

Union hosts Pa. Young Farmer Conference

BY TRISH WILLIAMS

MIFFLINBURG — Pennsylvania Young Farmer Association members and their families, from all over the state, met last Friday and Saturday at Mifflinburg for the PYFA Summer Conference.

Hosted by the Mifflinburg PYFA chapter, the conference provided a wide range of activities for participants, including tours of Union County's agribusiness, a banquet, athletic competition, and of course business meetings.

The Mifflinburg High School was the operations center for the two day conference. Local chapter president Daniel Spangler, and advisor David Woodling, assisted conference chairman James Sanders in coordinating and conducting the conference's activities.

A Friday evening banquet, catered by Country Cupboard Restaurant was well attended and provided an excellent time for fellowship. After the banquet Young Farmers were addressed by a distinguished panel of speakers, including, Representative George W. Gekas, (R) 17th district; Penn State's Assistant Director of Extension Dr. Wayne Hinsh; Deputy of Secretary of Agriculture E. Chester Heim; and PYFA state president Leroy D. Gessaman.

Gekas told Young Farmers as long as groups, such as PYFA continue to work together with legislators to propound resolutions on agricultural debates, that they will be represented in the halls of Congress, and will have a voice in determining the future of the United States.

Hinsh, also looked toward the future as he addressed the group. PYFA will have a large influence on Pennsylvania agriculture in the 21st century, said Hinsh. Penn State is proud to conduct educational programs for the farming community. Last year more than 28,000 Extension staff days were devoted to improving farm income, he said.

Penn State is putting more

emphasis on communication skills, Hinsh continued, in order that farmers and agri-businessmen can better articulate the needs and situation of agriculture to the consuming public and legislators. More importance is also being placed on skills in computer science, and Penn State is working toward assuring that all of its graduates are competent in computer science.

Penn State has been selected as the site of the future Northeast Regional Computer Institute, that will serve all participating states in the Northeast, said Hinsh.

Penn State Extension is currently putting together a state computer system that will eventually link all 67 county Extension office with the University Park campus.

Speaking on behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture E. Chester Heim, stressed the need for farmers to get more involved in marketing of agricultural products. Heim who oversees the Bureau of Markets at PDA, spoke from experience he waxed while growing up in his family's farm retail produce business.

"To move ahead in Pennsylvania," said Heim, "there are some things I feel we in agriculture need as our major objectives. First, we need to improve the marketing of agriculture commodities."

"Promotion of our agriculture products must be a major objective of Pennsylvania agriculture," stressed Heim. Another major objective cited by Heim is the coordinating of research to improve production, processing and distribution of food and fiber to consumers, while assuring a reasonable return to those in production agriculture, and also assuring the consumer a quality product.

Heim suggested four points need to be considered in order to structure a sound market system for agriculture. These points are, full market information,



Distinguished guests and speakers at the banquet were, from the left, Rep. George Gekas, Betty Broda presents a letter from Governor Thornburgh to Mifflinburg PYFA president Dan Spangler, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Chester Heim, and Penn State Extension Director Dr. Wayne Hinsh.

knowledge of market trends, concentrated market development, and effective market organization.

"Realistically, if we want to produce more, we have to find new markets," he said. "It will take a united effort to do the job," he pointed out, but later added, "The time could not be riper for us to consider more aggressive and imaginative commodity marketing arrangements."

In his closing remarks Heim urged the Young Farmers to rise to the marketing challenge before them.

Betty Broda on behalf of Senator Edward Helfrick and Governor Thornburgh, presented local Chapter president Daniel Spangler with a letter from the Senator and Governor that commended the Young Farmers for the excellence of the organization's educational programs that help keep Pennsylvania agriculture growing better.

On a lighter note, host chapter advisor Dave Woodling presented state PYFA president Leroy Gessaman with the official worry towel, and turned the responsibility of finding another chapter to host next year's summer conference over to Gessaman.

Entertainment at the banquet was supplied by the Union County String Band.

Participants in the conference were provided an excellent opportunity to learn more about Union County's agri-business sector while viewing the County's beautiful countryside on bus tours conducted Friday afternoon and Saturday morning.

Four tours took participants to some of the areas more progressive farms and agri-businesses, where they were given an explanation of the operation and the opportunity to ask questions.

