



Here students Sue Albright, left, and Lisa Mumma both from Manheim, egg the peeps on in their pecking efforts.

School is for the birds

BY PAT KAUFFMAN

MANHEIM — Mary Murphy has hatched up a plan to keep her sixth grade students busy and involved through the last trying weeks of the school year.

Mary teaches a sixth grade class at H.C. Burgard Elementary School in Manheim. For the past four years, she has been teaching a unit on embryology during the last 9 weeks of school.

The unit centers around the 4-H embryology project. And the incubator and the eggs are placed in the classroom by Nancy Meyers, Lancaster 4-H agent. But what Mary does from there is the special part.

Before teaching in Manheim, Mary had opportunity to observe an embryology unit used in the Harrisburg school system. And from her observations of that unit, and a lot of personal input, she has fashioned a teaching unit that encompasses the whole of classroom activity.

Upon entering the room, the visitor notes the busy activity of a cluster of youngsters. The kids are huddled around an incubator containing 14 eggs, each numbered. Mary explains that each student is assigned an egg.

Hatching time was near, and the students were as fretful and anxious as new parents. Each egg was observed for the progress its occupant was making at the job of pecking. And one egg was causing considerable

concern due to the blood that was visible. That egg was according to the students, in trouble. Mary reminded the class that death was a part of life, and the observer was made immediately aware of the avenues this amazing teacher uses to direct relevant information into her students minds.

Mary starts her teaching unit 3 weeks prior to the arrival of the incubator.

During these weeks, the students work with graphs and charts, learn the terminology connected with the project, and talk about the life cycle of the chick. In addition, they are each required to compare the life cycle of the chick to that of one other animal. Mary says that the project uses all of the skills and subjects normally taught in the sixth grade. And it uses them in a way the kids find fascinating and enjoyable. Therefore, she says, they are more receptive to what they learn.

Once the eggs are placed, the students take turns rotating the eggs and the eggs which are numbered, are assigned to students as 'their' egg. During the hatching process, the eggs are candled daily to determine their progress. And when an egg appears in trouble, the class opens it and discusses the problems that contributed to the loss of the chick. Jars with embryos in all stages of development are on the classroom shelves, and the students compare the vascular system of a healthy embryo

to that of the egg with problems.

Toward the end of the three week incubation period, the students show all the symptoms of first time parenthood. Pacing in front of the incubator is not uncommon. And classwork then revolves around writing poems about the chicks, and continuing graph and chart work on the developmental stages.

As soon as the first chick hatches, the group will isolate it from all the others to hatch later. During the last three weeks of the project, the group will observe the inherent behavior characteristics of the isolated peep as opposed to the behavior of the group. And near the end of the three weeks, the youngsters will place the peep that has previously been held in solitary confinement with the group and the class will discuss the behavior characteristics of a group. This they will relate to the problems they will face next year as they enter the junior high. This one aspect of the project alone is valuable to the youngsters because it gives them a chance to vocalize their fears and learn to deal with the problems of being in a new environment.

At the end of the unit,

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Field work still trailing last year

HARRISBURG — Commonwealth farmers made headway during the week ending May 12, even with traces of rain throughout the week. Farm reporters rated nearly six days suitable for fieldwork statewide. However, southern Pennsylvania farmers only had five suitable days, according to the Crop Reporting Service.

Field activities included fixing fences; spreading lime, manure and fertilizer; discing; plowing; spraying; pruning fruit trees; cutting asparagus; setting cabbage plants; planting corn,

potatoes, alfalfa, oats, soybean and sweet corn.

Statewide, reports of fuel supplies were mostly adequate to surplus. LP gas was rated 95 percent adequate and five percent surplus. Diesel fuel and gasoline were both rated at 93 percent adequate and seven percent surplus.

Statewide, soil moisture is rated mostly adequate. Soils in all areas were reported approximately equal, at 84 percent and 86 percent adequate moisture.

Plowing is 77 percent complete, behind last year's 85 percent. Spring plowing stands at 80 percent done in the north, 79 percent in the central area and 68 percent done in the south.

Oats are 84 percent sown, compared to the 90 percent sown in 1979. The percentage of oats sown varies from 80 percent in the south, to 86 percent in central counties and 90 percent in the south.

Potato planting is still lagging at 49 percent, behind last year's 63 percent. The northern counties report about 25 percent complete, with central counties standing at 66 percent planted and the southern section of the Commonwealth reporting a little better than 50 percent planted.

Corn planting, now at 30 percent, compared to 38 percent complete last year at this time and an historic average of 29 percent. Progress of corn planting is 24 percent in the north, 30 percent in the central counties and 39 percent planted in the southern area of Pennsylvania.

Soybean planting statewide stands at 10 percent, compared to seven per-

cent in 1979. However, the major portion has occurred in the northern counties where 21 percent of the crop is planted. Central and southern counties report less than five percent complete in soybean planting.

The winter grains continue mostly in the pre-boot stage. However, barley is 27 percent booted, the same as last year and six percent headed which compares to 12 percent in 1979. Wheat is 13 percent booted compared to last year's 30 percent.

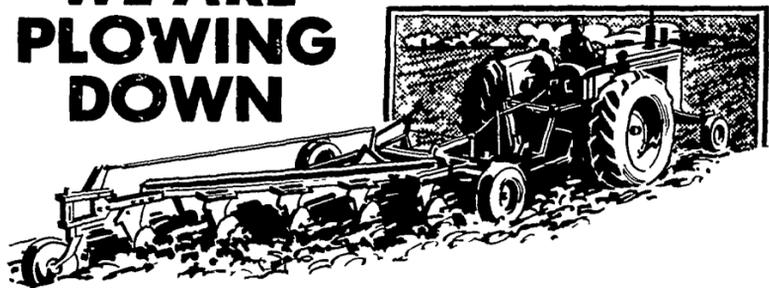
Alfalfa hay stands are reported in 2/3 good and 1/3 fair condition, with insect and spraying activity increasing. First cutting of alfalfa is beginning. Clover stands are 2/3 good and 1/3 fair condition. The amount of feed being obtained from pasture is mostly average.

Peaches are reported at 73 percent in or past full bloom which compares to 83 percent last year. Cherries are reported at 82 percent in or past full bloom, the same as last year. Apples are 55 percent in or past full bloom, slightly behind the 62 percent in 1979. Reports of scattered frost last week may have hurt some spots, however, there were no serious reports at this printing. Good progress was reported for vegetable planting of sweet corn, cabbage and green peas.

Wear protective gear while operating your tractor: safety shoes and bump cap, respirator when spraying or if conditions are dusty, ear protectors if tractor is cabless.

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