

Indian Visitors Surprised by Americans' Friendliness

BY SALLY BAIR
Lancaster County
Correspondent

LANCASTER — "Americans are more friendly, more smiling and more loving than I expected. We are getting much more than we deserve." These observations were made by Udendra P. Waghray, one of 29 Ambassadors from India spending two weeks in the Lancaster area through the Friendship Force Exchange.

Several of the Ambassadors, who are staying in homes for their two-week visit here, have agricultural backgrounds, not surprising in a country in which 70 percent of the people are employed in agriculture. India has a population of 723 million people and has land area about one third the size of the United States.

Udendra, who is being hosted by Keith and Kathy Vogt of Marietta, said he did not expect Americans to be so friendly or that hosts would spend so much time with their guests. He also said he thought they might not receive as much respect because they come from a country that is poorer than the United States.

Similar comments were voiced by Jhina Padam Singh and Mahendra S. Patel who were spending the first of their two weeks with Earl and Doris Hummel, Landisville. Jhina operates about 10 acres of orchards with two of his sons and Mahendra grew up on his father's 60-acre farm.

Mahendra says truthfully, "We had some apprehension about how we would find Americans. We have been absorbed as family members and have a fantastic family here."

Jhina agrees, "We have festivity all the time. We are completely indebted to Doris for all she does for us. We are simple people, and are all children of God." Both men agreed that they would not choose

to come as tourists, but liked the Friendship Force exchange because they could actually live in a home in this country.

Also visiting with the Vogts, who operate a grain hauling business, is Dilip Kumar Patel, who is a wholesale vegetable grower from the state of Gujarat in western India. Dilip is enjoying the lush agriculture in this area, and has had the opportunity to go to the wholesale vegetable auction in Leola.

Dilip grows vegetables on seven acres of land in the west central state of Gujarat, a major agricultural area of India. His father grows vegetables on five acres. Their crops includes such local vegetables as cabbage and cauliflower as well as mangoes. He said bananas and sugar cane are also major crops in his area.

A member of a cooperative, Dilip hires seasonal help as necessary to work the crops. Labor is cheap and readily available in that populous nation. However, Dilip makes a universal statement about the agricultural economy, when he replies to a question about the prices he receives. "I would like to make more money," he said.

Dilip purchases hybrid plants for planting and when he needs a tractor for working in the fields or for hauling his produce to market, he hires one. Most of the work is done by hand.

His comment about the Lancaster County countryside is, "It's beautiful. In India it is mostly flat."

Udendra agrees, "In India it rains just once a year during a three or four month period. There is not as much greenery there."

To compensate for the lack of rainfall, Dilip irrigates his crops.

The India delegation began their trip by spending three days in London and two days in New York,

and both young men agree that Lancaster Countians are friendlier than the city people with whom they came into contact. Waghray says, "This is a beautiful place to live in. There is a lot of land available and a lot of nice people. They are very 'helping natured.' They laugh a lot and smile a lot."

Kathy Vogt quickly notes that the smiling and friendliness seems to come forth from both sides. She said that during a trip to the Capitol on Monday to meet Governor Thornburgh, the Indian visitors were very outgoing.

The food served here is quite different from India. Udendra explains, "Your diet contains a lot of protein, and we take a lot of carbohydrates." Indian food is more highly spiced, though he admits that in India there are more and more foods being introduced from other cultures. Udendra lives in Andhra Pradesh in south central India.

Jhina, who has a degree in horticulture, raises apples, cherries, apricots, almonds, peaches, walnuts, hazelnuts and citrus fruits on the land he operates with the help of two sons. While they farm about 10 acres, he said the average farm may be about three acres. His orchards are located in Himachal Pradesh, north of Delhi, within view of snow-capped peaks of the Himalayan Mountains. Indeed, the chief minister of that state is an agriculturist, Shri Vir Bhadra Singh, who has a special interest in apple cultivation.

His home state has a lot of agriculture, and it is from 5,000 to 17,000 feet above sea level.

His agricultural products are sold wholesale in New Delhi through agents on commission. He said that markets in his country are mostly open air markets with the exception of an air-conditioned market, called the Baliki Bazaar, founded by Indira Ghandi's late son.

Jhina noted that his orchards are managed with two to three extra people helping on a regular basis. During harvest and other busy times they hire up to 30 additional workers.

Jhina is quite proud of his accomplishment in growing almond trees in a climate which features 65 inches of rainfall annually. Usually, those trees can't take that much water, but he works in changing the structure of the soil to permit it to have proper drainage. He said he also grafts trees "for a perfect union" of the stalk and the budding branch. A careful spray program is also important to his success. "I have built up resistance in my trees, and I have standardized from the beginning to marketing, and have built up a reputation."

