Ag Day.


"The requests for advertising materials were so great from 38 states that funds ran out and materials had to be rationed," said NAMA Executive Director Ernie Marshall, who conceived the Foundation idea to ensure even greater national impact in 1976.

Volunteers of the National Agri-Marketing Association - over 2,000 professional communicators and marketers - will contribute an estimated \$200,000 of their time and expertise in creative inputs. These people will organize, manage and prepare the campaign. The financial resources from the Ag Day Foundation will be used to produce the materials in quantity and to meet projected demands based on last year's experience.

The Foundation Committee members will make the Ag Day appeal in-

dividually to their respective industry segments in the coming weeks so that materials may be produced in early 1976.

Individuals and groups who also wish to have a part in this salute to agriculture may send their contributions to: American Ag Day Foundation, 800 W. 47th Suite 518, Kansas City, MO 64112.



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