

# Grange asks expanded vo-ag programs

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, March 28, 1981—C19

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania State Grange Master Charles E. Wismer, Jr. is urging the State Department of Education to continue, and possibly expand the present vocational agriculture education program in the State's school systems.

This was the subject of a letter which Wismer wrote to Dr. Robert G. Scanlon, Secretary of Education, requesting that agriculture be made a top priority

in the vocational education program. His action was prompted by a recent meeting with members of the Department of Education, vocational agriculture teachers and House Majority Leader Samuel Hayes regarding the future of the vocational agriculture program, a growing concern to farmers in the state.

In past years, enrollment in vocational agriculture programs has dropped in comparison to other

fields. As a result, some schools have eliminated the program, many have made cuts.

Wismer said he would like to see more attention given to the program in this state because, "agriculture is the second largest industry in Pennsylvania," he said. "Its value to U.S. consumers is unequalled."

He added that education through vocational programs is essential because farming is becoming

increasingly complex, requiring more specialized skills.

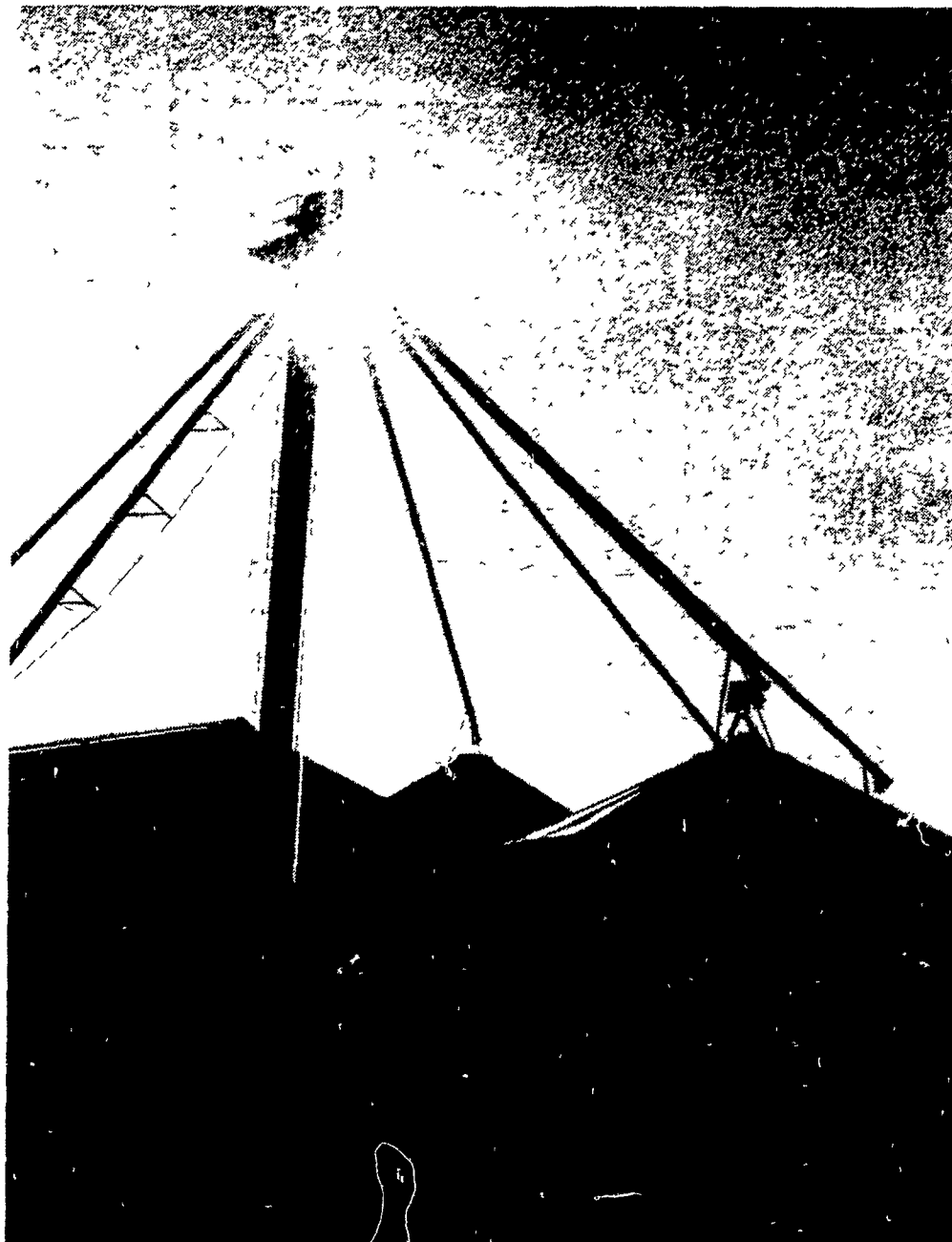
"There's so much more that a farmer needs to know now that he didn't 50 years ago," Wismer said. "He almost has to be a financial wizard."

The farming industry is becoming more like a big business, and in some areas, it's even becoming computerized. Young people who want to become farmers now need to have a

knowledge of marketing, finance, accounting, and much more."

Educating young people through the school system is the best way to help them to keep up with the rapidly changing research and technology in the farming industry, Wismer said.

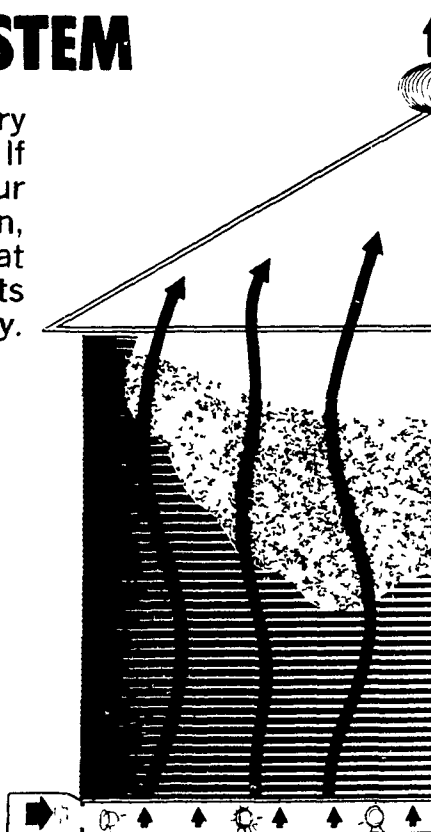
"The program provides good hands-on experience. It requires students to keep strict records, fill out regular reports and work on continuing projects."



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