

Earl Geib leads busy life of FFA state officer

DANNE SPAHR
JEIM, Pa. - This Pennsylvania Farm going to mean a lot of for Earl Geib, n R4, even though he er in charge of an or taking part in any tions. Instead, he e his work cut out for fulfilling his duty as nsylvania Eastern Vice President of the Farmers of America. the other 10 officers e state as well as last president, are ble for the program tate FFA convention ill be held in con- with the Farm Show nesday of that ular week.

"The state convention is the thing we do all year, so we want it as perfect as we can get it," says the amiable 18-year-old farmer. As part of the festivities, Keystone Farmer degrees will be handed out to deserving youth around the Commonwealth as well as honorary Keystone degrees, honorary parent degrees (those having three or more Keystone Degree sons or daughters), 1976 proficiency awards, and several others. (The Keystone Farmers will be published in next week's issue of Lancaster Farming.) Geib's designated roll in the program is to introduce the Eastern Region Star Farmer and the

individual who has won the regional agribusiness award for the year.

"We're going up Sunday morning at 10 o'clock to usher the elderly people around the buildings," Geib explained. And from then on, the week will be all work for Geib from morning to evening until Wednesday when the program takes place.

To the state officer, who was appointed to his role in June of 1976, this "work" is not tedious, but fun. Prior to this convention, he took part in the national FFA convention in Kansas City, Mo., in November. There he was part of the Courtesy Corps, and also took his turn in the delegate seat.

"I didn't get too much sleep at that convention," he jokes, admitting that although the meetings lasted long, he and his group of friends also managed to have fun when their day was all over - to the point of missing some sleep.

"But, I'd say that the greatest advantages to being a state officer are traveling and meeting people," he explains in vindication of the good times he has. "FFA has meant a great deal to me," he says, "and, I'd encourage anybody to get involved and try for leadership."

But, anyone who has a short chat with Geib is quick to pick up that his enjoyment of FFA is just part of an overall positive view of life in which many things that other people might not allow themselves to fully enjoy are "fun" for him.

For instance, he thoroughly enjoys the Manheim Fair, his home town Fair, because this is the arena in which he shows his hogs and steers. He raises five steers a year - one for 4-H, one for FFA, and the rest for fattening and selling. Of those steers, some of the greatest enjoyment he gets is showing them at

Manheim. 1974 was a good year for him - that year he had the reserve champion FFA steer. And, while he likes pigs for their convenience in getting them ready to show, he says working with a steer for a whole year in preparation for a Fair is "fun, too."

His hog operation is another example of his zeal for the things in which he involves himself. While his father raises hogs, beef, tobacco, and grains to feed the animals, the Geib family hog operation had been fairly limited until Earl became interested in it.

"Then, I wanted more and more," he says, "And, now, we've got them in every available space." Geib raises 80 head of his own in a fattening operation. He purchases the animals at 40 pounds and finishes them out. This year he entered his pigs at the Lancaster County FFA hog show where he took third and fifth places.

Although he still works for his father at this point, he does raise hogs, steers, and tobacco on his own, and has hopes of going into partnership with his father in the future. This is one of the few ways Earl sees for a young farmer to get started nowadays, unless the beginner has an abundant supply of money to start with, which is a rarity.

Right now Geib is working part time for both his father and Plain and Fancy Egg Ranch, Elizabethtown. He works at Plain and Fancy on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and for his father on the remaining days.

"I'm really lucky," he says, talking about his employers. "The people at Plain and Fancy don't get bothered if I have to take time off, and so far my parents have felt that FFA comes first no matter what needs to be done on the farm."

Geib has needed time off



Earl Geib puts the tobacco in the press. He and his father and brother are spending a large part of their days stripping right now, a chore which Earl says he really doesn't mind doing.

from work several times during his term as officer. Beside the conventions he has attended and will attend in the coming year, he has also taken part in three leadership training conferences. One was held in Lancaster, another in Lehigh, and a third in Delaware-Chester. Usually he takes charge of teaching the vice presidents in these sessions. He will also be attending a state officers' convention in Washington D.C. at the end of January.

Two other responsibilities of the regional vice president are visiting all 19 Lancaster and Lebanon County FFA chapters and going to banquets around the region.

It can get to be a full schedule for a farmer with a part time job, but Geib

definitely feels that it is worth all the energy he puts into it.

"I have friends from all over, now," he explains. "And, I've developed both my leadership and speaking abilities because of this."

Prior to being named the regional vice president last June, Geib had held the positions of chaplain, treasurer, and president of his own chapter. He graduated from Manheim Central High School in 1976.

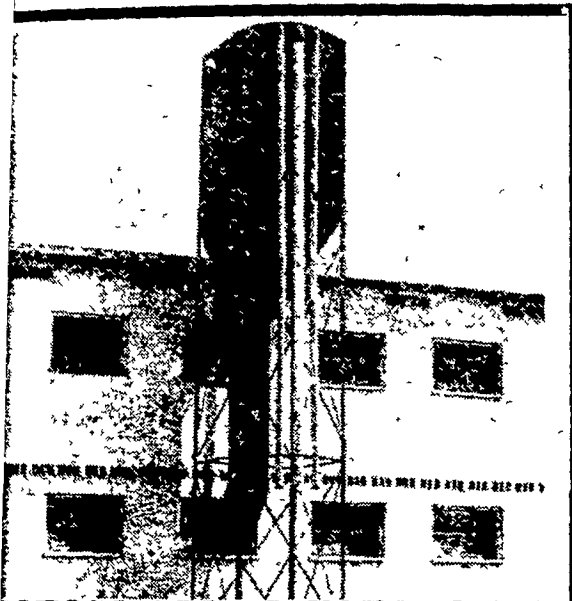
While in school, he received the Outstanding Agriculture Student award in 1975. Just this year, he placed second in the state livestock production proficiency area.

And, while farming is the major part of Geib's life, his outside interests include being a member of a singing group comprised of 12 young people from Chiques Church of the Brethren, Manheim. The group calls themselves the "Joy Boys" and have sung in as many as 15 different places. They accompany themselves with guitar, banjo, and piano.

Geib is active in the church youth group, which he describes as being quite active, itself. The youth get together for activities such as roller skating, caroling, and winter picnics.

So, all in all, Geib is a busy fellow at this point in his life. But, he manages to do it all, and quite happily at that, from all appearances.

"I won't want to see my term end next June," he says, reluctantly looking ahead to the future. "It's meant a lot to me, and I hate to give it up." Fortunately, even when his term expires he will still have three more years to spend in the organization.



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