

FFA band plans musical variety

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—This Fall 88 members of the Future Farmers of America will double as musicians when the FFA Band comes together to perform at the National Convention. The band members are chosen from over 500 applicants representing 42 states. After two days of intense practice, the band will perform at all eight sessions of the convention.

The National FFA Band is being sponsored by the Carnation Company of Los Angeles, California, this year, as a special project of the National FFA Foundation, Inc. The National FFA Band was first organized in 1947. Since that time competition for the honor of playing in the band has steadily increased.

Under the direction of Roger Heath, former Director of California Polytechnic State University Bands, the FFA Band has gained a reputation for its polished performances even though bandsmen have only two days of practice together prior to their first performance.

Heath, now in his eleventh year as director of the National FFA Band, was presented the FFA Honorary American Farmer Degree in recognition of his dedicated service to the FFA.

"Band members are selected on the basis of tape

recorded auditions or competitive auditions in their State FFA Band with supporting recommendations from their high school band directors," explains Heath who spends many hours during the summer selecting FFA members to fill the 88-piece band. In addition, all applicants are required to list their musical experience and activities such as solo and ensemble performances, special honors and special experience such as drum majoring or baton twirling. Chris Klinedinst of Wrightsville, Pa. was chosen to play the baritone.

Chris and other FFA members who play in the band will arrive in Kansas City on Sunday before the convention starts so they can begin practicing. "Although we sometimes send band members the more difficult music ahead of time, it still takes a lot of practice to get ready for our first convention hall performance on Wednesday morning," says Heath. "We will spend many hours over the preceding weekend practicing the music and working out marching style," he explains. "We'll also practice all Monday and Tuesday, and the rest of the week we'll keep in shape by short practice sessions and concert performances." Two other men, Phillip D.

Wharton and Roland Rutz will assist Heath with the Band. Rutz of the Montgomery Public Schools in Montgomery, Minnesota, will assist Heath in practice sessions working with the brass, woodwind and percussion instruments. Wharton, who is Director of Bands at Lake Gibson High School, Lakeland, Florida, will serve as assistant director.

During the convention week the FFA Band will play at seven sessions. "We'll play a wide variety of music," says Heath, "including marches, rock tunes, selections from Broadway musicals, serious music, and mood music. We'll also have some of the latest hits," adds Heath, who likes to "think young" when planning music for the youthful convention crowd.

Dominican official tours Sussex County

LAUREL, Del. - A senior civil servant from Dominica, Sylvester Joseph, Permanent Secretary for Local Government and Community Development, recently visited Sussex county as an official guest of the University of Delaware.

Joseph, whose 300 square mile, 80,000 population West Indian island nation became independent of Great Britain in 1976, toured Blades, Laurel, and Delmar to hear about the Delaware Extension Service's community resource development work with local governments.

Dominica, which is largely agricultural, is exploring the possibility of setting up local governments in the near future. Under the British

system, most decisions had been made on the national level.

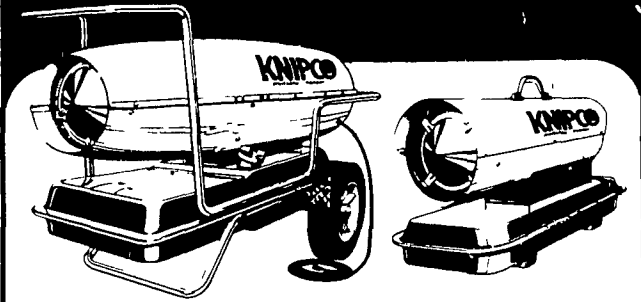
The official also established contact with agencies that might provide disaster relief to the island, which was devastated by Hurricane David.

At the same time, his observations of a Sussex mobile home park and county homes with window solar units gave him ideas for rebuilding.

Sylvester's visit was arranged under the auspices of the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Center for International Studies at the Cornell University.

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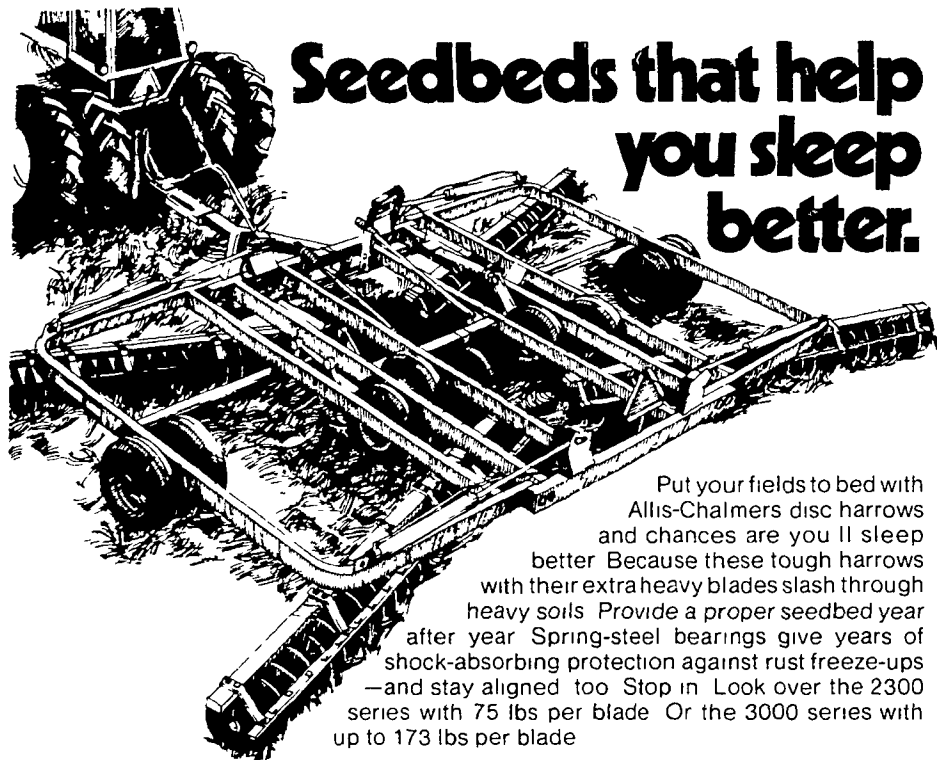
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