

Foreign ag lending officers visit York County

BY JOYCE BUPP
Staff Correspondent

YORK — A delegation of foreign agriculture lending officers recently took a look at southcentral Pennsylvania farm technology and economics during a month-long training visit to the United States.

York's Farm Credit offices helped host the 34 agriculture loan specialists taking part in the USDA's Small Farmer Credit Distribution and Administration Seminar. Most of the participants represented provincial government ag lending programs in countries of Asia and Africa, including Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia and Nigeria.

According to Ed Heindel, York office senior credit analyst who hosted the seminar participants during their visit, the foreign loan officers were impressed with American farm technology and techniques of production. However, he added that they see little future in angling their home agriculture systems toward massive mechanization.

Most of the third world

countries, and their ag credit programs, are aimed at peasant-type farmers, usually tenants on government-owned land of only an acre or two per family. Loans, for the most part, must be extended without any collateral backing and large percentages of payback defaults are common.

The lending specialists, who must sometimes also act in advisory roles similar to a county agent, are searching for ways to generate cash flows for their clients, to better improve food production, farm family standards of living and a more workable farm credit system of government financial aid.

In their studies of the American farm Credit cooperative method of financing, the ag lending students were especially interested in learning ways to improve the speed of loan processing. One Nigerian, for instance, worried that it now takes three or four months until he can get loan money to clients borrowing to raise their year's crops.

Heindel added that the loan officers were also impressed with the authority given to Farm Credit field representatives at various levels, and with the numerous levels of government assistance through USDA financial aid programs.

While guests of the Farm Credit office, the busload of foreign banking representatives spent one afternoon at the 40-cow dairy operation of York Production Credit chairman Rolla Lehman II, Dillsburg. During their tour to the hundred-acre Lehman family farm, the visitors threw dozens of questions at county agent John Smith, York Soil Conservation's Riggs Harwell and W.D. Manifold representing the offices of ASCS.

As one way of showing his foreign guests how area farmers locally market some of their production, Lehman prepared a refreshment buffet of York County foods, including area specialties fresh apple cider and potato chips.

During their stay in the York area, the visitors also met with representatives of the Farmers Home Administration, Lancaster's Hamilton Bank, Agway, Inc., the Pennfield Corporation and paid a visit to the York Fair.

For two weeks prior to their Pennsylvania tour, the ag lenders received intensive background



York Production Credit chairman Rolla Lehman II, center wearing hat, hosted foreign ag lenders studying farm financing methods. To his right is Mrs. Lehman and USDA tutor and host Professor H.B. Clark.

briefings on the American government and methods of agriculture financing through both the farm cooperatives and private commercial systems. Their crash course on government

and economics was held in Washington D.C. and tutored by Professor H.B. Clark of the University of Florida, also associated with the USDA's food and resources economics department.

The visitors wrapped up their stay in the United States with a week of further studies on cooperative agriculture financing at the Baltimore Farm Credit system offices.

Lancaster poultrymen to hold annual meeting

NEW HOLLAND — The annual banquet meeting of the Lancaster County Poultry Association will be held on Thursday, October 30 at 6:30 p.m. in the Historic Strasburg Restaurant.

The evening promises to be very entertaining with the group "Still On The Hill" providing the music.

A brief business meeting will include the election of four directors. There will be a drawing for door prizes for members. Membership fee of \$10 can be paid the night of the banquet.

Members are asked to secure tickets as early as possible so the Association has an accurate count of the number of people coming.

As in the past, farmers may purchase tickets from any one of the board members. You must have

your tickets prior to the night of the banquet. Cost of the ticket is \$9.75. Contact one of the board members for tickets.

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