

## Nat'l FFA officers

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useful rolls in any career." Jackson responded to one reporter's inquiry about his wanting to attend law school after completing his agricultural studies at Purdue University. The 21-year-old youth is a native of Tipton, Ind., and comes from a crop and livestock farm in that state. He noted that education is the backbone of the FFA program, to which Wilson added "A good farmer is always a learner."

All three officers repeatedly stressed the fact that FFA is involved with more than "production agriculture," while at the same time acknowledging that the club was at one time limited to that. Wilson explained that production agriculture is still the heart of the association, but around it there is a circle of approximately 200 businesses which are directly connected to farming enterprises. "FFA prepared students for any of these forms of farming, agribusiness, floriculture, etc.," he said. A career in vocational agriculture instruction upon graduating from Kansas State is his goal.

With the American Farmer Degree a requirement for holding a national office, the three youths spoke from a well-rounded background of experience and knowledge, and with ad-

mirable poise. Their present duties, due to the amount of travelling they must do, have required them to drop out of school for a year and live as a group away from home for more than half of the year. They were accompanied by Coleman Harris, associate executive secretary of the national FFA, which is headquartered in Alexandria, Va.

The question of land use legislation was brought up and all three, as well as state and local FFA officers present, were in agreement that states should begin to take some action on the matter. Convinced that farmers and vo-ag students still need considerable familiarization on the issue, Loudenslager pointed out that the FFA has the means to spread information.

The 21-year old Loudenslager from Ohio State University noted that the U.S. is losing close to a million acres of farm land each year, and that remaining farmland is then more efficiently managed to make up for the loss. "The FFA is concerned with efficient use of the land," he said. His future plans include teaching and part-time management of his home farm near Morral, Ohio.

Getting the general public to realize what the FFA, agriculture and agribusiness



Ron Wilson, national FFA vice president from the Central Region, second from left, chats with Lancaster County FFA advisors and officers. Left to right: Dr. Robert Herr, Garden Spot; Lew Ayers,

Ephrata; Gary Eberly, Cloister FFA chapter president; and Laverne Martin, county FFA president from Garden Spot.

is all about is one of the primary objectives of today's FFA program, which last year had funds of \$680,000. To achieve this goal, the organization has set up a Food For America educational program for elementary children, who in turn can take the message and printed matter home with them. Dr. Robert Herr, of the Garden Spot School

District, pointed out this project originated at his school and has since spread to all parts of the country with enthusiastic response.

Along with the FFA's phenomenal rate of growth has come a more favorable public image. There are three main reasons for this, according to the FFA leaders who were present at the meeting. First of all, the

organization has become more diversified — offering more programs and thereby attracting more members. Over half of the club's membership is now involved in programs other than ag production. Businesses and industry are coming out in greater support of the organization, and the FFA itself has stepped out to tell others what it's all about,

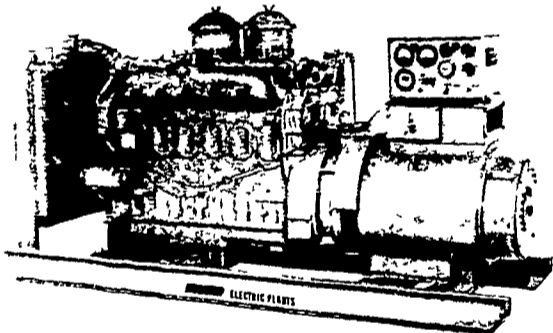
rather than keep the news within itself. Furthermore, agriculture has entered an era of increased public awareness, which in turn has caused people to take more notice of the FFA. Appearances have been made on major TV programs, including NBC's TODAY show. "It has forced us to tell

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