

Dennis Brubaker: American Farmer Degree winner

Pencil is a farmer's most important equipment

By DIETER KRIEG

LEBANON — The pencil is the most important piece of equipment a farmer can own, and also the least expensive, says Dennis Brubaker, 20, who will receive the American Farmer Degree in Kansas City this coming week. According to Brubaker, a full-time agribusiness employee and part-time farmer, too many farmers don't regard the pencil as an important management tool. "They let the salesmen do the figuring, and a salesman will figure it his way, not yours," the young man observed.

Brubaker, one of five children born to Mr. and Mrs. J. Carl Brubaker,

Lebanon R7, lives with his parents on their 100-acre, 60-cow dairy farm. He works full-time as a feed mixer at Mark Hershey's mill, and is also involved with some of the chores on the farm, including his own pig-fattening operation.

Receiving the American Farmer Degree - the highest award bestowed on members of the FFA - rates as one of the highlights of Brubaker's membership in the association. Noting that he would have liked to have earned the coveted degree in the area of agricultural production, he concedes that such an expectation would have been unrealistic since he is only a part-time farmer. He figures his work and responsibilities at the mill

played a larger role in his having earned the distinctive degree. It is bestowed upon only a select few of the FFA's membership, which stands at more than 500,000, nationally. A prerequisite for the award is that the candidate must have received his state degree. Brubaker received his - the Keystone Degree - in 1974, during his junior year at Cedar Crest High School.

A 1975 graduate of the school's vocational agriculture program, Brubaker served his FFA Chapter as secretary, vice president, and president. He was also active in individual and team contests.

One of Brubaker's most significant achievements came in late 1975 when he

won first place in a tractor driving contest involving contestants from 13 states. That took place in Springfield, Mass. In addition, the young man has excelled in public speaking and soil judging and has earned a mechanics award building a truck body, including sides.

The FFA, says Brubaker, has been a source of encouragement for him, especially when it comes to developing leadership abilities.

Believing that the FFA can do much for those who care enough to make the most of it, the young Lebanon County farmer stresses that FFA'ers and 4-H'ers alike should "keep their feet on the ground." He advises that members should work towards goals and success with their lives, not just awards.

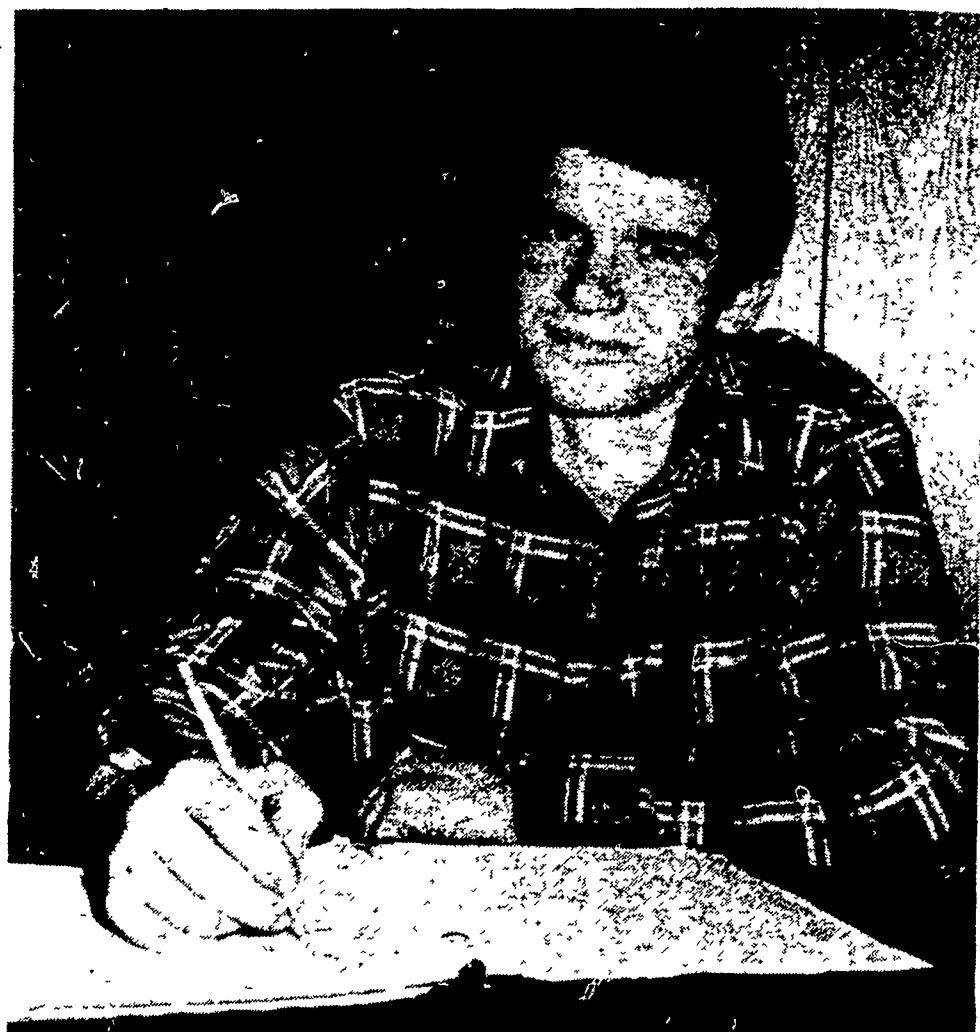
Brubaker spends much of his time and efforts at the mill, where his responsibilities include feed mixing, noting ingredient

inventories, and dispatching trucks. He has been employed there since shortly after his graduation from high school. As a part-time farmer, Brubaker feeds out 1500 pigs per year. He has been doing that for a little over a year. He had previously worked with breeding stock, having had as many as 30 sows.

A member of the Midway Church of the Brethren, where he is president of the choir and a former president of the youth group, Dennis Brubaker is the second of five children. An older brother, Kirby, 22, is an accountant. Ronald, 18, works with his father on the home farm. Jere, 17, is a senior at Cedar Crest High School and part-time mechanic at a nearby Ford dealership. Sharon, 13, is in the 8th grade.

Although he is uncertain as to what his future holds, the 20-year old American Farmer Degree winner has some firm opinions about agriculture. Strongly favoring the concept of

privately-owned, independent family farming operations, he opinionizes that large agribusiness interests are eroding that type of farming. He would also like to see less government involvement and interference with agriculture. He believes that if a farmer keeps a sharp pencil at hand, and uses it, his opportunities for profits and private enterprise will be increased.



American Farmer Degree recipient Dennis Brubaker of Lebanon says the pencil is the most important and cheapest piece of equipment a farmer can have. Brubaker is a part-time farmer, feeding out 1500 piggs per year, while also holding a full-time job at a Lebanon County feed mill.

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