

Three Grassland FFA'ers discuss agriculture

By MELISSA PIPER
NEW HOLLAND - "FFA - The Future of America" is the theme of this year's National FFA Week which will be celebrated Feb. 21-28th. Three area youths that are particularly involved in FFA work are LaVern Martin, president of the Grassland FFA Chapter, Donald Weaver, State regional vice-president and Lloyd Hoover, State vice-president. All the young men are Lancaster County residents, each of them will be working or are so now in an agricultural field and after this spring, all will have graduated from Garden Spot High School.

LaVern, Don and Lloyd gathered at the high school here, earlier this week to talk about farming, agriculture and FFA. Their comments on the future of agriculture in this country follow.

Commenting on the theme of the bicentennial year's FFA Week, LaVern noted, "there is a certain future for farming but producers will

have to put forth a real effort."

"Many farmers are just not producing like they should and it doesn't help the world economy," the FFA president explained.

LaVern works for his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde W. Martin, on their East Earl farm. The high school senior is looking forward to a career in dairying.

Explaining his feelings on future agriculture, Lloyd remarked, "agriculture is a big factor in the world situation on the whole."

"We've got to be able to produce to the fullest to keep the world going."

Lloyd is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Hoover, Leola R1, and was recently named as the state vice-president for Pennsylvania FFA.

Don Weaver is also a state officer, serving in the capacity of eastern regional vice-president, and works on his parent's (Mr. and Mrs. John M. Weaver's) dairy farm in New Holland R1.

Don believes that although the individual farmer has not had too much of a say in the past, he must continue to produce a good product for the future. "Now more than ever, a farmer has to be a businessman and a scientist - we must learn more for the future because it is efficiency that will count."

All three of the FFA members were concerned about the marketing aspect of agricultural products and were in agreement that more could be done by collective bargaining.

"Farmers must group together for pull," Lloyd stated, "price setting is getting away from individual control but in groups - such

as coops - it is easier to put up a demand."

LaVern noted that in the past, farmers had been unwilling to join co-ops or marketing groups as they wanted total independence.

"Now, farmers are realizing that they cannot just get by by themselves it takes cooperation and people working toward the same goals."

Echoing his thoughts on marketing, Don stated,

strikes as the least labor or pricing problem but farmers are really at the mercy of the middlemen and marketing officials."

Although the FFA'ers are still young, each is interested in improving the marketing situation for farmers. Lloyd, who works in agribusiness, referred to his position on the marketing of commodities.

"Too often the middleman adds to expenses but doesn't add any quality to the product," he remarked. "It

Don, who along with his father, is contemplating a milk retail store to ease their personal marketing situation, also delivered his thoughts. "Small farmers can't really skip the middleman for an individual farmer has little say, but this is where co-op again play an important role."

FFA helping consumers learn

Many farm organizations are finding out just how important communication with consumers is and the youths expressed their satisfaction at FFA's attempts.

"I really believe that FFA is doing a good job in keeping the consumers informed," Lloyd interjected.

"Our programs in the elementary schools have gone over well and it is extremely important for young people to learn about food production and agriculture at an early age."

LaVern, Don and Lloyd are three of many FFA youths all across the country. For their age, they are well informed concerning agriculture and are hopeful of a future in farm productions. Each praised FFA for its help in their personal development as

well as insight into farming and agribusiness.



Don Weaver



Lloyd Hoover

"farmers will probably never go on strike because they seem too kind-hearted."

"The business world

is a facet of our system to have middlemen but I think direct marketing is better if prices are to be realistic."



LaVern Martin



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