



Farm Talk

by
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and whatever else is done on a Georgia farm, these city reporters surely developed a different view of agriculture. Now I suspect they tell the farm story in a more complete and realistic way. Not just the farm income story or the farm surplus story, but all of the issues that modern farmers face—conservation, land use, taxes, chemicals, air pollution, community development, labor and so on.

It might be difficult to find city reporters willing to spend a week in the spring or summer on a farm. That may be more time than a reporter or his paper feels the story is worth. Or, he may run out

of interest in the subject long before his week is up. On the other hand, a reporter who is willing to accept such an assignment is apt to be a displaced farm boy longing for a brief return to the land. He might not be a very objective reporter. It would be better to have a guy who knows nothing about farming but knows how to ask questions, listen to the answers and then go back to town and write fairly about what he did and what he saw and heard.

The farm community has had a standing complaint with the press about farm coverage - city newsmen don't do much toward covering agriculture and most

media outlets don't have anyone around that understands much about agriculture. I've been told by media people that this is why they don't cover agriculture. They don't understand it, so they don't cover it.

There's a lot more to agriculture than rising food prices, grain sales to Russia, milk surpluses, and farm failures. The Georgia project seems like a very positive step toward background reporters in some other aspects of farming.

Maybe this idea can be borrowed. No doubt there are area farmers willing to host if there are reporters who have the time and interest.

Telling the farmer's story to urbanites has become a major preoccupation with a number of farm organizations, agencies and industries over the past few years. I'm not at all sure what the "farmer's story" is, why it must be told and who should hear it. Rather, I think, there are many stories and many audiences. And I suspect much of the storytelling is being done by people who are not farmers and for reasons that aren't 100 percent pure. I have to wonder why a company should spend thousands of dollars telling what a good guy a farmer is. Why shouldn't farmers themselves be telling the story rather than standing idly by while industry does it for them.

But what can a farmer do? Or for that matter, what can a local or state organization do to improve agricultural relations? Here's one idea that stands a pretty good chance of working—a farm "live-in" for newspaper reporters. This approach was tried in Georgia on an experimental basis.

The Georgia plan worked like this. Reporters from the state's major daily newspaper actually lived with farm families for a week or more. They did what the families did—field work, chores, recreation, church. Hopefully, they saw farm life as it really is and had an opportunity to communicate with farm people over a period of several days.

It wasn't a publicity stunt or an effort to romanticize rural life, according to a spokesman for the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, coordinator of the project. A reporter was assigned to a representative farm in his paper's circulation area. And he stayed there long enough to see what really goes on. This wasn't one of those quickie glamour tours of rural America where a bunch of travel and business editor's board an air-conditioned bus and go farm-hopping through Happy Valley. This was the real thing.

After a week of baling hay, cultivating soybeans, milking cows

KENNET SQUARE — Henry Roberts, president of the American Mushroom Institute, has announced the appointment of Charles R. Harris, Dover, Del. as Executive Director of the Association. The AMI is a national trade association representing the growing and marketing of cultivated mushrooms in the United States. Membership consists of mushroom growers, processors, buyers, suppliers and researchers.

Harris served as the Executive Director, Delaware State Bar Association, a group representing lawyers and judges in Delaware from October 1977 to January 1984.

Harris was graduated from West Chester State Teachers College in 1949 and taught in the Junior High School in West Chester until 1954 when he transferred to the Junior High School in Springfield. In 1955, he was appointed Executive Secretary, Delaware State

Education Association, a position he held until November, 1974.

He was graduated from Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa. with a Masters' degree in 1951 and has earned sufficient credits from the Graduate School, University of Delaware, to qualify for a chief

school officers certificate in 1973. He was graduated from the Institute of Organizational Management, Chamber of Commerce of the United States and Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, in Association Management.

Mushroom post to Harris

Ag area session Thursday

HONESDALE — A meeting to consider the formation of an "Agricultural Area" will be held Thursday at 8 p.m. in the Calkins Grange Hall.

The Agricultural Area Security Law passed in 1981 provides Pennsylvania farmers with the opportunity to band together to create agricultural areas. Such an area consists of at least 500 acres of farm land with the primary objective being to protect the

agricultural industry. An agricultural area does not have to be in one 500 acre unit but may consist of several unconnected parcels.

The speaker will be Joseph Macialek, Community Development Agent, Penn State Extension Service. The meeting is being conducted by the Wayne County Agricultural Extension Service in cooperation with area farmers. All interested persons are welcome.

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