



Dale Gerber and Randy Hertzog, a ninth grade student, go over a project book together as preparation for some future work. Gerber works at

Warwick High School where he is advisor to the FFA chapter.

Gerber supplies leadership to Warwick

LITITZ — After being plagued twice by the threat of losing the vocational agriculture department, Warwick High School now has a vo-ag and Future Farmer of America program that has turned around and is gaining ground.

Still one of the smallest chapters in the county, the FFA chapter has grown from 34 to 55 students in the past year, with the freshman group filling space to capacity.

A lot of the credit for the change in the program has to go to Dale Gerber, vo-ag teacher and FFA advisor. Gerber, however is quick to pass on the credit. He acknowledges that the program was "exceedingly weak" when he took the job, but he credits the community, Superintendent

John Bonfield and the school board for their support and the decision to "do it right and turn the program around. The decision to keep the program was made before I was hired." Furthermore, he notes, "I receive excellent cooperation, here, the most I have ever experienced." We have really good quality students, and we get excellent cooperation with the guidance counselors."

Gerber said he really enjoyed the challenge at Warwick and feels that the vocational agriculture program is really meeting a need today. "We try to meet the students where they are. We are vocational, and we constantly talk careers. Research shows that 35 percent of all occupations in Lancaster County are ag-related. The one

requirement for someone to take the course and join FFA is to express an occupational interest. We are occupational oriented."

Gerber pointed out that there are nine high schools and three vo-tech schools in Lancaster County offering vo-ag courses, adding, "We have the most in any county in the state." While he is the only teacher at Warwick with one teacher's aide, he notes that most districts are multiple teaching units. "In other counties the single teacher is predominant. We have a very proficient system in Lancaster County and it is self-perpetuating." He said the very high standards and performances by several of the large chapters serve to help other chapters strive to achieve more.

He said Lancaster

County's unique position as one of the most productive counties in the state, leading in many agricultural fields, contributes to the outstanding support FFA receives in the county.

Gerber graduated from Penn State in 1964 and taught at Donegal and Gettysburg for short times, and at Northern York School District for 10 years. He also spent two years teaching agricultural engineering at Penn State.

He explained that there (Turn to Page B9)

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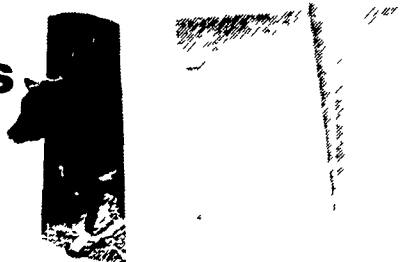
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