

African ag visitors tour Berks, Lehigh

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS

Staff Correspondent

SHARTLESVILLE — Several farmers and agribusinesses in Berks and Lehigh counties displayed their operations last week to three visiting agricultural representatives from Africa.

Hosted by the Berks-Lehigh Valley Farm Credit Service, Fogelsville, the students were sponsored by the Agricultural Cooperative Development In-

ternational. This week long stay included farm and farm business tours, the PAFC Conference at Lehigh Valley Farmers and a tour of the plant, and a day with a loan officer of Farm Credit.

The three visitors - Haroun G. Buzohera, Tanzania; Fernandez Mutiria, Kenya; and Haggrey Manase Akile, Tanzania, contacted the Farm Credit Service to learn the policies and procedures used in processing, approving, and

monitoring the short and intermediate term loans to their member-borrowers. They were also interested in viewing the modern mechanization used daily by farmers and agri-businesses in this area.

On their tours, they also had the advantage of discussing with the Farm Credit member-borrowers, their views on the Farm Credit system and the advantages of belonging to an association of this

type. Opinions on other types of agricultural cooperatives were also discussed as the Africans gained insight into the local concepts of farm businesses.

The studies of the Africans are primarily related to agri-business management. All three are currently masters degree candidates at the USDA Graduate School in Washington. They are scheduled to complete their degrees in May.

Haroun G. Buzohera is presently employed as a project officer in a bank. He holds a two-year degree in an agricultural college and was previously a manager at the National Chick Hatchery.

Fernandez Mutiria is the present credit officer with the Ministry of Cooperatives Development in Nairobi, Kenya. His academic training includes a B.A. in commerce from the Nairobi University, Kenya.

Haggrey Manase Akile holds a diploma in agricultural engineering. He is a project officer and was a past field foreman for Kilombero Sugar Company, and an assistant field officer in the Ministry of Agriculture of his country.

While in Berks County, the students were guided by Farm Credit staff on tours of the farms of Sterling Raber, William Howerter and the Marsteller Farm. On Tuesday, April 3, they attended the PAFC Conference at Lehigh Valley Farmers, heard speakers and viewed slide presentations on cooperatives and the American free enterprise system. They were also able to tour the plant. On Wednesday, April 4, their schedule included stops at the Tallman Potato operation, Swope and Bashore equipment, the V & J

Mushroom plant, and the Campbells Soup packaging plant at Evansville.

On Thursday, April 5, three loan officers from Farm Credit, Ed Buss, Gene Olshefsky, and Dave Ketner, hosted a visitor throughout the day during their schedule of loan officers duties. At the end of the week, Farm Credit policies were reviewed and procedures, controls, and accounting practices were shared with the visitors by the Farm Credit staff.

Berks-Lehigh Valley Farm Credit Service is part of the national network of the farm credit system consisting of 12 districts throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The largest agricultural lender in the country, the Farm Credit system can boast a cooperative structure where member-borrowers control the operation through an elected board of directors. The Berks-Lehigh Association serves seven counties, Berks, Lehigh, Northampton, Schuylkill, Monroe, Carbon, and Pike, and currently consists of 1,848 member-borrowers with an outstanding loan volume of \$97,641,528.00.

York FFA events

YORK — The York County FFA met last Saturday and went bowling at Suburban Lanes. Schools that attended were Dover, Red Lion, Kennard-Dale and Northern.

Other upcoming social events include an FFA picnic at Rocky Ridge Park on June 3. Members should bring covered dishes and beverage. Later, softball will be played. On August 2-4 the York County FFA will be at the York Mall.



African visitors who toured farms and agribusiness in Berks and Lehigh counties last week include, from the left, Haggrey Manase Akile, Tanzania; Haroun G. Buzohera, Tanzania; and Fernandez Mutiria, Kenya. The visitors were hosted by the Berks-Lehigh Valley Farm Credit Service.

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