

# It's time to cuddle a calf or love a lamb

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

WEST WILLOW — The sheer, joyful excitement of the experience showed in both their voices and their eyes.

It bubbled forth in their voices like 7-Up just poured into a glass on a warm, summer day.

The staccato squeals of delight and fascination were matched by ever widening eyes — similar to those that dance from one gaily wrapped gift to another on Christmas morning.

With a genuine zest and honest simplicity that is reserved for only the very young, the experience gave them a chance to cuddle a calf, hug a hare, love a lamb or pet a pony.

As students at Pequea Township Elementary School, they got these rare and memorable opportunities this week when members of the Manor FFA Chapter brought a bit of the farm to their school. Along with a similar visit to the Conestoga Elementary School, the chapter conducted the program as a Food for America project.

But it was more than just a first-hand, close-up chance to see and touch some of the animals that many of the students only view from an impersonal distance.

The FFA'ers from Penn Manor High School showed a brief movie to help explain where food originates on the farm and gave an explanation about each of the animals on display.

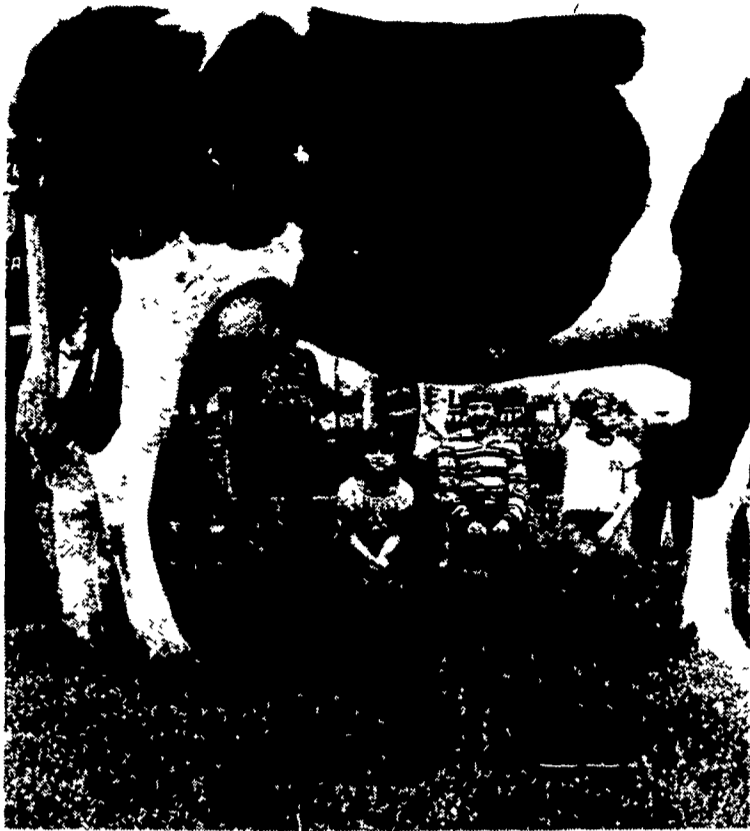
And the students — mostly in first through third grades — got an opportunity to test their own knowledge about the barnyard friends and ask questions about them to increase that knowledge.

Concerning the big 'black and white Holstein, the youngsters expressed a wide diversity of statistical knowledge — some amazingly accurate and some quite a bit off the mark.

For example, many knew the correct number of stomachs, but had little idea of how much milk a good cow produces in a day. They expressed equal amazement at how much feed must go into that cow each day to make that milk.

Also popular among the visitors to the school was a pair of turkeys — a big strutting Tom and a more docile hen.

The grade schoolers were



Students express a keen interest in the business end of the cow.

curious about the debeaking, but expressed no concern as some adults are doing these days. They readily accepted the explanation from the FFA host that the practice aids feeding efficiency and reduces injury among the birds.

The youngsters were more interested in how the Tom could change the colors and hues of his comb.

"Why does he show off so much?" one curious tot asked.

The off-the-cuff reply of the FFA chapter member couldn't have been more philosophically apropos to life in general beyond the turkey pen:

"I guess it's because that is the way males are around females."

It went over the heads of the youthful audience, but in not too many years it won't.

There were little animals for the students to hold, too.

As one young boy stroked the soft

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And Jeff Burkholder shows how the business end works.



I think I'll let him get his own grass.



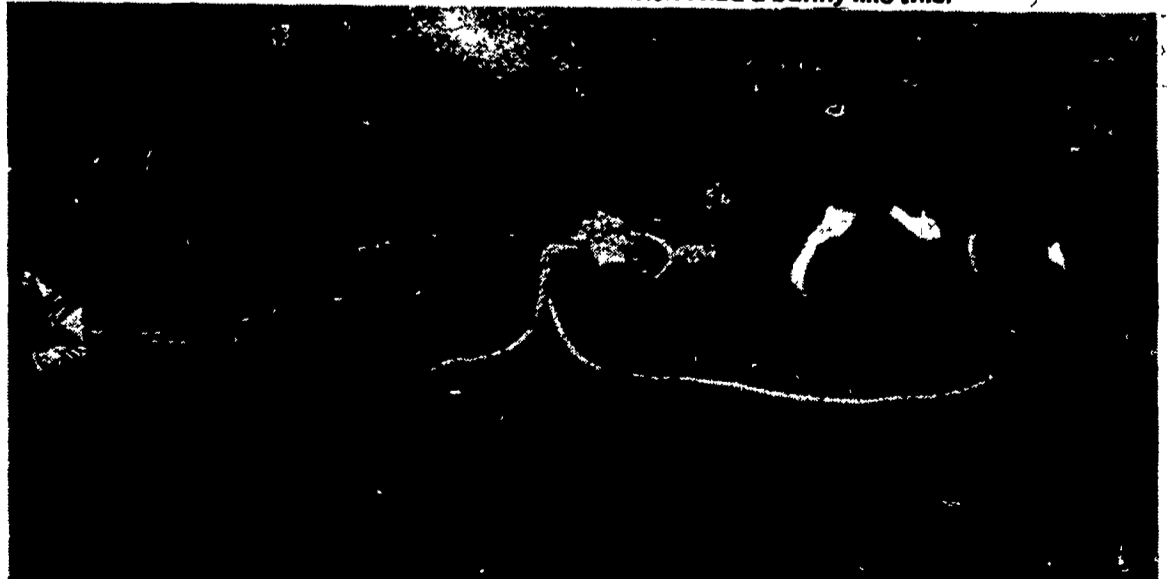
Wow, look how his head changes color.



I wish I had a bunny like this.



Oh, it's so soft and lovable.



Whew! Where did those kids get all of that energy? It's been a long day and all of the excitement has me plumb tuckered out. It's

time to get back to the farm where it's nice and quiet and get some well-needed rest.