

# Energy conservation theme of Berks Co. tour

BY LAUREL SCHAEFFER  
Staff Correspondent

HAMBURG—Energy conservation was the theme of this year's conservation tour sponsored by the Berks County Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service, Conservation District, Cooperative Extension Service, and Farmers Home Administration, on September 14.

Featured in the day long tour were visits to several Berks County farms, which were experimenting or successfully using alternate sources of energy. These practices included a solar grain dryer, an evaporation cooling system, methane gas production from manure, drainage ditches with underground pipes used to trap excess soil water which is released in dryer soil con-

ditions and a wind turbine, used to generate electricity.

The Mehrkam Wind Turbine, designed and manufactured by Terrence and Douglas Mehrkam, Hamburg, R2, is used to supply a very substantial amount of the electricity used by their various enterprises. This includes Energy Development Company, Windsor Nursery, and their farm enterprise where they operate a 12,000 hen layer operation.

Being completely automatic, the wind turbines are built in four sizes ranging from 40 to 225 Kilowatts maximum output. They are set up and tied into power lines after an electrical meter used to measure the amount of electricity bought from power companies so as not to be charged to the owner. Ex-

cess electricity not being consumed by the turbine owner is automatically sold back to the utility company.

Mehrkam stressed however that the turbines are not a system for total independence. "The wind doesn't blow all the time," he explained. But it was also noted that there is more available wind in winter when a larger amount of electricity would be consumed, especially if electric heat were used.

The turbines need a minimum of nine mile per hour winds to generate electricity. Mehrkam also commented that they are practical for farm operations and are very reliable. Their yearly maintenance consists of approximately five dollars worth of grease a year. "Utilities companies have been very cooperative with our Turbines," he added.

The rather high initial costs can be offset by the many tax advantages available and the great decrease in commercial electrical usage. Mehrkam estimated the average payback period would probably be seven years and the life of the turbines should be a very minimum of ten.

The Mehrkam wind turbine can be built for under 700 dollars per kilowatt, which is much lower than other turbines on the market, Mehrkam also mentioned. He noted that the larger turbine will have a lower cost per kilowatt.

Other hosts included, Mountain View Farms, Donald Landis, Fred Bohn and Sons, and Winfield J. Finkbner.



Participants in the Berks County Conservation Tour included Clyde Bauer and Duane Bysher of the Soil Conservation Service. Douglas Mehrkam is part-owner of the Mehrkam wind turbine, which was a feature of the tour, as it uses a minimum of nine mile per hour winds to generate electricity. Also pictured is Henry Bohn of the Agricultural Stabilization Service.

## Solanco Fair

(Continued from Page 13)

the Ayrshire show, with Ken Findley showing the senior and grand champion and the senior reserve champion. Twelve-year-old Anita Brommer had the junior champion and reserve junior champion and reserve grand champion.

Other results include:

### Junior Calf

1. Anita Brommer, Conestoga; 2. Joanne Findley, Willow Street.

### Senior Calf

1. Karen Long, Willow Street.

### Junior Yearling

1. Anita Brommer, Conestoga; 2. Christina Esbenschade, Quarryville.

### Senior Yearling

1. Kenneth Findley, Willow Street.

### Two-Year-Old

1. Joanne Findley, Willow Street.

### Three and Four-Year-Old

1. Joanne Findley, Willow Street; 2. Ken Findley, Willow Street.

### Aged Cow

1. Ken Findley, Willow Street.

Ken Findley showed the best dairy herd, with Joanne Findley and Karen Long showing the best product of dam. Ken Findley took first place in dam-daughter and Joanne Findley took second. Joanne Findley and Karen Long also showed the best open get.



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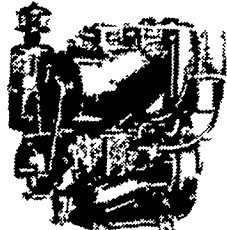
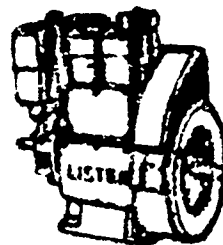
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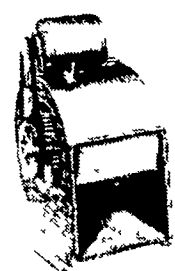
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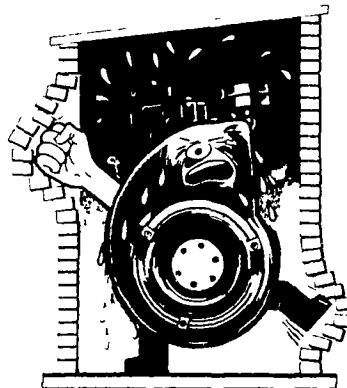
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