

Clinton Co. Extension director to retire

UNIVERSITY PARK — Chester P. McMinn, Clinton county Extension director will retire April 20 with 36 years of service.

A native of Brockway, McMinn received a bachelor of science degree from Penn State in 1939, majoring in agricultural education. He has done graduate work at Penn State and West Virginia University.

He taught vocational agriculture for three years, then served as an officer in the U.S. Army Air Force from 1942-45. McMinn was named to the Extension staff in 1946 as an assistant county agent, dividing his time between Clarion and Venango counties. Two years later he was assigned full time in Venango County and was promoted to Clinton County agent in 1955.

When McMinn was assigned to Clinton County, tobacco acreage was decreasing due to the lack of a suitable market. He assisted growers in converting land to vegetable production, primarily for canning and freezing purposes.

His work with farmers enrolled in the Dairy Herd Improvement Association led to dramatic increases in milk production. He stressed mastitis control and improved feeding programs. Approximately 58 percent of the total number of cows in the county



Chester P. McMinn

are enrolled in the milk testing program.

The retiring Extension agent promoted enrollment in the State Alfalfa Growing Program as a tool in increasing crop yields. During the last four years, 11 Clinton County farmers were enrolled in the contest and at least one entry placed in the top five each year. The results of these demonstrations generated interest in other growers to improve quality, yield, and income from alfalfa production.

McMinn conducted educational programs to keep farmers informed of corn practices that will increase yields, improve storage, utilization, and marketing. This was carried out through meetings, tours, and participation in the Pennsylvania Corn Club.

With increasing livestock numbers in Clinton County, soybean production is becoming a practical alternative for corn. McMinn assisted in establishing soybean test plots to assess maturity and yields for the different climates found in the county. He also provides information on the use of herbicides, fertilizer, and cultural practices for soybeans.

As farm size and land values continue to rise, farmers have found a need for more information on estate taxes, insurance, and investments. The Extension agent developed a program to provide estate planning information by organizing meetings and through individual assistance where personal questions can be discussed.

He also organized a series of public meetings on a controversial property tax issue. Topics centered on increasing citizens knowledge of the operation of the property tax, providing a setting for discussing tax issues, and

Ida's Notebook

Ida Risser



Tomorrow will be Easter and we'll probably celebrate it by hunting baskets of candy and decorated eggs. After breakfast we'll go to church and hope for a nice sunny day to enjoy the outdoors. Maybe several of our children will be home for a big ham meal and the traditional fancy coconut cake made in the shape of a Easter rabbit. It should be a relatively quiet day.

In order to remind myself of how we and our six children spent our Easter season fifteen years ago, when they were two years to seventeen years old and all at home, I got my diary out of the table drawer.

It wasn't necessarily the happiest of times. There were so many of us with so many interests that at times things got quite hectic. It seemed that someone always had a sore throat or a fever that necessitated a visit to the doctor.

As my husband had an infected finger at the time, the older boys were doing some of the milking

and plowing. One of them upset the tractor and locked the engine but was not hurt—we were lucky.

At that time all the manure was loaded by hand and they were lucky to get five loads spread in a day. But now, over a decade later, we load it with a scoop from the slotted-dam holding area and put 20 or 30 load on the fields in a day.

I had all the milking equipment to wash by hand and the boys were digging a hole with shovels for a 500-gallon underground gasoline tank. With all that they still found time to go trout fishing, sell night-crawlers and do baby sitting. The twelve-year-old boy baked angel food cake and a jelly roll for us as he enjoyed doing that.

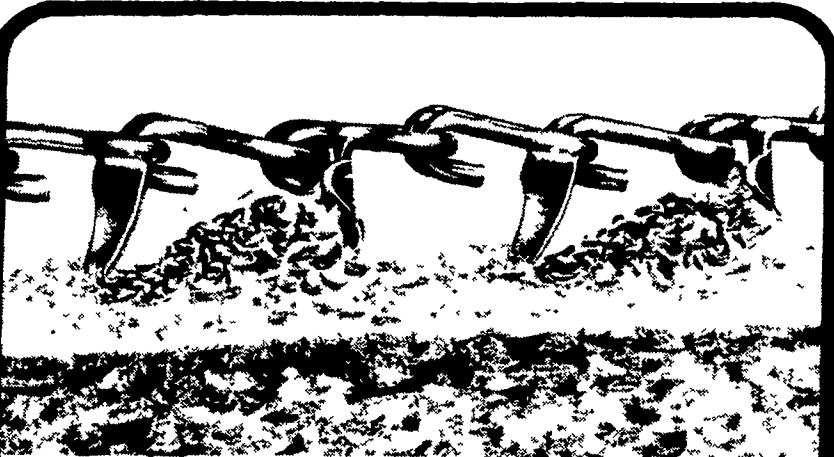
Our 30-month-old girl was learning to read and kept pestering us to listen to the 50 new words she had just learned. The middle girl was taking flute lessons and leading her 4-H calf, while the oldest had a very busy schedule. She tutored students all over the county in math and languages and also worked part time at a drive-in restaurant during her senior year in high school.

Some food prices that I noted in my diary were: 10 loaves of bread for \$1.85, 20 lb. of shad at .09 cents per lb., and 8 dozen eggs for \$2.00. I knew where to buy cheap food as it took a lot to grow the children to their present stature of over 6 feet. And so amid the working, playing, and bickering, they grew up and now are able to live independently.

elaborating on alternatives to the property tax. The meetings were open to all interested citizens and local government officials.

In 1966, McMinn received a Distinguished Service Award from the National Agricultural Agents for his service to agriculture.

He is married to the former Irene Cordray, of Point Marion. They are the parents of three daughters.



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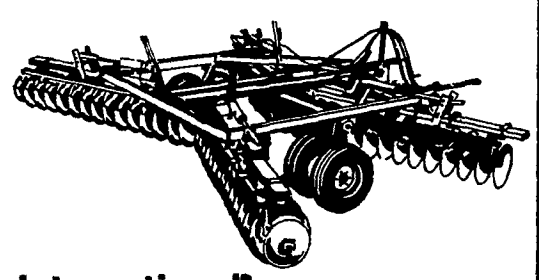
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