

Elementary children learn about agriculture

ELVERSON — Children at the Robeson Elementary School are learning about agriculture this week from Twin Valley High School vocational agriculture students who are involved with agriculture on a first-hand basis. The instructors for the elementary students are all members of the Twin Valley Chapter of the Future Farmers of America (FFA) who are conducting the agriculture class for the elementary school children as part of the FFA's "Food For America" program, the organization's effort to better rural-urban understanding.

"Food for America" is designed to improve leadership abilities in FFA members while communicating the story of modern agriculture to elementary school children. Parents of the youngsters are also included in the new materials, with some of the activities requiring the child to take a problem or two home for parental input, thereby gaining the attention of the adults.

Chapter members and instructors serve as discussion leaders in the classroom, utilizing a set of instructional resource materials that includes an activity resource book containing ten duplicating masters good to make several hundred copies of the educational games included. Elementary school teachers will be able to utilize the book to provide their classes with a complete unit on agriculture — how

food gets from the farm to the table.

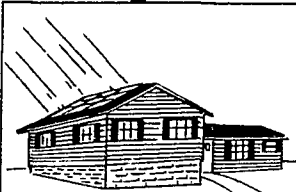
The entire "Food For America" project is co-sponsored through the National FFA Foundation, Inc., by three agricultural businesses: American Breeders Service, Division of W.R. Grace and Company; J I Case, A Tenneco Company, and Mobay Chemical Corporation. Funds from the sponsoring companies and from the FFA Foundation General Fund have been used to develop and distribute resource materials and to offset the costs of distributing the film.

The FFA appears to be in a uniquely favorable position to tackle the issue of improving producer-consumer understanding and people's understanding of agriculture. With over 507,000 members across the nation in 9000 high schools, they are able to provide the human contact to many individuals, right along with the visual and printed information.

"We are concerned that so few young people understand where their food comes from," says Twin Valley Food For America chairman Lewis Kohl. Our members are well qualified to help elementary school children learn about agriculture because of the knowledge and experience we've gained in the vocational agriculture courses and by actual experience on the farm and in local agricultural businesses."

Following the classroom instruction and film on agriculture, chapter members have arranged to bring several farm animals and other agricultural displays to the school. Children will have an opportunity to see and touch live farm animals and farm crops. For many it will be the first exposure to the animals and crops that provide their daily food.

CONSUMER GUIDELINES



Solar Designs
When building or purchasing a home keep in mind there are two types of solar designs available. "active" which implies the use of solar equipment such as roof top collectors and "passive" which uses the house itself as a solar collector. In a passive system the structure is designed to admit the sun's heat in winter, but to provide shade for summer. Proper planning for the use of solar energy can help reduce your utility costs.

Md. farmers leaning towards no-till and minimum tillage

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — If doing is believing, then Maryland farmers are putting more and more faith in no-till and minimum tillage planting techniques.

According to a survey by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, last year 62 per cent of Maryland's corn acreage and 52 per cent of its soybean acreage was planted by these methods.

Both techniques are preferred by soil conservationists over conventional mold board plowing. Says State Conservationist Gerald R. Calhoun, "no-till and minimum tillage help reduce erosion and conserve moisture. In most cases, they also reduce fuel consumption. With today's economy and climate of environmental concern, these are advantages farmers can't afford to overlook."

With no-till, the crop is planted using a sharp coulter followed by a small chisel — a special planting technique which inserts the seed into the soil without plowing. A herbicide is used to kill any winter cover crop or weeds which might compete with the new plants for moisture. Meanwhile, the old vegetation anchors the soil and keeps it from being exposed to the erosive forces of wind and rain.

In fact, no-till farming can reduce soil loss up to 75 per cent or more. On slopes, Calhoun recommends that planting also be done on or near the contour.

While most Maryland acreage is still planted using minimum (33 per cent) or conventional (47 per cent) tillage techniques, Calhoun says he expects more farmers to turn to no-till to help meet state and federal water quality requirements which call for the reduction of sediment reaching streams.

Yields obtained by Maryland growers have demonstrated that no-till will work on any kind of soil, except land with poor drainage.

"It takes more managerial ability for someone to make a go of using no-till," says Calhoun. "You have to be careful about the chemicals you use and when and how you plant. But the savings in terms of resources and dollars is well worth the effort."

Pa. broiler placements up

HARRISBURG — Placements of broiler chicks in the commonwealth during the week ending April 28 were 12 per cent above the corresponding week a year ago, according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service.

The placements were 2,249,000, two per cent below the previous week. Average placements during the past nine weeks were 13 per cent above a year earlier.

Placements of broiler chicks in the 21 key poultry-producing states were 83,270,000, one per cent above the previous week and

nine per cent above the same week a year earlier. Average placements during the past nine weeks were ten per cent above a year ago.

The number of broiler-fryers slaughtered in Pennsylvania under federal inspection during the week ending April 18 was 1,427,000, with an average weight of 4.07 pounds.

Ah, Nuts!

Contrary to popular belief, a peanut isn't a nut — it's a legume.

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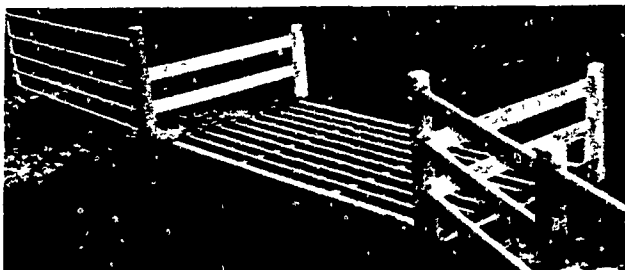
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