

For Ephrata's Tom High, Au

BY JACK HUBLEY

EPHRATA — It was August of 1984 when Tom High's world turned upside-down. As a participant in the FFA's Work Experience Abroad program, the son of Floyd and Dorothy High of Ephrata left the U.S. for Australia on Aug. 21.

The plan called for six months of farming experience and a return trip in February. But the Ephrata High School graduate enjoyed life in the southern hemisphere so much that he never got home until the end of May.

And from the beginning of his

sojourn, Tom's nine months away from home were highlighted by a long list of first-time experiences. Accustomed to having his feet planted firmly on the ground, the young farmer hopped a plane, for the first time in his life, enroute to three days of orientation in California.

And 14 hours after leaving late summer in California, he found himself on the other side of the equator...in late winter. Although residents of southeastern Australia don't have to worry about sub-freezing temperatures, Tom recalls that "it was still pretty cold

when we got there."

High's first tour of duty was on the farm of Dave and Lola Pietsch who, along with their 24-year-old son Chris, farm 2,300 acres of barley, wheat and peas and run a farrow-to-finish hog operation.

"It was pretty dry in that area," says Tom, noting that only 2½ inches of rain had fallen during the first six months of 1984. To conserve precious soil moisture, the family cultivates only one-half of their acreage each year, allowing the other half to lie fallow. One-third of the cropland is devoted to peas, which are then sold as cattle



Confinement facilities, such as this 200-unit finishing building, are relatively new to Australia.



Tom High reviews a few of his Australian souvenirs with parents Dorothy and Floyd High of Ephrata. Sponsored by local businesses, High spent nine months in Australia through the FFA's Work Experience Abroad program.

feed. The climate is simply too dry for corn or soybeans, Tom says.

A couple of months after harvest, the wheat and barley fields are burned off to break down the residue. "If you leave wheat straw on top of the ground it wouldn't rot from one year to the next," says Tom, noting that Australian soil seems to lack the acids necessary to break down crop material.

The Pietschs grind their own feed for their swine herd. Their 30 sows are bred and kept outdoors, and the only confinement unit on the farm is a 200-pig finishing barn. Although the emphasis is on producing lean pork, Tom says that Australian hogs seem to be a lot fatter, a factor he attributes to the country's lack of quality breeding stock.

But Australian swine producers are making a concerted effort to upgrade their herds, Tom points out. Modern management techniques such as artificial insemination and confinement housing are on the increase, and, though Tom had worked with swine through his FFA projects

back home, his first hands-on AI experience came in Australia.

After three months of work at the Pietsch operation, Tom found himself in cattle country on the farm of John and Betty Landis located northeast of Victoria in the state of New South Wales.

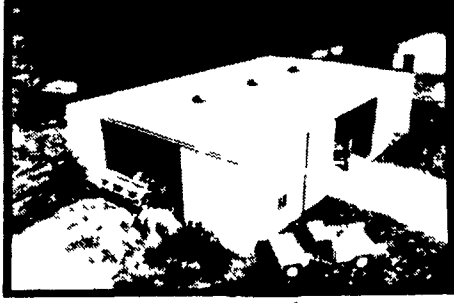
The Landis operation consists of 7,000 acres of grassland and forests, home to the Landis' 800 head of Hereford cattle. Housing costs are minimal on the Landis spread, where the cattle roam freely across extensive grasslands. The range is fenced into 12 separate areas and the cattle tend to cluster into small herds called "mobs". Cows are serviced by the farm's 12 bulls, and the calving rate averages about 85 percent.

The Landis' calving season is spread over an eight-month period, and cows and calves are sold on a monthly basis. How do Australian farmers go about rounding up their merchandise on such extensive rangeland? Tom took his first lesson in cowpunching to find out. "It was the first time I ever rode a

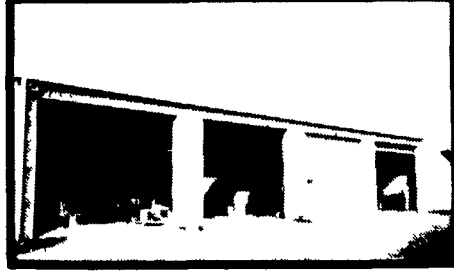
QUALITY BUILDINGS
BY BUTLER



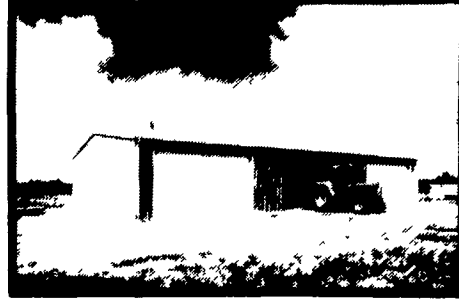
SUMMER SALES



FARMSTED II



SHOP - STORAGE - GARAGE



AG-MASTER 2:12

SPECIAL DISCOUNTS ON ALL BUTLER
STANDARD BUILDINGS NOW THRU AUG. 15th

\$8,914.00* F.O.B.

* Galvalume Walls and Roof With One Double Slide Door

BUTLER MFG. CO.
Attn P E Hess
P O Box 337, Oxford, PA 19363



ASK ABOUT OUR
NEW DEALER PROGRAM
MAIL IN COUPON TODAY

Name _____
Address _____
County _____ Zip _____
City _____ State _____
Phone _____
(Include area code)

Full Line Of Insulation, Roll or Board
See Your Butler Agri-Builder For All Your Insulation Needs

See Your
Agri-Builder
Before
You Buy

GRANT'S CONSTRUCTION
CO., INC
R D #1
Buffalo Mills, PA 15534
PH 814-842-6540

C & M SALES INC
R D #1
Honesdale, PA 18431
PH 717 253 1612

GOMPFF CONSTRUCTION
CO., INC
1841 Jerry's Road
Street, MD 21154
PH 301 692 5350

MYERS BUILDING
SYSTEMS, INC
R D #1, Box 161
Clear Spring MD 21722
PH 301-582 4200

NAZARETH BUILDING
SYSTEMS, INC
P O Box 47
Nazareth, PA 18064
PH 215-837 7700

TRI COUNTY
AGRI-SYSTEMS
R D #1, Box 55
Swedesboro, NJ 08085
PH 609-467 3174

MATTSON ENTERPRISES
1605 Mt. Holly
Burlington, NJ
PH 609-386 7

NOBODY
BUT BUTLER
WE WAIT
BUSINESS

Ask Your Agri-Builder

MANY OPTIONS... D

Let Us Do The Con

* Prices May Vary From