

Transplanted 'city slicker' wins FFA poultry award

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
JONESTOWN — From self-admitted "city slicker" to earning the top national FFA proficiency award in poultry production in eight short years is the amazing story of Lisa Weikel, of R2 Jonestown.

But even more startling is the fact that Lisa is only 18 and out of high school less than a year.

And, if that isn't enough, the pert, youthful egg producer is sole manager and primarily responsible for a 47,000-layer operation and thereby shoulders a good bit of her family's livelihood.

Thus anyone who says there's no future in agriculture for today's youth, particularly those who don't come from an existing farm background, need only talk for a few minutes to Lisa, graduate of the FFA program at Northern Lebanon High School.

"It's a 24-hour baby sitting job.

but I love it," she said.

"I enjoy best working with the birds and seeing just how well I can do with them.

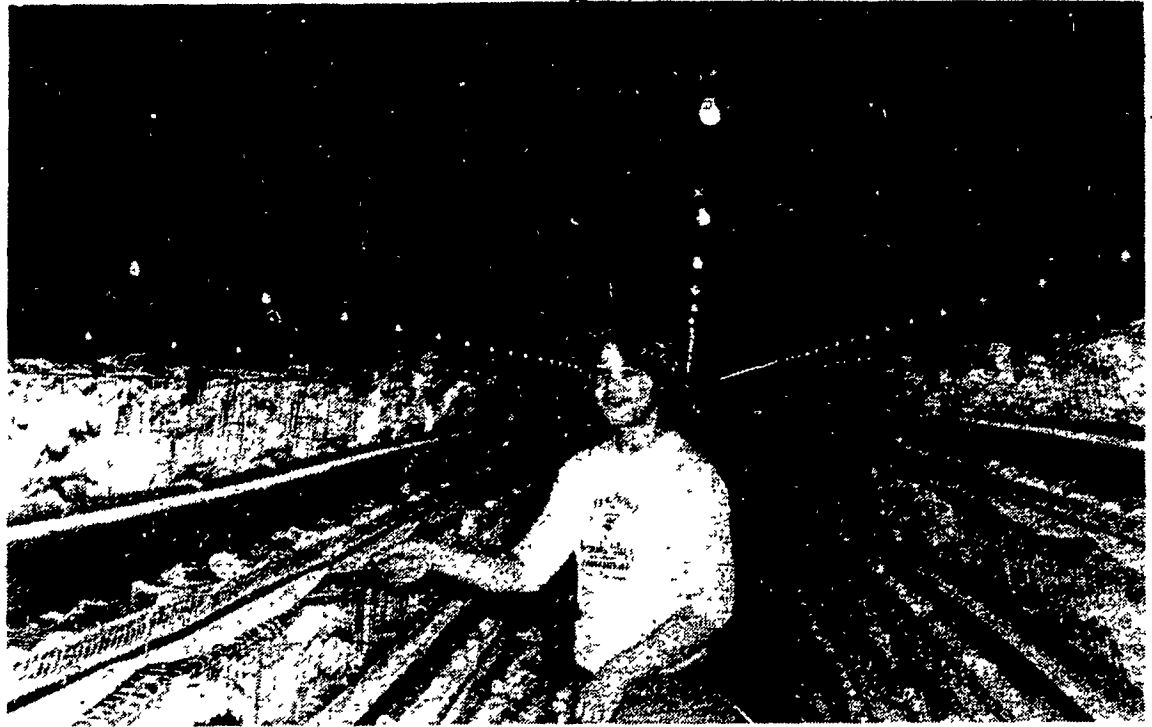
"I've always liked working with animals."

The toughest part of the operation for her is trying to keep up with the mechanical end — the automatic waterers, feeders and egg collecting machinery. But younger brother, Doug, who is mechanically and electrically inclined, helps out in this area.

The Weikel family moved to the northern part of Lebanon County near the Indiantown Gap Military Reservation eight years ago from Harrisburg.

"We were city slickers in Harrisburg," Lisa explained, "but had a couple of horses."

"When it got too expensive to board the horses, we decided to get a small farm of our own."



Management and operational techniques of 18-year old Lebanon County FFA member the Lisa Weikel in this 47,000-layer house won the top national award in poultry production.

Block appoints Pa. ASCS director

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Secretary of Agriculture John Block has appointed Eugene F. Thompson, of Marion Center, as State Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service.

As Executive Director, Thompson will be responsible for carrying out Federal farm price support, production adjustment and cost-sharing conservation programs in Pennsylvania.

Thompson, a former dairy farmer, has owned and operated a dairy farm for over 30 years in Indiana County. The Holstein

herd was dispersed in August 1981, with the farm being retained at the present time.

He has been president of the Pennsylvania Young Farmers Association, Pennsylvania Farmers Association, president of the Indiana County Agricultural Extension Service Association and a member of the board of directors of the Atlantic Breeders Cooperative Association.

Thompson has been Acting State Executive Director for the Pennsylvania Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service since August 10, 1981.

But after moving to the 36-acre farm, Lisa's father, Walter, suffered a stroke. There had to be a revamping of the family's plans.

Thus in 1978, the family went into the layer business with a 47,000-bird house. As the oldest child and due to her love of animals and agriculture, Lisa became primarily responsible for the operation.

She's responsible for all phases of the operation, keeping the books and managing to attain the best production from each flock. Her mother, Andrea, helps in the morning and brother Doug on the night shift.

But the chickens haven't dampened Lisa's first ag love of horses. She has a string of six quarter horses and has bred some of the stock for herself and a friend.

Although just 18, Lisa has definite future plans for both the horses and chickens.

"I'd like to expand the horse operation to include boarding and put up another chicken house, if and when interest rates improve," she explained.

The future poultry plans include an 80,000-layer house and possibly an egg processing facility so the family can go directly into wholesaling and retailing their product.

The well and electrical generator facilities are sufficient to handle another house, but like many in agriculture today future plans are being delayed pending improvement in the economic picture.

Lisa has been quite active in both FFA and 4-H. She participated in public speaking and horse judging

in FFA. She was third in the state in horse proficiency.

In 4-H, her activities have centered around her horses and she serves as vice president of the Hoof and Horn 4-H Horse and Pony Club.

And in her spare time, she's in charge of a gathering crew for Dutch Country Egg Farms.

"I was surprised when I won the national proficiency award," she said.

"Two of the other regional winners had 30,000 pullets and one an additional 60,000 broilers.

"Another had just a few hundred and I thought well at least I have him beat."

But Lisa's enviable track record in just the past few years and her bright, optimistic plans for the future evidently made quite an impression on the judges.

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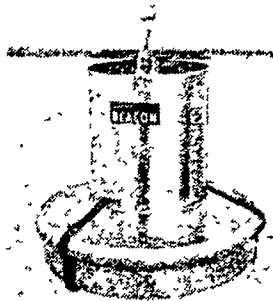
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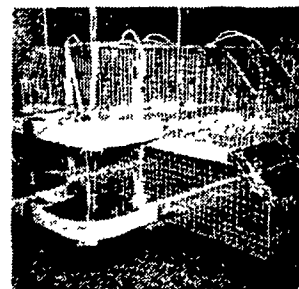
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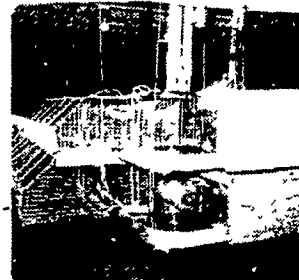


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