

Delaware 4-H

(Continued from Page B28)

long 4-H and FFA Beef Forum at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Va. Earlier this year, Klair took a week off to accompany the Delaware 4-H livestock judging team which competed in the National 4-H livestock judging contest in Louisville, Ky.

Why does he invest so much of his time in these efforts? "For one thing," says Klair, "I get personal satisfaction out of keeping a livestock program going in Delaware. The more I'm involved, the more interest I have, the more ideas I get. It's like a big rolling snowball," he says, talking about the excitement he feels, acquiring more information and sharing it with the kids.

He and other members of the livestock advisory committee often put in 20 hours in a single weekend helping young people with projects, and coaching judging teams. His wife Barbara, a former 4-H'er, also is very active in 4-H.

In Delaware and other states, 4-H programs are operated almost exclusively by volunteer leaders, starting with the organizational leader. People like Earl and Jane

Everline, a Harrington couple, or Ken and Molly Horeis of Felton, started with a small nucleus of six or eight members meeting in their homes and watched the groups gradually grow. The Everline's club, the Harrington Sunshines, is a fairly typical one. It has about 26 members ranging in ages from nine to 19, 10 leaders (including the Everline's son Mike, a former 4-H'er) and five junior leaders. The club's yearly calendar lists 55 club and county activities its members can participate in, besides their own special projects. The list is impressive, ranging from public service activities such as UNICEF, a bank cleanup, a flower bed for the town library, and a hospital fair, to special holiday events, project tours and training, demonstrations, a bus trip, a picnic, bike rodeo, dog show, field crops event, fashion revue, photo contest, public speaking event, and achievement banquet.

Gooden says 4-H is often a family affair. More than half the club leaders in the state are parents of members. But it's not unusual for some to remain active long after their own kids have grown. That's what happened to Jay and John Hukill of Lewes. They got involved

through a 4-H sheep project their son Jim started, and at one time had a flock of 20 or 25 animals. Through this interest, the couple became active with sheep events at the Delaware State Fair.

Help other kids

John Hukill, a Delaware river pilot, is assistant superintendent of the sheep barn at the fair and for several years has organized and run the 4-H and FFA feeder lamb competition there.

He and his wife are also resource leaders for a local club, which often meets at their house. "I was so thrilled with the things 4-H did for my children, I wanted to give other kids the same opportunities," says Jay. "I think it's a tremendous program. That's why I continue even though my own kids are grown." Currently she is president of the Sussex County 4-H Leaders Association.

Their son Jim, now an apprentice river pilot, was a national 4-H winner in leadership, based on the sheep project that started it all.

"I have a 10-year-old niece in 4-H now," says Jay. "I can hardly wait for my granddaughter (who's three) to get old enough to join. I love to see the children succeed and excel. That's one of the things about 4-H—there are so many things the kids can do. You see a new child at a meeting and right away you think, I bet they'd like that project."

Do it for kids

With all the time and effort involved in supporting any successful youth program, why do people like the Hukills, Shaffers, Horeises, Everlines and Klairs give so generously of themselves?

"I think almost any 4-H volunteer will tell you the same thing," says Jay Hukill. "We do it because of the kids."

According to area agent Gooden, the thrust today in 4-H nationally is to involve more and more youth without increasing professional staff size. The success of this effort depends heavily on volunteers. "These people are the backbone of the 4-H program," she says. Because of volunteers, in Delaware only seven paid professionals are able to reach more than 9,000 young people, helping them develop social and

technical skills which will enable them to become more satisfied, productive adults with a strong sense of community responsibility.

The week of April 17 to 23 is National Volunteer Week — an appropriate time to salute the hundreds of volunteers who serve 4-H in Delaware.

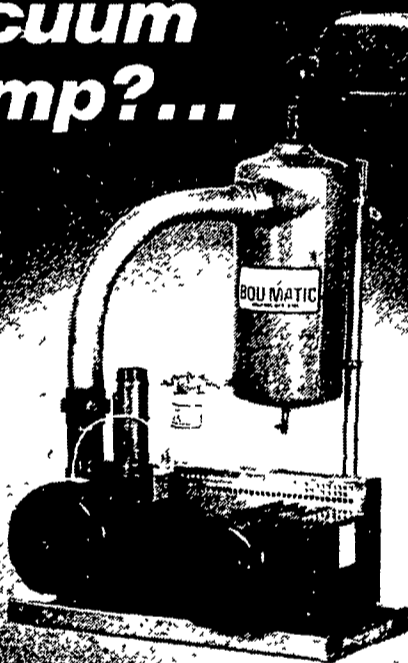
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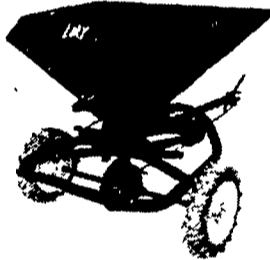
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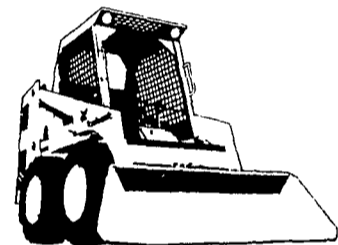
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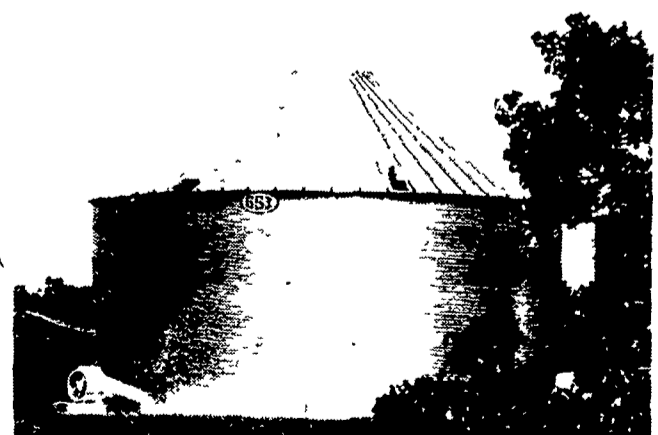
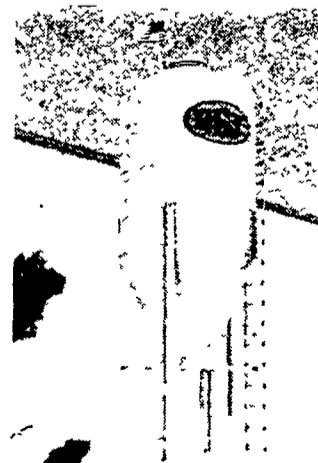
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