## A steward of the soil at seventeen

BOWMANSVILLE - Already at just 17 years of age, Mark Weber, of R1 Mohnton, can be classified as a genuine steward of the soil.

A vo-ag transfer student at Garden Spot High School, New Holland, Mark is in his second year of farming 45 acres in the Bowmansville area.

And he does it with the most caring of principles of soil stewardship, which are generally ascribed to farmers many years his senior.

His example gives credence to the belief that such stewardship is something that one is born with and nurtures into deeper and deeper meaning much as the actual work with the land nurtures the bounty that springs forth each vear.

As he walks across the land and reaches down to grab a handful of the plowed earth, this caring clearly comes through. The contours and grassy strips that stretch off into the distance are strong testimony to his efforts.

Winner of this year's crop proficiency award of the Grassland FFA Chapter, Weber blends together a combination of classroom and cultivation.

"It gives me an opportunity to put a lot of things into practice which I'm able to learn in the classroom," he said.

He does a variety of cropping oats, clover in wheat to be followed by alfalfa and corn.

Like many other soil stewards, he already experienced some of the disappointments that can come and has already learned to balance them with an optimistic outlook.

"The corn was sort of discouraging last year," he said. "But I hope to have better yields

this year." And he expresses such optimism in a "colorful" way.

"There's nothing as nice as seeing a field of good, dark green coloring when the corn is growing," he explained.

"I just like to see hardy, healthy plants coming up through the soil.' But Weber's stewardship

policies extend beyond the soil to the tools he uses to work that soil.

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He's already acquired a good basic foundation of equipment purchased at sales. Most of it is about one to four years old.

"I want to keep it in good condition and use it later when I go

into dairying," he explained.

Thus, in addition to being a soil steward at 17, Weber already is clearly mapping out his future road to follow.

His father, Floyd, had a dairy herd until seiling out in 1978.

"I grew up with dairying and knew it was something that I wanted to do," he said.

The Webers still have some heifer stock, which they've been selling off when they become fresh. Mark has a couple of Holstein heifers and a year ago won an Ayrshire chain calf.

He figures that with his equipment and experience with cropping, he'll be better able to move. into dairying when the time comes and concentrate then on building a

It's a good bet that the same sound principles he's already applied in his cropping activities will be carried over into his upcoming dairying.

For even now, he's keeping his eye on such things as the advancing technology in embryo transfers.

"I find it sorta fascinating," he said.

"Getting as many calves out of your best cow is the way to go.

"I like to try new things. You gotta always be ready to try something new or else the job -\_any job - can get boring."

What a combination of philosophies. He's a Future Farmer with his feet firmly planted in a tradition of soil stewardship and his eyes firmly fixed toward helping to advance the dairy industry of tomorrow.—



Aiready at seventeen, Mark Weber, of R1 Mohnton, feels a close and caring association with the soil he works. A vo-ag student at area. Eventually, he plans to go into dairying.

Garden Spot High School in New Holland, he farms some 45 acres in the Bowmansville

## interested in conservation sci

LANCASTER - If you have a 14 to 16 year old boy or girl with an interest in conservation, why not send him/her to the Lancaster County Youth Conservation School? Sponsored jointly by the Lancaster County Conservation

District and Lancaster County forestry, survival, and orien-Federation of Sportsman Clubs, the week-long school is being held July 26-August 1, 1981 at the Northern Lancaster County Fish and Game Association.

Campers receive a wide variety of training and instruction in the areas of soil and water conservation, fish and wildlife management, land use planning,

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teering.

Cost of the week-long school is \$65 and the deadline for registering is June 15.

For more information, contact the Lancaster County Conservation District, Room 6, Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster, PA, 17601, or call (717) 299-5361.

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	1,500	5'4"	9'0''	7	1,388	486.00
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