

'God bless you, John. We'll miss you.'

'Because of this servant, this is a much better place.'

'He has touched 4 generations and his contributions will live on forever.'



Retiring York County extension agent John Smith, right, accepts a Nittany Lion statue from Joe McCurdy, representing Penn State's Extension Service.

By Joyce Bupp
Staff Correspondent
EAST PROSPECT — "Because of this servant, this is a much better place to be."

With those words in his invocation, York farmer Rolla Lehman opened an evening of reminiscence, laughter, and a few tears as the 31 year tenure of John T. Smith, as York County's extension agent, came to a close.

On hand at the spacious Wisheaven Hall to pay tribute to Smith's leadership and likeability were more than 500 farmers, agribusiness representatives and friends of extension.

A series of speakers, representing various segments of the agriculture community, in turn offered memories, sentiments and some "roasting" for the well-known and respected county agent, who in 1978 received the State

Cooperative Extension's first-ever award for outstanding leadership.

Speaking for the county's farmers was dairyman E. Wayne Beshore, who told the gathering that "John Smith has touched four generations, and his contributions will live on forever."

George Williams, of Codorus Fertilizer Service, represented the agri-businessmen, and reminisced of the support Smith offered when, many years ago, Williams approached the county agent for advice on beginning his fledgling business.

"My office will help you in any way we can," he remembered the county agent saying, with this added admonition; "If you advocate solid agriculture practices and practice honesty in dealing with farmers."

Dr. Howard Thoele, assistant dean of Penn State University, noted that threaded through Smith's career was the theme "teacher." The county agent was an instructor in vocational agriculture and a veterans agricultural training program prior to joining the extension staff.

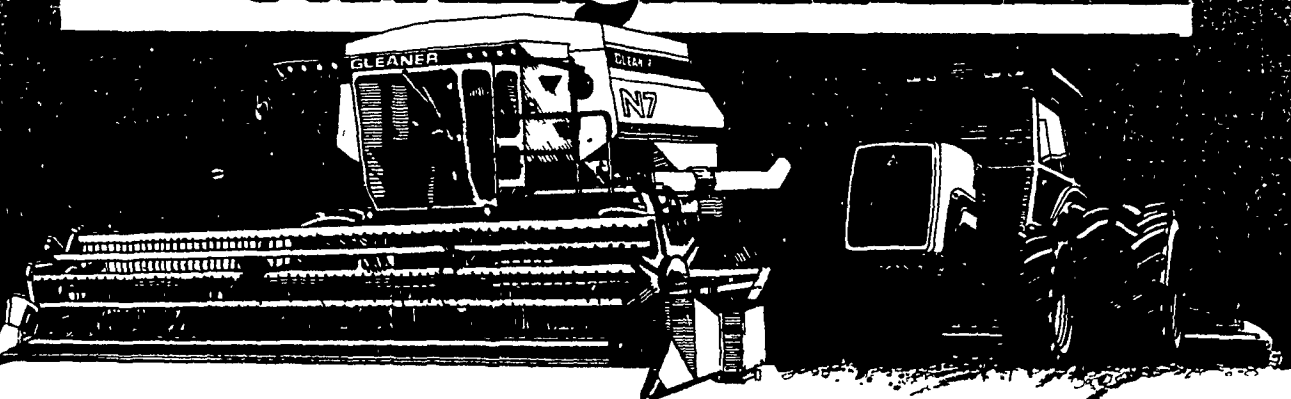
Congressman William Goodling, raised on a York County fruit farm, acknowledged Smith as a "walking source of diversified information."

Representing the more than two thousand 4-H'ers in the county was state winning public speaker Chris Shive. She related how she once, as a little girl spilled a glass of water on the county agent while seated next to him at a banquet, and how Smith went out of his way to comfort her and laugh off the accident.

Smith is credited with instituting a number of now-popular 4-H activities; including day camp and 4-day camp, being instrumental in updating the York fair facilities and adding the 4-H petting zoo to the York Fair attractions, initiating scholarships for 4-H'ers and helping to establish the programs that have paid off and set up a trust foundation for the county 4-H Center.

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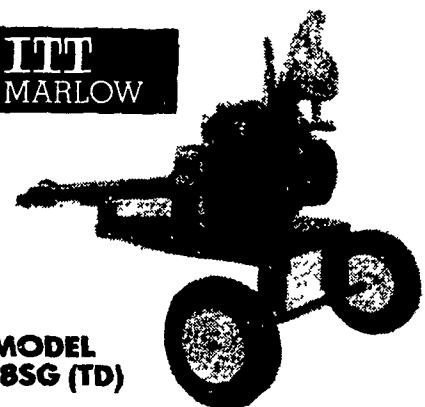
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