



Larry Ragan, left, and Dr. Jill Findeis look over the brochure for the 1987 Governor's School for Agriculture. Ragan taught computer applications to the students while Findeis taught agricultural economics; both were pleased with the high level of enthusiasm displayed by the 60 students attending the first school.

*Application Deadline is Feb. 27*

## Students Acclaim Governor's Ag School

BY SALLY BAIR

Lancaster County Correspondent UNIVERSITY PARK — "It was one of the best summers I ever had," Randy Risser says without hesitation. Nicole Rovner agrees, "I got so much more out of it than I ever expected."

What they are commenting on is the Pennsylvania Governor's School for Agriculture, which is now accepting applications for its second session to be held at the Pennsylvania State University June 28 through Aug. 1.

The five-week school is designed to introduce outstanding high school juniors and seniors to the diversity of agriculture. The five weeks are filled with hands-on experiences in labs, lectures, field trips and visits with college professors, and, according to these two Lancaster County participants in the first-ever program last summer, it is an experience worth checking into.

Nikki, a senior at Hempfield High School, says she has known since she was little that she wanted to attend Penn State. However, the five-week Governor's School "made me more enthusiastic about Penn State. I met a lot of professors I will have when I am there."

Although she has already made plans to study wildlife science, Nikki says, "The School made me more aware of what was available as far as majors."

Risser, a senior at Solanco High School, does not plan to attend Penn State, but said, "It taught me a lot about college, and I feel good about going to college."

He said about 50 percent of the 60 students attending the school were from farms. He grew up on a farm near Holtwood with a grain business, and has been active in the Future Farmers of America. But he admits that he learned a lot more about the kinds of careers that are possible in agriculture. "We went everywhere and learned a little bit about everything."

Those who were non-farm students were definitely exposed to a wider understanding of agriculture, according to Risser, who added, "I was too."

Larry Ragan, educational coordinator for Agriculture Information Services with Penn State, taught uses of computers to the students. He says, "The kids were really, really excited. It was challenging to keep up with their interest level."

Ragan was surprised that so few of the students had computer experience, but said they quickly became enthusiastic about the capabilities of the computer. Each student was given an electronic mail account so that they could send messages via computer to each other and to professors. Some even requested sending a message to the county agent in their home county. Ragan said, "They ate it up. It generated so much interest we couldn't keep the lab open enough."

Dr. Jill Findeis taught critical issues and policies of agriculture economics to the group and says, "They seemed to have lots more

energy than college students." This seemingly unending energy paid off in her course, which included a lot of discussion.

Their young age, and in some cases, lack of experience with agricultural issues, made the class interesting. Findeis says with a smile, "Because of their age, they wanted to see immediate payoffs. They wanted to have an immediate understanding of the 1985 Farm Bill." She said the mix of farm and non-farm kept the discussions interesting.

She said the large amount of "hands-on experiences" were very useful to the students in showing

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Nikki Rovner, a senior at Hempfield High School in Lancaster County, is planning to attend Penn State when she graduates, and was delighted to be able to work with professors she will have as an undergraduate.

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