

# Agri-Women support food education

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Even if Americans take American agriculture for granted without fully appreciating its capabilities, Secretary of Agriculture John Block found that the rest of the world follows U.S. agricultural policy with great interest.

"That's the first question they raise, before other considerations," he told an audience of farmers, educators and USDA personnel called to Washington last week to consider means for getting agriculture subjects and issues taught in public schools.

American Agri-Women present at the meeting included 2nd vice president Emilie Welsh, East Berlin; grain and livestock committee chairman, Jean Ibendahl, Illinois; AAW president Evelyn Landis, North Dakota; Education chairman Pat Zee, New Jersey; and Penn's Agri-Women President Gail McPherson, New Park.

Part of a give and take discussion group responded to panelists: Niel Carey, Maryland State Department of Education;

John Lewis, Illinois Council on Economic Education; Nellie Quander, National Association of Elementary School Principals; Dave Bohling, Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

The group learned of new things happening around the country in teaching about agriculture.

American Agri-Women presentations focused on what women in agriculture are doing with schools, working on state and local levels' finding and distributing materials.

Educators stressed the necessity to fit any educational materials into the basics being already taught with close tie-ins to social studies, language, math, and careers to insure that materials are used in the classroom.

Already in force in Illinois are the Agri-Data kits placed in every classroom in the state by Illinois Women for Agriculture, member of AAW.

Agriculture in Maryland is the title of a pilot program designed for elementary level included in an

accordian folder patterned after a barn.

On-going production efforts are underway between Public Broadcasting in Maryland and Romper Room, Sesame Street, and Walt Disney Education Committee to make updated programs suitable for the classroom.

The importance of motivating teachers to use agricultural materials, providing inservice training, zeroing in on specific grade level pupil audiences and cooperating with educators in the development of curriculum materials proved to be common ground guidelines for groups wishing to contribute in this area.

Secretary Block had called this meeting with some of his top staff to aid in coordinating efforts to "tell the story of agriculture," his primary motivation as Secretary of Agriculture.

The USDA will probably soon be acting as a clearing house for cataloguing the various educational materials available from agriculture groups, offering staff time priorities. At present all

speeches delivered by staff reflect this concern.

Built into the curriculum objections will be emphasis on the free enterprise system with the overview that agriculture is important to the system, and a healthy agriculture benefits everyone. Coordination of school text reviewing, teacher workshops and credits for certification,

development of ag concepts for study, along with support from both education and agriculture groups will be needed for success.

The group left Washington, D.C. eager to get started toward the objective of expanding students' horizons and "stretching their notions" about modern agriculture in a modern world, according to Gail McPherson, PAW President.

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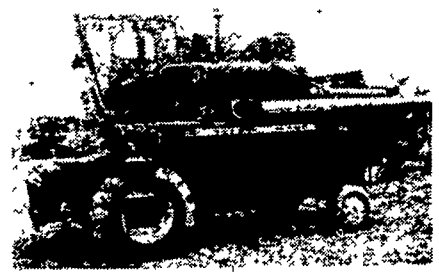


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