

FFA agribusinessman

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The four named were selected from among the 747 members who have been recommended by their respective State FFA Associations to receive the FFA American Farmer Degree.

Lynn Groff has taken advantage of every learning experience that has come his way, and today, the energetic young man from Ephrata is reaping the benefits.

Lynn, who is the Eastern Region nominee for the FFA Star Agribusinessman of America award, is the product department group leader of Victor Weaver, Inc., a poultry and egg processing plant in New Holland.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Groff, Lynn never lived on a farm, largely because of the high cost of land in Lancaster County. But his FFA and vocational agriculture training under Clifford Day provided him with opportunities to expand his knowledge in agricultural-related industries.

"Land costs are probably why I got involved in the processing of farm products rather than production," he explains. "I feel that the FFA supervised work experience programs helped me decide to find a job closely related to agriculture."

Immediately after graduating from Garden Spot High School, Lynn was employed at Weaver's as a group leader in the slicing department. Since then, through hard work and dedication, he has moved up in the organization.

Weaver's started as a small business processing 200 birds a week. Today, the company processes more than 70,000 birds a day, employs more than 1,000 persons and distributes its products across the nation and overseas.

"The expanding business has been made possible to a large extent by the increasing number of products that the company has successfully tested and marketed," Lynn says.

Lynn's employers took notice of his work. He was offered the position of product development technician, which required developing new products and equipment. "It was a challenge I accepted with great anticipation," Lynn recalls. "In product development you work with all areas of the plant."

"The food industry is an ever-changing field and we must stay abreast of new trends and processing methods," he says. "When problems occur on production, we are asked to find solutions. We are constantly striving to improve our products and trying to reduce costs while at the same time maintaining quality."

After working for a year and a half as development technician, Lynn again was offered a promotion, this time as department group leader. Again, he was given more responsibilities.

"This job requires working with sales and marketing very closely," he says. "You need to learn what the consumer wants and develop products along those lines."

"In my work, we are always trying new products," he adds. "It's my responsibility to get production started and keep a close watch on the quality. Trying to solve the problems that arise with a new product is a constant challenge in my job. Breakdowns must be kept at a minimum to keep all operations flowing smoothly."

Lynn will never forget the valuable education he received while a member of FFA Vocational Agriculture programs. "My FFA training prepared me well in keeping complete and accurate records, which are important in my job," he says.

"I have enjoyed my association with FFA. It has helped me develop my leadership abilities in the chapter, community, church, and my work. Speaking before FFA groups did a great deal to develop my self-confidence which is essential in supervising others."

The ambitious

agribusinessman is satisfied with his success, but he is optimistic of an even brighter future. "I intend to stay at Weaver's," he says, "but I'll be open to any further opportunities that come along."

As Star Agribusinessman for their respective regions, each will receive a cash award of \$500 presented by the National FFA Foundation at the National Future Farmers of America Convention in Kansas City, Missouri, November 9-12. At that time, one will be named Star Agribusinessman of America and will receive an additional \$500. A committee of judges including leaders in business, agriculture, and education will meet in Kansas City on November 11 to select the Star Agribusinessman of America.

The Star Agribusinessman of America Award was established in 1969 to recognize the growing number of FFA members becoming established in agribusiness occupations. Like the Star Farmer of America Award which is the highest honor for an FFA member becoming established in farming, the Star Agribusinessman Award recognizes the FFA member whose achievements in an



Lynn Groff

agriculture related occupation and leadership are most outstanding in the nation.

The Star Agribusinessman of America awards are provided by the Future

Farmers of America Foundation, Inc., which receives its funds by annual contributions from about 1,600 business and industrial concerns, organizations, and individuals.

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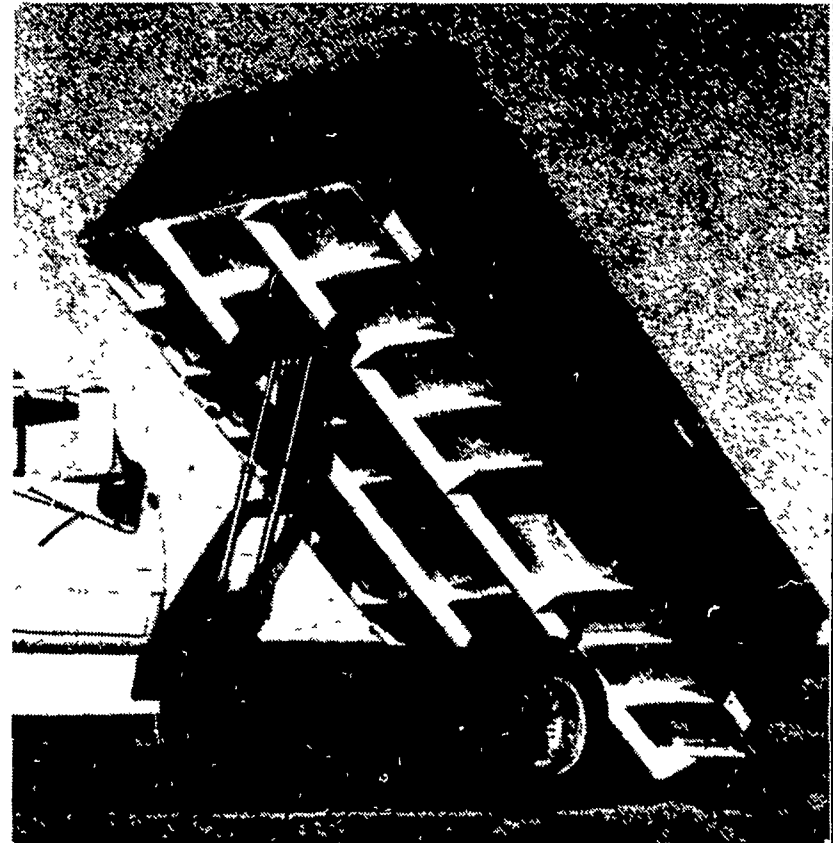
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