

Bring agents together...and they'll talk farming

BY SALLY BAIR

Staff Correspondent

LANCASTER — When Extension county agents leave their own counties, it seems that the thing they enjoy most is visiting other counties and learning about agriculture there.

This week over 1,000 County Agents from around the United States, packed into tour buses and made 85 stops throughout South Central Pennsylvania. The largest number of visits were in Lancaster County, with stops at dairy farms,

fruit farms, markets and wineries.

The agents were interested in getting specific, and at nearly each stop they peppered their hosts with questions about length of growing season, yields, varieties and other points. Naturally they enjoyed traveling through the picturesque countryside and Arnold Lueck, Lancaster county agent and tour host, pointed out, "Even the rain didn't dampen their enthusiasm." Indeed, it did not, and at every visit they poked in every available corner to see how things are done

in Pennsylvania.

At Funk's Farm Market near Millersville the visiting agents were treated to information about farmland preservation efforts in Lancaster County Amos Funk, a guiding force in the Lancaster Agricultural Preserve Board, showed maps of the county and explained about the deed restriction program and the designated agricultural preserves.

Tobacco was of interest to many of the guests, who also have it grown in their home counties. They asked about diseases, price per pound, yield per acre, and marketing possibilities.

To Lawrence Winkler, who is a county agent in Texas, the small family farms and their enormous productivity were of great interest. He couldn't help comparing it with the thousands of acres needed to support livestock in his part of the nation.

Alvin Anderson, extension director of Franklin County, Iowa, said the tours are always a popular part of the national county agents convention. "It is an educational event," he noted.

"We love the people here—they are down-to-earth folks," says Bill Witherspoon, national vice-president elect of NACAA, and an extension director in Horry County, S.C. He said the convention is part vacation and part educational, and that the tours are always a highlight.



Several agents are treated to an in-depth pow-wow with Amos Funk.



Wilmer Rohrer, left, talks to Lawrence Winkler, right, a county agent from Texas.

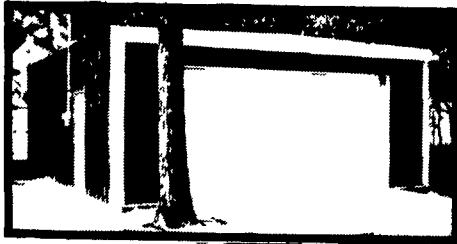


Kim Stroud, an employee of Atlantic Breeders Cooperative, takes a group of county agents through the company's animal housing facilities.

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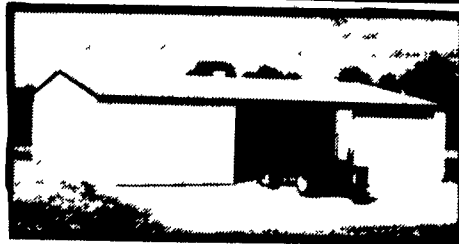
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