

86 attend PFA Youth Leadership Conference

LEWISBURG — "The future of farming is in your hands. You have to shape it with those hands." Carolyn Witmer, 1983-84 state president of the Future Farmers of America told an attentive audience at the banquet for the sixth annual Pennsylvania Farmers' Association (PFA) Youth Leadership Conference.

The conference, held at Bucknell University in Lewisburg from June 24-28, drew 86 young people, representing 49 PFA organizations across the Commonwealth. Sponsored by the PFA Women's Committee, the conference is designed to teach high school students about the legislative process and the PFA's work.

"I've developed an understanding of what happens to a legislative bill," says John Burkholder of Lancaster County, one of the participants.

The group broke down into advisory councils, a PFA-like structure with a board of directors, and a House of Representatives to consider issues, form resolutions, attend mock hearings, and work through lobbyists to shape legislation. The issues included farm-related topics such as taxation, safety and land use, public-interest topics such as drugs and alcohol, prison reform, crime, and nuclear proliferation.

To liven up the proceedings there were some unusual bills introduced, including requiring cars to be painted with polka dots and, of course, changing the conference curfew until later. The latter bill passed the House but was vetoed by the Governor, PFA regional coordinator Dave Muzzy.

In addition to learning about legislation, the young people set up and ran a cooperative store, selling milk, candy, and snacks. The

participants were shareholders in the co-op and divided dividends at the end of the conference. "I live on a dairy farm, and co-ops are a way of life for us," Burkholder notes. "I needed to know how they function, and I've gotten that here." The PFA Field Services organizers, who ran the conference, made the learning fun by presenting a movie on co-ops and holding a College-Bowl-type quiz

among the students afterwards.

There was time for other fun, too. In addition to recreation time, the students took elective classes in music, communication, self-improvement, and bicycle safety. Twelve of the young people received certificates from the state Department of Education as instructors in bicycle safety, a skill they can take home and use in their

communities.

"I've met a lot of new people, learned about different kinds of farming and how the political system works," says Carolyn Martens of Waterford, Erie County. Martens' parents are both active in PFA and she adds, "The conference has helped me see what PFA offers my parents and why and how they're involved."

New winter barley resists powdery mildew

ITHACA, N.Y. — A new high-yielding winter barley with excellent built-in resistance to powdery mildew, a fungal disease considered to be the second most serious malady affecting the barley crop, has been developed at Cornell University.

To be made available for commercial use in time for planting in the fall of 1985, the new variety was developed by Neal F. Jensen and Mark E. Sorrells, both in the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell. Jensen, who initiated the project in 1966, retired from Cornell six years ago.

Sorrells, an assistant professor of plant breeding and a specialist in small grains, followed up on Jensen's work and made the final selections after a series of tests conducted over the past several years.

Sorrells announced the new barley during Cornell's Seed Growers' Field Day held yester-

day. The annual event attracted about 100 seed growers from New York and neighboring states.

He says that seed growers in New York State will be planting the yet-to-be-named barley this fall for production of certified seed for use by barley growers during the 1985-86 season. Winter barley is planted in the fall and harvested in mid-July the following year.

Used primarily as animal feed, the winter barley crop is grown on some 10,000 to 20,000 acres in central and western parts of New York State. Other eastern states that grow this crop are Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. It also is grown in Michigan and in Ontario, Canada.

Farmers also grow a spring barley, one that is planted in April for harvest in summer, but an excessively wet spring such as the one experienced this year often hampers spring planting activities. Because winter barley is planted in early fall, a prolonged

rainy spell in spring, if anything, usually has a positive effect on the crop, Sorrells explains.


In Cornell tests conducted over the past three years, the new barley has averaged 85 bushels an acre in yield, about three to four bushels more than Schuyler. Also a Cornell variety, Schuyler has been the most popular one since its commercial debut in 1970.


Other characteristics in terms of test weight, maturity, plant height, lodging resistance, and winter hardiness are similar to Schuyler, but mildew resistance is better than Schuyler, according to Sorrells. The new barley also is moderately resistant to other diseases such as loose smut and leaf rust, but it is susceptible to leaf scald.

"Under good growing conditions the new variety has a definite edge over Schuyler in yield and mildew resistance," Sorrells points out. "It eventually will replace Schuyler."




Carolyn Witmer, 1983-84 Pa. FFA president, talks with PFA Field Services Director Mel Eckhaus.





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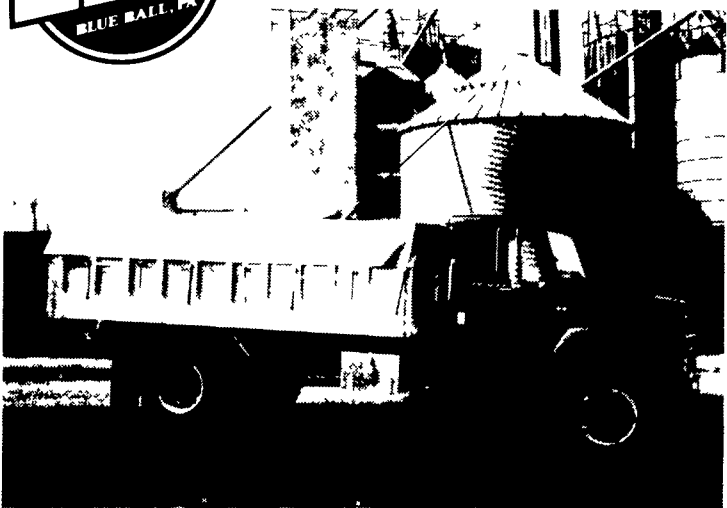
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