

FFA boosted his farming interest

By DIETER KRIEG STEWARTSTOWN -- Seventeen-year old Dean Miller has an interest in farming because that's what he grew-up with. He became dedicated to agriculture because of his membership in the Kennard-Dale High School FFA Chapter.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Miller, Stewartstown, young Miller has taken vocational agriculture courses since the seventh grade. He has enjoyed each year of it and is already realizing that he will miss school when he graduates in mid June of this year. FFA has meant a lot to the York County youth. Farming has taken on new meanings because of it.

FFA, according to Miller, is more than education. It's a way of growing up and maturing; of developing character and judgement. It helps to find and refine interests, build careers, leadership, and awareness.

One of the most important benefits Miller has received through the FFA program is the ability to converse more easily in front of groups. As a member of the parliamentary procedures

team, he has gained some confidence in speaking, he says. He served his chapter and county FFA group as secretary last year and has also had the office of sentinel.

Miller appreciates the FFA program because of the friends he has been able to make because of it. In addition, he has been able to participate in numerous events, contests, and tours. They've combined fun with education.

The two men who are largely responsible for Miller's refined agricultural development are Ralph Travis and Charlie Wright, vocational agriculture instructors at Kennard-Dale High School. Aside from the usual courses of learning, Travis and Wright have included field trips in their students' study programs. An example is a visit to various test plots put out by commercial or research interests. Students thereby have the opportunity to see first-hand how various crops, chemicals, fertilizers, or soils perform. They also learn why performances differ and how they might apply different

techniques to their individual operations.

A bonus in the FFA program is that there are opportunities to travel to faraway places such as Kansas City and even abroad. Although Miller hasn't had the chance to take part in the FFA exchange (student) program, he has been to Kansas City for the National FFA Convention.

While a member of the parliamentary procedures team, Miller and company placed first in the county, area, and region. A variety of complications just prior to the state contest caused the big state prize to slip out of the team's reach.

The young man has also been on the meat judging team, placing as second high individual in that contest last year. Some of his experience for that event has come from his interest and work with both beef cattle and hogs. During 1977 he fattened 41 market hogs. The family raises steers as well, with many of the caretaking responsibilities falling on the Kennard-Dale senior.

A former delegate to FFA Week at Penn State, Miller has also had projects in corn

and hogs. He has kept records on all of his projects and his efforts were recognized this month by the high school when he was named senior of the month. His agricultural record figured strongly in that reward.

A year ago, when his FFA chapter held their annual awards banquet, Miller was the recipient of the scholarship and crop production honors.

Miller's parents farm approximately 800 acres in southern York County, and in years to come, Dean hopes to become the operator of his own farm. Until then, he's figuring on continuing to work with his father. A close-knit family, the Millers have all of their immediate family members within just a few miles of them.

When the day comes that young Miller will strike it out on his own, crops, steers and hogs will probably figure uppermost in his inventory. That's what he's involved with now and he likes it enough to want to keep at it. He thinks he'll also follow his father's footsteps when it comes to planting crops. That would mean mostly



FFA has given Dean Miller of York County the opportunity to develop casual interests at home into what he now knows for sure he wants as a career.

corn, with smaller acreages of wheat, barley and soybeans. The way Miller has it figured, he would like to raise the crops he needs to feed his livestock, and then sell whatever is left over.

Miller believes that the current farm strike won't get too much accomplished. While admitting that prices aren't "excellent," he maintains they're sufficient to get by on. He looks to his

agricultural future with enough optimism to want to face the risks. He says he's not looking for big profits, just enough to live on. There are other rewards to farming besides money, the young man believes. The rewards he finds in farming include the privilege of being your own boss, living close to work, being out in the country, and working with

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