Because of the value of land, Jhina said his orchards look like "a veritable jungle." Nonetheless, in a trail blazing experiment, he managed to grow cauliflower both for its fruit and seed among the trees while their leaves were off. He said he did it to show others that it would work, and he received a premium price for his seed.

While Mahendra works now in graphic design, he is in close touch with his family. Two of his brothers farm with his father, also in the Gujarat state, in western India. They grow cotton, wheat, mangoes, peanuts and bananas.

Mahendra points out that bananas produce a crop once every 14 months, and the crop is worth 18,000 rupees per acre. There are 13 rupees to \$1. Cotton yields about 6,000 rupees per acre. Cotton takes about six months to grow and is rotated with wheat or corn.

Mahendra said that eight to 10 employees work on his father's farm regularly, and during the busy season they employ 40 to 50 additional workers.



Doris Hummel, Landisville, poses with her two Indian visitors near their favorite tree, a magnolia. Mahendra S. Patel, center, is graphic designer who grew up on a farm in the state of Gujarat, and Jhina Padam Singh, owns about 10 acres of orchards in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

The diet for many of the visitors is vegetarian, and Mahendra explains that rice and pulse, the edible pods of peas, beans or lentils, comprise a large part of their diet. His father-in-law produces spices like fennel for sale.

Deepakbhai T. Patel is visiting on the Dauphin County dairy farm of Tom and Tiz Williams, and will spend his second week with Creedon Bixler, a technician for Atlantic Breeders Cooperative, to give him wide exposure to Pennsylvania agriculture.

Deepakbhai, whose home is also in the state of Gujarat, raises sugar cane, banana, mangoes and vegetables on 35 acres. He also wholesales his produce.

He owns two Holstein cows and two Jersey cows, and his family uses the milk.

Jhina pointed out that they too have two milk-producing cows, but they also milk a "she-buffalo". According to Jhina, the buffaloes,

milk has 6.5 percent butterfat content, which is higher even than Jersey cows. He said the original Jersey stock has been crossbred to help them withstand the rigors of the Himalayas. Mahendra said they have about four buffaloes from which they use the milk, and they keep bullocks for doing the field work.

Udendra expresses the feelings of many of the visitors when he explains why he chose to visit the United States through the Friendship Force Exchange. "A tourist can see places, but they cannot meet the people. We can read a lot about America, but I wanted to see how the American behave, how they go to the grocery store and how they live."

For these Indian visitors, the glimpse of the agriculture in South Central Pennsylvania is interesting, but the opportunity to live with families is an experience they will cherish a lifetime.

Farm and Home Scholarships

(Continued from Page A17)

Gina Metzger, 18, the daughter of Sally A. Metzger, 540 Martin Avenue, Mount Joy, is a senior at Donegal High School. She will study nursing at East Stroudsburg University. A member of the National Honor Society, she plays field hockey and football, is a cheerleader and serves on student council.

Mai N. Nguyen, 19, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thao Nguyen, 548 W. Walnut Street, Lancaster. A senior at McCaskey High school, she will study nursing at Lancaster General Hospital.

Kathleen J. Robinson, 17, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald M. Robinson, R.D. 2, Ephrata. A senior at Conestoga Valley High

School, she will study nursing at Messiah College. She was a member of the chorus, county band and concert band.

Carol Shenk, 18, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry G. Shenk, R.D. 1, Manheim, and is a senior at Lancaster Mennonite High School. She will attend Goshen College and study nursing. She is a member of the National Honor Society and is layout editor for the yearbook staff.

Ut Thi Vo, 17, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sinh Van Vo, 1245 Wabank Street, Lancaster, and is a senior at McCaskey High School. She is in the National Honor Society, orchestra and the Burning Glass magazine staff. She will study nursing at Lancaster General Hospital.



Deepakbhai T. Patel, center, is being hosted by Tom and Tiz Williams, left, who operate a dairy farm in Dauphin County, and, in the second week, by Creedin Bixler, Cumberland County. Deepakbhai operates a 35-acre farm in India, raising sugar cane, bananas, mangoes and vegetables.



Keith and Kathy Vogt, Marietta, are hosting Friendship Force visitors Udendra P. Waghray, left, and Dilip Kumar Patel, both of India. The Friendship Force Ambassadors will stay on the Vogt farm for one week before moving to second week hosts.



Students who will study nursing who received Farm and Home Foundation scholarships include, from left: Gina Metzger, Mount Joy; Kathleen Robinson, Ephrata; Carol Shenk, Manheim; and Ut Vo, McCaskey. (Mai N. Nguyen was absent from photo.)