

Try Australia for a great vacation

BY R. RHEINHEIMER
EPHRATA — Enthusiasm, optimism, a sense of humor, and good business sense, that's what I found when I recently visited Australia and New Zealand. It was delightful.

That enthusiasm goes a long way to make a trip enjoyable, but more than that, the scenery and sights visited are very fascinating. For example, there are sheep dogs so well trained to handle sheep that they will actually run across the backs of a flock of sheep to move the front ones along, and then retreat to the rear to bring up the stragglers.

The visit started in Sydney, and while that city is certainly fascinating, I couldn't wait to get out into the country and onto a farm. We flew into a small country town called Albury, and were met by Neville Lowe, the owner of a sheep and cattle property. Lowe took me to his station, or farm, to see at first hand how one farms in this area.

He told us that he and his brother own a very small property—only 1200 acres. That is small by Australian standards, but still enables the brothers to raise around 2000 Merino sheep, and 120 head of beef cows.

The sheds (barns) were not very big or modern, but actually were not used to house animals. There was a bit of hay stored in one of the sheds, and another had farm machinery in it. The primary one, however, was the shearing shed—a shed approximately 40 feet wide and 60 feet long. There are holding pens at one end, with a shearing and grading area at the other.

During shearing season the Lowe brothers, with help from neighbors, shear up to 200 sheep a day, moving them through two chutes to the shearers. There they are shorn, the wool graded and baled, and the sheep turned loose again.

It all looks a bit primitive, but you can be assured that the production line of sheep shearing is very efficient indeed.

Through a very inexpensive irrigation scheme, the Lowes raise some crops not normally grown in that part of Australia. They irrigate several paddocks (fields) and grow grain sorghum and oats. All in all, it is a very fascinating place to visit.

Lowe, along with his neighbors, has organized a "Farm Home Hosting"

program, so that visitors to Australia can actually stay overnight at a farm home, if they choose, to visit with, and observe the life of an Australian farmer. Almost every American who visits Australia reports this as one of the chief highlights of their tour.

Following the visit to a farm, the local community also has a "Country Affair" for visitors. This is a gathering of local folks and visitors that includes a demonstration of sheep shearing and handling, country music, and excellent food. Australian humor, hospitality and enthusiasm are very much in evidence at these country affairs, and everyone has a very good time.

The Australian English is 98 percent understandable to an American, and that two percent that is different makes a very delightful twist.

Fields, for instance, are called paddocks. A farm is a property, or a station. Wells are called bores, a pig farm is called a piggery, and

barns are called sheds.

The differences aren't much, and usually one can catch on without having to have things explained, but those little twists do tend to keep one alert.

Some of the Australian cities and towns remind one very much of American Western towns of a century ago. The streets are very wide, and dusty, and you almost think that you're going to see a sign that says "Last Chance Saloon."

The shops are modern, though, and almost all air conditioned inside. The economy of Australia has its ups and downs, similar to ours, and the standard of living is universally high.

One just can't help getting a bit enthusiastic, when you talk to the people, and when you read and hear about all the opportunities available in Australia. Just to read the newspapers and to see all the advertisements for new ideas and areas opening up gives one a feeling of newness and enthusiasm.

Do visit Australia if you possibly can.

Berks Conservation Tour coming Oct. 16

LEESPORT — Participants in the annual conservation tour in Berks County will get an early taste of Christmas. The first stop on this year's tour, scheduled for October 16, will be the Tom DeLong Christmas Tree Farm, in Brecknock Township.

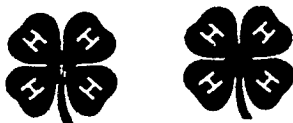
While visiting the well-known farm, visitors will be able to see many types of conservation practices, including a pond and tree plantings of all sizes.

From there, the conservation tour will travel to the Sam Schlouch family farm where contour strips and cropland terraces help to keep the land in top-notch condition. The Schlouch farm raises tobacco and buckwheat.

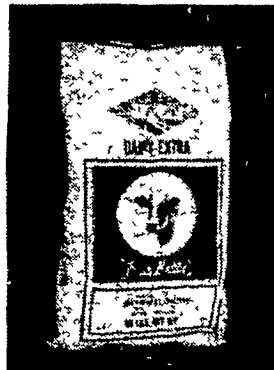
Everything goes up after the stop at the Schlouch farm, with a climb up the Hopewell Fire Tower next on the agenda. Lunch will precede a tour of the French Creek State Park.

The final stop on the tour will be the Joanna Furnace Historical site where the tour guests will see a sawmill in operation.

Cost of the bus tour, including a box lunch, is \$8 per person. All reservations are needed by October 10.



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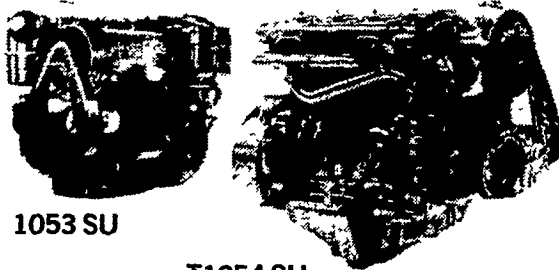
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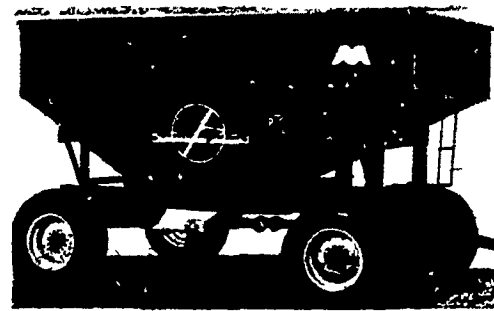
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