

Berks Countian reached goal of American Farmer

By LAUREL SCHAEFFER
Staff Correspondent

TOPTON — Some time ago, David Schantz, Alburts, R1, set a goal for himself that few people ever accomplish. To achieve it, he has worked hard for several years.

Ever since 1974 when he first went out to Kansas City as a member of the Pennsylvania dairy judging team to participate in the National Future Farmer of America Convention, David has been looking forward to the day he could return. This desire came partially from the fact that he had had a short stay the first time, but more importantly because he wanted to be distinguished in the FFA as an American Farmer.

All of the time and effort this young farmer has put into his goal has finally paid off. On November 10 he will return to Kansas City, this time to receive the degree he sought after.

David's FFA projects have mainly centered around dairy cattle and field crops. Presently he has 25 registered Holsteins of his

own, 17 which are milking, and 70 acres of land that he has been using as his FFA project to raise corn, alfalfa, and barley.

David got his first heifer in 1968 when he first joined 4-H. Ever since then he has been adding to his herd every year.

"The first five years weren't so easy," says David, "I had all bulls born." All of his animals come out of the family herd which numbers approximately 250 head.

While in 4-H, David was very active showing his cattle and attending state achievement days with dairy judging teams. He has shown at Kutztown Fair, the District FFA show, and the Oley Fair. Last year he won two grand champion showman awards but, he admits, he never had a grand champion cow - only a junior champion. He plans to continue to show in the future, explaining that he feels he has to, to promote his herd and his breed.

This accomplished young farmer started his FFA "career" with the Bran-



David Schantz, American Farmer candidate from Berks County, goes over the record books of his past years in the Future Farmers of America.

dywine Heights High School Chapter of which he was very active. It was in his senior year that he was fortunate enough to attend the National Convention for his first time. While there, he placed sixth high individual

in the dairy judging contest, and his team placed fourth for which he received two gold medals.

That year he was also the County FFA treasurer and his chapter's president. After graduation he swit-

ched to the Kutztown FFA Chapter because Brandywine Heights discontinued the program.

For the past six years David has had a field crops project with the FFA. Last year he entered the state

5 acre contest and has done so again this year.

"One year," said David, "I won the county yield contest."

Another activity in which this enthusiastic farmer has participated was the land judging team in 1974 for which he again won the county contest.

David's participation goes further than just 4-H and FFA. He is also an active member in the Junior Holstein Association and the Kutztown Young Farmers. Presently, he is serving as president of the Berks Junior Holstein Association and as news reporter for the State Junior Association.

Last year he was a semi-finalist in the Pennsylvania Distinguished Junior Member Contest which was held at the state convention, and has hopes for this year as well.

By being one of the three semi-finalists, David had the opportunity to go to Brattleboro, Vt., to the Holstein Association's headquarters for a three-day tour, and was very impressed with what he saw.

"We toured some very good farms, also," he told Lancaster Farming, "and I saw some excellent, but expensive cattle."

David plans to stay with dairy farming. "It is the only thing I can see doing," he stated. Dairy has been his major interest for as long as he can remember.

"I like the variety that there is in farming," he continued. "I enjoy the field work and being outdoors as much as working with the cattle."

The future for farming looks rough to this young farmer because of the competition with urban development. Smaller farms may get pushed out of the business, he said, but it is hard to say what will happen.

Our farm is as big as we want," David said. He and his father are farming 400 acres and milking 135 cows, with the help of one full-time employee.

"Now we are striving to improve our herd to increase production and the quality of the herd," said David.

Both he and his father, Burd Schantz, are certified breeding technicians and do all of their own breeding. "I can see a lot with heredity," David said. "When you know what you are looking for you can see resemblances in related animals."

In the future, David feels he and his father will form a partnership. He is always ready to see if new ideas will work.

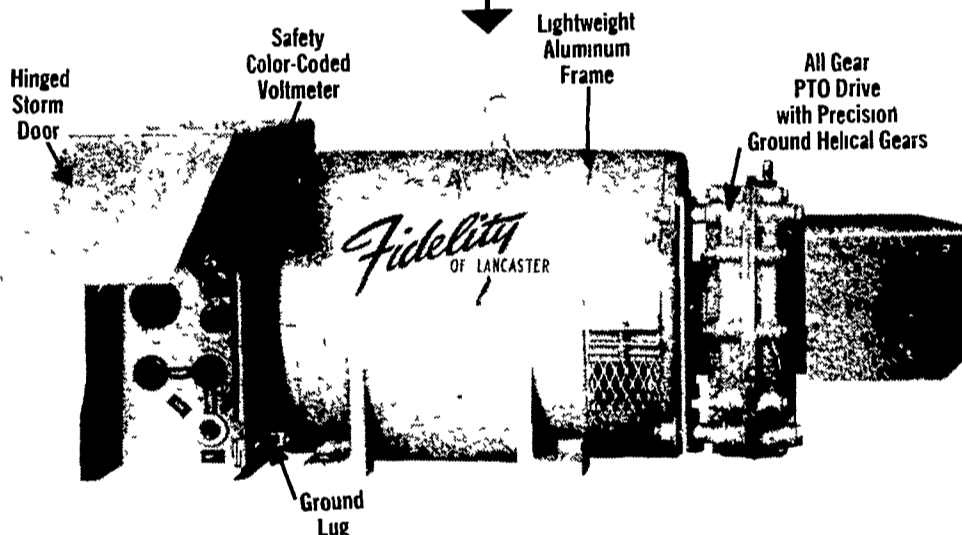
"We are always trying to improve our operation with new methods," he related. "It is the only way you can stay ahead."

David has had many other accomplishments during the past as well as the ones mentioned and will probably continue to set records, but he has other outside interests also. In his "spare" time he plays softball with the Pioneer Grange of Topton and enjoys bowling, roller skating, and hunting.

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