Tour stops and highlights include:

Pleasant View Egg Farm - a family owned operation. The farm consists of over 70,000 laying hens, 100 steers and more than 600 crop acres. The farm markets eggs throughout central and eastern Pennsylvania. All eggs are processed on the farm by a unique processing arrangement that involves the use of a computerized egg grading scales. The operation employs owner Richard Moyer, wife Mary, son Joe and daughters Elaine and Linda, and 20 other employees. The operation has earned Moyer the Pa. Master Farmer Award in 1973 and the Outstanding Farmer over 30 state award in 1970. Mr. and Mrs. Moyer received the state Young Farmer



Entertainment for the Friday evening program was provide by the Union County String Band, a fine group of pickers.

Community Service Award in 1980.

Donald and Dan Spangler dairy farm - with 60 cows housed in a parlor and free stall set-up. Of special interest on this farm was the open front heifer raising facility and the system of manure handling. Mrs. Spangler also hosted tours through their recently remodeled stone home, that is over 200 years old and has been in the family for 107 years. The Spanglers formed this father-son partnership in 1981. Dan is currently the president of the Mifflinburg Young Farmer Chapter.

George Bowersox integrated livestock operation - The Bowersox began farming in 1956. From egg layers and general field crops the operation has grown and now includes a son and son-in-law. Jointly the operation includes 76,000 broilers, 300 steers, 200 hogs, and more than 700 acres of corn. While corn raised on the farm is fed through the steers and hogs, most poultry feed is purchased. The remaining corn is sold as a cash crop. Feed trials have been conducted on feeding chicken manure to steers as well as boosting corn silage protein by adding anhydrous ammonia.

Sterling Crone Christmas Trees - The Sterlings moved to Union County from the York area in 1973. Their farm career began with the purchase of 156 acres of somewhat marginal ground in 1961. In 1971 another farm of 164 acres was purchased. Today, after much hard work, more than 60,000 trees are growing on the two farms. This enables Sterling to market about 2000 trees each year.

Eugene and Lee Spangler - Eugene began farming on a rented farm in 1947. With top management he was able to purchase his present farm in 1963. The dairy operation now consists of 80 head of dairy cows with a herd

average of 17,000 milk and 696 fat. Eugene won the Mifflinburg Young Farmers corn yield contest five of the last 11 years. Of special interest on the tour was the large farm shop where along with a hired man, machinery is assembled for the local International dealership. A father-son working partnership was formed in 1978 when son Lee graduated from Penn State with a degree in Ag Education. Son Glenn, is presently one of the vo-ag instructors at Mifflinburg High School.

John and David Dietrich dairy farm - Here the group met two of the most active Young Farmer members in the state. In addition to their Holstein herd of 75 cows David has found time to serve as PYFA state treasurer in 1970 and as state president in 1972. He and wife Barbara received the state community service award. A unique character of this farm is the contoured hillside which is the site for local classes on conservation. The farm has a total of 117 contour strips that are each 87 feet wide.

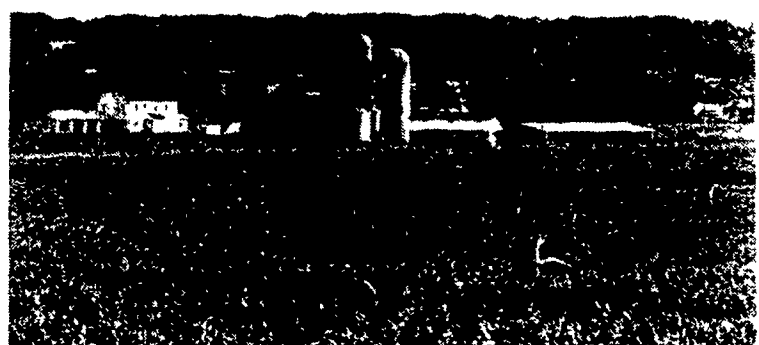
Kuhns Brothers Lumber Co. - This mill owned by two brothers, Larry and Leonard Kuhns, employs over 30. It was begun in 1962 and sawed 500,000 board feet that year. Today Kuhns Brothers saws over 7 million board feet of timber per year. New plans call for more expansion and pre-fabricated log homes, a pallet division and a tongue in groove division.

Martin's Vegetables - Ken Martin purchased this farm in 1979. He has chosen to pursue vegetable production and each year has added more vegetables to his already diverse farm crop recipe. This year he is growing cantaloupes, watermelons, brussel sprouts, peppers, cauliflower, tomatoes, honeydew, cherry tomatoes, and greenhouse plants. Ken and sisters Ruth Ann and

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Ken Martin hosted four bus tours to his retail produce business. In addition to on the farm sales, Ken sells produce direct to local restaurants.



This picture of Eugene and Lee Spangler's farm is typical of the farm land around Mifflinburg that Young Farmers toured.