



Roy Sprinthall chats with Henry Reist, Mount Joy, prior to their takeoff for a bird's eye view of Lancaster County. Sprinthall, tour coordinator for the British group visiting in Lancaster with the Friendship Force exchange, enjoyed the opportunity to put Lancaster County in perspective. He called the landscape very similar to Derbyshire, England, his home.

English Friendship Force visitors tour Lancaster farmland

BY SALLY BAIR
Staff Correspondent

LANCASTER — A visit to Lancaster County is not complete without an introduction to the county's agriculture and its unique landscape. For 14 English visitors, the similarities to their part of Great Britain was unmistakable.

The visitors were in Lancaster County for two weeks as Ambassadors in the Friendship Force exchange, an organization designed to help promote better international understanding. Hailing from Derbyshire, England, in the geographical center of the country, the visitors appreciated the beautiful green, lush Lancaster County countryside as they toured the county during visits with two different host families.

Roy Sprinthall, tour coordinator, said, "Your farms could be in England if they take away the silos. We don't have tall silos, but the countryside is very English. It could be almost anywhere in England."

Sprinthall had the unique opportunity of seeing the country from the air when flying farmer Henry Reist, Mount Joy, offered him a plane ride in his private, two-seater plane. It was an experience Sprinthall never expected to have and give him a good overview of the county and its features.

Reist will travel to England in August with his wife as part of the two-way exchange program, and hopes to have the opportunity to visit some English farms while there.

Sprinthall said the area reminds him of the "market garden" center near the city of Derby, his home. The market garden area is so named because of its acres and acres of cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce and carrots, much of which is offered at markets similar to Lancaster's Central Market.

He said they have markets in England, operating every day but Wednesday and Sunday, but their markets have separate sections which house clothing and hardware as well as food.

Dairy farms in England are small and privately owned. England has many sheep farms as well. Sheep are raised for both meat and wool production. Sprinthall said the sheep run in the wild during the summer months, making it necessary for farmers to

search for newborn lambs. In winter they would be given shelter.

Imports are mostly fruits, since the climate is not suitable for commercial fruit production.

Milk is also imported, but not by choice, Sprinthall notes, saying that their imports are dictated by the European Economic Community, of which Great Britain is a member. "We're not short on milk," he says.

George Evans, another visitor who is manager of a supermarket known as Sainsburys, one of a chain of 245 stores, is candid about the milk market. He said the EEC forces Britain to have an open door to milk imports, but people are encouraged not to buy the imported products through advertising. He said other countries export their milk at a loss, and adds, "Our producers are upset because of it."

He points out, "The milk trade is suffering and the demand has lessened."

A unique feature of English milk marketing is that home delivery is still the norm. Sprinthall explains, "The English housewife is passionately fond of having her own milk delivered to the door. The only day it is not delivered is Christmas Day."

He said there are milkmen even in "very rural areas," and he estimates that 95 percent of the population is covered by home delivery. Along with dairy deliveries, the housewife can order such items as bread and potatoes.

The deliveries are made in glass bottles, which, of course, can be recycled. Evans said milk has been carried in supermarkets only in the last six or seven years, and it has been available only in cartons or plastic containers for that amount of time.

UHT milk is coming into its own in England. Evans says, "We use it regularly because it is convenient. It has a long life. We use it mostly for cooking and for tea."

The UHT milk is available only in liter or larger boxes, not in the small snack size servings being featured in this country. Flavored milks are available as well as regular milk.

One secret to its success is that it is cheaper than the fresh version. Refrigerated milk costs about 21 pence per pint and UHT costs from 15 to 17 pence, making it attractive to the consumer.

Cheese is a popular dairy

product in England, with cheddar accounting for the largest volume. Butter is imported from New Zealand, long recognized as the manufacturer of high quality butter. Although there has been a 15 percent decline in butter use over the last 10 years, it is still a good buy by our standards, costing about \$1.40 a pound.

Sprinthall remarked that there is a wider selection of products available in American stores than in England. He said his family does not have meat every day, noting, "We eat simply but nutritiously. It is simple because my wife works every day as a nurse, so she prepares the meal in about ½ hour. It is not how much you eat but what you eat. Meat is very expensive commodity."

Evans says that meat sales have been declining in England over the last few years. Much of the meat offered in his store comes from company-owned farms in Scotland. There is a butcher shop in the supermarket.

Supermarkets such as his carry non-food items, basic home needs as well as pharmaceuticals.

The shopping habits of the British housewife varies according to age group, but he said the average housewife shops once a week. Senior citizens may shop daily, but use shopping as a social outing. Evans said that refrigerators in England are small, necessitating more frequent shopping trips.

Although checkout lines are not yet automated, Evans says that inventory is automated, and product codes are used for ordering.

While in Lancaster Sprinthall had the opportunity to tour Atlantic Breeders Cooperative with his host, N. Alan Bair. Sprinthall said there is a bull stud within 30 miles of his home. So far, because of extremely rigid health regulations, no U.S. semen is imported in England.

In their two-week whirlwind visit to the county, these 14 British visitors saw a great deal of its agriculture and learned much of its history. They were pleasantly surprised by the attention accorded them by the media, and the interest shown in their visit. They were officially greeted by Chairman of the County Commissioners James Huber, Representative Gibson Armstrong and Lancaster Mayor Arthur Morris.

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