

Grassland FFA celebrates 25th anniversary

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
NEW HOLLAND — "I remember we had our first banquet in the high school cafeteria.

"Things have sure changed since then."

With these words, Robert Freeman, R1 Denver, recalled the organizational year of the Grassland, FFA Chapter in the Eastern Lancaster County School District. Owner of a plumbing business, Freeman served as charter president of the chapter.

On Friday, March 9, Freeman joined numerous other Grassland FFA alumni, community leaders from the local, county and state levels, current members and parents and a number of program supporters in observing the 25th anniversary of the Grassland FFA Chapter.

In all, more than 450 attended the silver anniversary banquet. The large number was divided between the New Holland and Blue Ball fire halls for the banquet and then convened in the high school auditorium for the awards program.

It was a night of reminiscing for the FFA graduates, recalling moments from their ag shop days or trips to Kansas City.

Before they have moved on to varying careers in production agriculture, agribusiness and other lines of endeavor, the quarter-century of Grassland FFA'ers have achieved an enviable record in their Blue and Gold jackets. Some of these achievements were cited at the anniversary program.

In recognizing those attending from each of the graduating classes, it was pointed out that the chapter has had one national officer, 13 state officers, 27 county officers, 12 recipients of the American Degree and 138 Keystone Degree recipients.

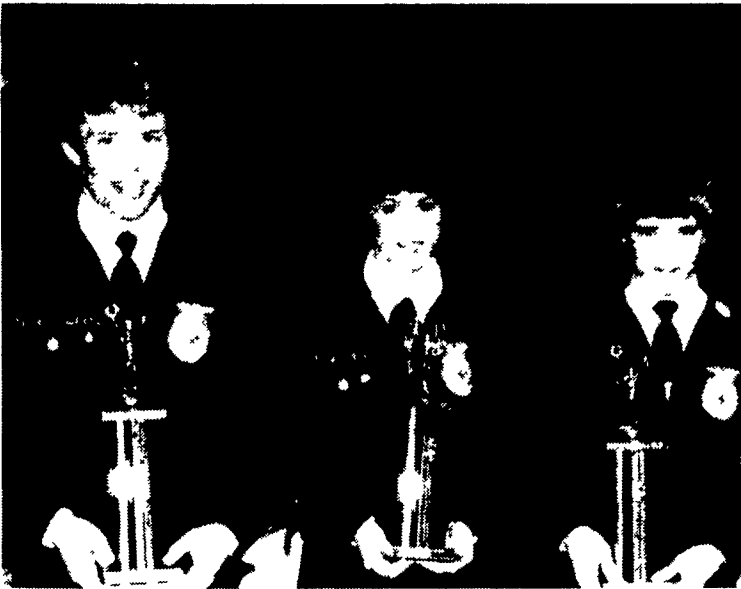
And over the past quarter-century there have been many who have received countless other awards, including the coveted "stars." Honored this year as the chapter's stars were:

Brian Gingrich and Earl Sauder — Star Greenhands.

Floyd Huber, Star Chapter Farmer; and Darryl Weaver, Star



Trio of presidents at the 25th anniversary banquet of the Grassland FFA Chapter include, from the left, Robert Freeman, R1 Denver, charter president; Sam Hayes, featured speaker and Minority Whip of the State House of Representatives who served as president of the Warriors Mark FFA in 1957-58 in Huntingdon County; and Marlin Mast, current Grassland president.



Red Rose Stars of Grassland FFA are, from the left, David Fisher, Agribusiness; Margaret Herr and Nelson Horning, Star Red Rose Farmers.

Chapter Agribusinessman.

David Fisher, Star Red Rose Agribusinessman; Margaret Herr and Nelson Horning, Star Red Rose Farmers.

Scott Bailey — Star Grassland Farmer.

In addition, 14 first-year chapter members received their Greenhand Degrees, 17 received Chapter Degrees, 14 were honored with their Red Rose Degrees and six with their Keystone Degree, including Scott Bailey, Gerald Baker, Lamar King, Kevin Martin, Ernest Mast and Michael Weaver.

Among the tributes paid the chapter was the following letter sent by Sec. of Agriculture John Block:

"Congratulations on 25 years of service to the agricultural community of the Eastern Lancaster County School District. As a former FFA member, the father of an FFA member and the member of an agricultural community, I know fully the tremendous contributions of the FFA to the individual, the parents and the community.

"I wish the very best to you and the others gathered to celebrate the anniversary of the Grassland FFA Chapter. Although I cannot be there with you tonight, I am with you in the spirit of the Future Farmers of America believing strongly in the future of farming with a faith borne not out of words but of deeds.

"Best wishes for continued success."

In her address to her home chapter members, Carolyn Witmer, State FFA president, reminded the Grasslanders of three important words — faith, hope and love — that will be vital throughout their lives.

Featured speaker for the evening was Sam Hayes, Minority Whip of the Pa. House of Representatives. Former president of the Warriors Mark FFA in Huntingdon County, Hayes received his Honorary American Degree a couple of years ago.

"America is economically and morally underpinned by agriculture," he said.

"The true test of civilization, as Emerson has said, is not the size of its cities or crops but the kind of men and women it turns out.

"Tonight we've seen many who have gone out from this FFA Chapter to places of leadership in agriculture and in their communities.

"This chapter is one of the great ag organizations in the state.

"But yesterday's successes do not preserve the future of this chapter, county, state or nation.

"It's not just the cows and alfalfa



Star Greenhands of Grassland FFA are Brian Gingrich, left and Earl Sauder.



Star Chapter Agribusinessman of Grassland FFA is Darryl Weaver, left, and Star Chapter Farmer is Floyd Huber.

and such that are good measures of what can be produced. It's the men and women that make the difference.

"During the next 25 years, be

faithful to agriculture — it truly underpins our society.

"Be faithful to the FFA Motto.

"And remember that learning never stops."



Scott Bailey is the Star Grassland Farmer.

