

# Hippie finds happiness on farm

By DIETER KRIEG

STRAUSSTOWN—A former Navy man and follower of the hippie lifestyle has found satisfaction and happiness on a Berks County farm. John Hoffman, 27, says of his present

experiences that he likes "the basic lifestyle, the work — and that farmers contribute in a very direct way" to the economy of this country. He feels satisfied in doing and providing, he acknowledged, and maintains an enthusiastic attitude about his career which is about ten months old.

Employed at the Anthony Poultry Farm, near here, and carrying major responsibilities in the production of field crops, Hoffman was a total stranger to farm work when he joined Anthony's less than a year ago. He was as green as grass.

Now he jokes about it with just a bit of pride, realizing that his determination and interest in a certain type of work have enabled him to become familiar and experienced in farm work.

According to Donald Anthony, who interviewed Hoffman last summer, Hoffman displayed enough potential for the type of work he was to do, and he therefore took a chance on him. He knew he was inexperienced, but adds philosophically that this could be an advantage in a way. As a novice, Hoffman had a lot to learn, including the pursuing of instruction books for tractors and combines. Some farm boys have never looked at those manuals, and nevertheless take the attitude that "they know it all."

Anthony admits he was a bit concerned about his new employee at first, since he had neither the experience nor background to operate equipment and raise crops. But to date things have worked out to be mutually satisfactory. Nevertheless, there have been some breakdowns, and Hoffman likes to tell of one in particular:

"I was out plowing," he began, "and I didn't know anything, but you know how the bottoms are supposed to trip when you hit a rock? Well, I hit a rock and it didn't trip . . . it just tore off." Shocked by the sight of it, and nervous about the boss finding out, Hoffman returned to the farm and timidly stated that he wished he would have been warned about those sort of things happening.

He received a cold answer "they don't." The incident serves as an amusing anecdote today, but he assures people it was anything but funny at the time.

Hoffman's background is varied. Prior to coming to Anthony's, a 650-acre farming operation known internationally for its White Leghorns, he was a control clerk for Continental Can Company. Aside from his experiences there and in the Navy, he has also worked as a director for a church, and computer programmer.



John Hoffman has found the lifestyle and type of work which is meaningful to him by going into farming. A former Navy man and follower of the hippie way of life, Hoffman is married and employed at Anthony's Hatchery, where he is directly involved in crop production.

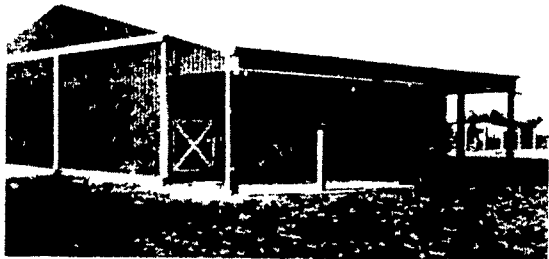
Hoffman claims he liked the work, basically, and the pay was good, but something was missing. He wanted a greater sense of accomplishment and thought he might find it on a farm. "I like to work, and produce," he stated repeatedly.

The young man's interest in farming was sparked while living on a farm commune near Virginia Beach, Va. with about 25 other people. After that he came to Reading to rent a farm with his brother. "But we didn't farm it," he explained, "we just wanted to be in that environment."

But now there's more to it, and he happily proclaims he likes the challenges of farming.

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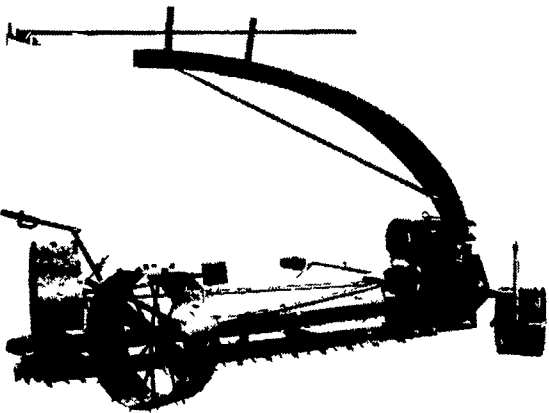


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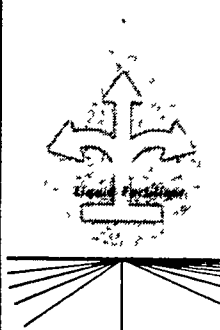
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