

4-H, growing through the years

LANCASTER — In the early 1900's agricultural development was one of our nation's top priorities.

Extension workers quickly learned that one way to persuade a family to adopt new farming and home-making practices was by introducing these ideas to children of the household.

Seaman Knapp and Perry Holden, Extension pioneers, could point to decreased boll weevil damage, increased corn yields, and increased numbers of properly-preserved tomatoes as direct results of their work with boys' and girls' clubs. That's why, in 1914, the government invested in a new youth organization, 4-H, as one step in reaching optimum agricultural production. By supporting 4-H, the government contributed to its goal of becoming the first society in history that was not only able to feed itself, but produce a surplus as well.

Early 4-H Club members didn't just learn how to increase levels of agricultural production. They also learned responsibility, good citizenship, public speaking, and leadership, as they met to share information obtained from their vegetable garden or hog raising projects.

Today 4-H'ers still learn how to grow vegetables and raise hogs, but projects available to club members now range from cultural heritage, nutrition education, and cooking, to career exploration, wood-working, and embryology. "What's so great about the variety of 4-H projects," says Dr. Maurice Kramer, State 4-H Program Director for Pennsylvania, "is that they give boys and girls a chance to explore. The projects not only teach 4-H'ers practical lifelong skills, but also prepare them to accept future responsibilities as an adult."

In addition to measuring the dollar contribution 4-H projects make to the economy (for example, 4-H'ers in the Beef project produce more than \$100 million worth of meat), it is necessary to look beyond the

value of commodities produced and focus on human resources being developed.

Informal evaluations show that 4-H develops hard-to-measure human resources like self-esteem, confidence, and the ability to cope with stress. By providing opportunities for youth to experience success, whether by completing a tie-dye project, negotiating a bicycle safety course, or chairing a meeting, 4-H is helping to counteract feelings of hopelessness and disappointment which seem so prevalent among today's youth.

Studies of inner city, low-income areas show that when 4-H moves in, juvenile crime decreases. It costs at least \$17,000 per year to care for an institutionalized delinquent 4-H program.

Red meat production declines

HARRISBURG — Commercial red meat production in Pennsylvania during October totaled 92.3 million pounds, down six percent from October 1979.

Cattle slaughter at 72,800 head was up one percent while calf slaughter at 26,000 head was up 10 percent from last year. Hog slaughter at 292,500 head decreased 12 percent from a year ago.

The number of sheep and lambs slaughtered totaled 14,200 down nine percent

cost the federal government about \$13.00 per participant. It 4-H can continue to act as a deterrent to delinquency by engaging youth in constructive activities before they become involved in destructive ones, the return to the public in terms of human resources developed and money saved from avoiding institutionalization will be immeasurable.

And 4-H gives kids the opportunity to help their communities, as well as themselves. Typical community-pride projects have included cleaning up roadsides, visiting nursing home shut-ins, teaching horseback riding to the handicapped, and transforming vacant lots into mini-parks. The values of cooperation and teamwork gained from these ex-

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"In recent years, 4-H has convincingly proved itself as a valuable program for urban as well as rural areas, with projects available to every boy and girl from every ethnic group and socioeconomic class," Dr. Kramer states. In terms of educational value, 4-H is priceless. And if enrollment can prove worth, 4-H with its more than five million members, is the nation's largest non-school educational program for boys and girls.

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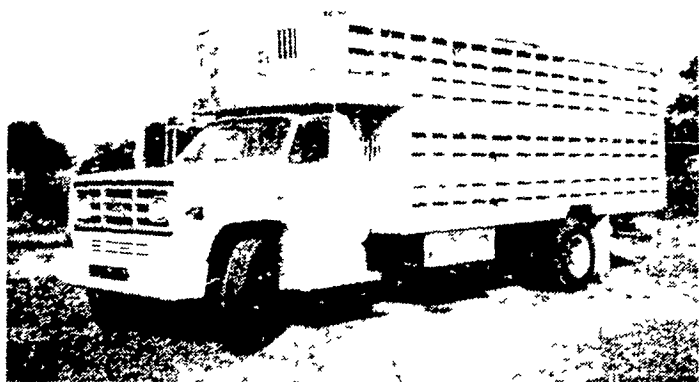
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