

Ag vital

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information scattered through other studies. "Children need to know why certain crops are grown in certain areas, and the relationship between food production and starvation."

Included on an idea-sharing panel on ag teaching in various states were: Jack Matthews, Maryland Farm Bureau; Gail McPherson for York County's Agri-Learn Unlimited; Faith Goldstein, coordinator of ag development for the New Jersey Department of Agriculture; and vo-ag teacher Robert Fisher, from Bellwood schools in Blair County.

Matthews credited a 1978 letter to the editor, written by a concerned young farmer who complained about the lack of ag in-

formation teaching, as stirring up interest among Maryland ag leaders. Through their efforts to incorporate farm background materials, Maryland has since mandated that ag information be taught either in the fourth, fifth or sixth grades.

Agri-Learn, according to Gail McPherson, was based partly on some of the studies of the Maryland curriculum. The fourth-grade level teaching program was put together by a group of York County agriculture representatives and experimentally taught last spring to a few select classes in the county. Authored by former vo-ag instructor William Fleet, the revised studies program is available to any school districts interested in using it.

In New Jersey, filmstrips on the pressure created by expanding urbanization have been put together by several utilities, added

Faith Goldstein. Among her recommendations were that teachers be informed of the various resource materials available, and that ag-ed advocates work at "getting to" textbook writers.

Ag teaching can readily tie in with consumer education, stressed Bellwood district vo-ag instructor Robert Fisher. In a full nine-month classroom series, ag and consumerism blend in materials that deal with such topics as food production, the broad agriculture industry and employment in ag-related fields.

An afternoon panel session of educators, moderated by state Secretary of Education Robert Scanlon, explored another viewpoint on incorporating ag information into already drum-tight school curriculums.

Abbe Barbato teaches ag materials to sixth graders and

advises a seventh grade Junior FFA group at Eastern Lancaster County school district. She urged ag representatives to offer in-service programs on agriculture to teachers, so they understand what they're teaching. Commending both the administration and community support in her district, Abbe noted that industry and Extension people offer additional resource expertise.

A former vo-ag instructor, Don Evans, was immediately faced with the threatened loss of the ag program when he accepted the superintendency at the Juniata District. With a boost from an advisory committee from the community that approached the board, vo-ag teaching was saved

from being scratched from the Juniata curriculum.

Evans recommended using community volunteers to help teach in specific areas, and involving students in decisions on what should be taught to fulfill their future needs.

A different approach has been taken in urbanized Delaware County, said C.R. "Bud" Bryan, Jr. There, the 4-H works closely with the schools to supply basic agriculture learning. Since only two farms of the limited few in the suburban county allow school visits, students get an opportunity to handle small farm animals at the 4-H center, after a series of classroom studies.

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"Ag in the Classroom" panelists look over some of the materials available for school studies. From left are Gail McPherson, of Agri-Learn, USDA's Sally Katt, Faith Goldstein from the New Jersey Ag Department, and Jack Matthews for Maryland Farm Bureau.



John Hershey, chairman of the state board of education, favors ag education in the classroom. Hershey, head of the Milton Hershey Estate farms, was the seminar luncheon speaker.

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