

# Ag program

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program was a personal dream come true. But, his ventures spawned from much creative thinking and a "bushelful" of determination.

Erway had observed the work experience program in action but felt it lacked initiative for those students

who wanted to work primarily in ag production. Many ag students had expressed an interest in returning to their home farms but could not leave school to do so. For them, experience had to wait until evening or after graduation.

"These students really had

to wait until after their schooling to gain actual experience in production work," Erway noted. "It meant that they had to adjust to the farming programs later which could mean many months of even a year."

"But with our new coop program, these students can ease into farm partnership or work without a long adjustment period."

Another aspect which caused Erway to alter the

typical work program was that few students on job training had the opportunity to become involved with community activities. So with these considerations, Erway began planning his coop work education.

A sabbatical leave from Manheim, saw Erway travel to Penn State where he studied occupational work programs in existence and planning stages. During his study Erway outlined his personal methods and will soon be evaluating the success of the program as his students complete the first full year of the unique ag education alternative.

The students involved in the program, work quite independently but must keep accurate records and become involved in community and county affairs. The seniors are required to attend five meetings at the county Farm and Home Center which deal with their

interests in agriculture and must also attend specially designed seminars every Wednesday at the school. The seminars range from learning about life insurance to visiting bankers and attorneys. Field trips are also utilized for educational experiences.

Each individual is required to keep an accurate log of his work on the job, including wages earned and hours worked. And while life "on the outside" might seem like too much of a vacation, the students must maintain a "C" average in academic studies or forfeit the right to be included in the program.

### Learning the Family Business

Mark Geib, son of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Geib, Manheim, is one of the 14 students who will have concluded the first full year of coop education in the

spring. Mark is a senior at the high school and has been a member of the FFA for four years.

The Geibs have a sizeable farm near Chicques Creek and raise 200 steers a year along with several acres of tobacco. Norman Geib also runs a trucking business and hauls feed to mills in central and southcentral portions of the state.

Until this year, Mark helped his father but mostly on weekends and in the evenings. Opting the coop education program however, Mark is now spending about 10 hours more per week working on the farm and driving truck.

"The coop program has given me more time to work here and to learn the business," Mark noted.

"I feel more like a contributing part of our family business and will not have to adjust to the work as if waiting till I graduated."

Along with his increased duties at home, Mark has also been attending meetings that pertain to his agricultural interest. In keeping with the program, the youth has attended the no-till conference in Hershey and is planning a trip to Penn State to attend the beef management seminar.

Commenting on the seminar program that he must attend at school, Mark stated, "I have enjoyed the programs as they are of interest to us in a different way."

"We might never have had to see an attorney but now at least we know what procedures they go through."

Mark's trucking work means traveling for many hours and although the youth admits that his schedule is tight for completing the assignments and logs, the youth enjoys being able to work in his chosen profession.

### Partnership is Already Started

Gerald Keller, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd B. Keller, Lititz R3, has already entered partnership with his brother although still a senior in school.

Under the coop education program, Gerald is operating a swine breeding enterprise with his younger brother David and also helps out on his parents farm near Lititz.

Gerald took swine breeding projects while an FFA member, but did most of the work on a small scale as his academic studies kept him in school most of the day. Now however, Gerald comes home at 1:30 p.m. four afternoons per week and has been able to increase his operation.

Gerald and David have 18 sows and sell about 250 feeder pigs per year. As their operation is expanding, the youths are remodeling farm structures to accommodate their needs.

"I really wouldn't get as much done if I couldn't be on the coop program," Gerald explained while working on a new farrowing building.

"If I were working on this building only on nights and on weekends, it would have meant another 10 hours before expanding. Now I have been able to complete much of the work in the afternoons."

The youth also helps out feeding beef and taking care of field work as needed. Gerald's farm is in part-



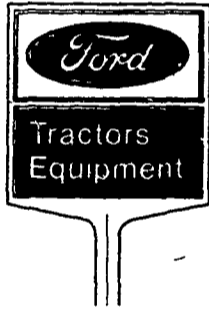
## Janie, the Good News Girl

I want to thank everybody for coming to our biggest and best open house ever.

Congratulations are in order to the following prize winners.

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- Ruth Wender, Lititz
- Leonard Reiff, Manheim
- Duane Shellenberger, Manheim
- Thomas Suter, Malvern
- Linford Harley, Manheim
- Richard Young, Lancaster
- Mrs. Sam Rhoads, Kirkwood
- Charles Zimmerman, Conestoga
- Martin Denlinger, Lancaster
- Ralph Todd, Manheim
- John Geeseman, Jr., Hummelstown
- Isaac Garman, Manheim
- Richard Kauffman, Columbia
- Mrs. Ruth Rohrer, Lancaster
- Vernon Charles, Lancaster
- Daniel M. Stoltzfus, Morgantown
- John Bassler, Lancaster
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Jess Erway (seated) and Glen Spangler, ag instructors at Manheim Central High School, have been working with the coop education program for almost a full year.

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