

## Featured On National T.V.

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Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU), where volunteer tutors work on a one to one basis with students to teach them how to read. As a student who had learned to read proficiently in the program, Neil was asked by CSIU program coordinator, Esther Zabitz, to participate in a local television program about adult literacy. Zabitz needed students to illustrate how her program worked.

It took a lot of hemming and hawing, Neil says, but he agreed to appear under the conditions of utmost secrecy until after the show was over. He told no one except his wife, Susan, he was going to be on the program. Not even his mom or dad. As it turned out judging by the response he received, Neil reports, the whole community must have been watching anyway. Congratulations poured in from every quarter citing him for his courage in coming forward.

Since then Neil's story has graced the front pages of local newspapers, he has been asked to speak to various groups, and in addition to his stint on nationwide television (ABC) for PLUS, is part of an upcoming documentary concerning Frank Laubach's method of teaching people how to read. Each One Teach One is the name of the documentary to be aired on Channel 44 on January 20 at 10:00 p.m., as well as the descriptive name of the Laubach reading method utilized by Neil.

A high school graduate, Neil maintains he could always read, although not very well. "I could read, but I couldn't get anything out of it. Every time I came to a word I didn't know, I had to stop until I figured it out and then I would lose my train of thought."

"In school," Neil continues, "when I was called on I was very

bashful. I panicked on the spot and I was called on very little. I couldn't read when I was called on so why would they call on me to read."

Etheletta Charles, a retired English teacher who tutored Neil, observes that at the time there were no special programs to teach children to read and since Neil was a "nice boy" he was likely passed from one grade to the next.

Nor did Neil, a young farm boy, help his own cause, he admits, when he told teachers, "You better give me grades to get out because I'm coming back anyhow."

Neil says he has known for years he would have to do something to improve his reading skills, but found nothing suited to his level or that provided a time frame when he could attend a class, that is until he enrolled in the CSIU program.

"We had checked some of the things at college and high school where they have reading courses, but everything was for somebody who already knew how to read," he recalls.

About three years ago, when Neil's daughter Jennifer began second grade, she brought home a paper containing information about a program designed to help adults learn how to read. Neil read it and told Susan to keep it until the crops were in and he would look into the matter then.

A few months later Neil enrolled in the reading program. According to Mrs. Charles, a student entering the program is tested for existing reading skills and then started at whatever level the tests indicate. The course consists of four books. In Neil's case it was decided he should begin part way through the second book. At the time Neil said he thought he should start farther along, but admits that before long the second book had him "sweating."

## Hog Producers Can Increase Weaned Litter Size

MINNEAPOLIS, MN. — Hog producers can consistently achieve reproductive efficiency in the range of 21 to 22 weaned pigs per sow per year by implementing a herd management program in consultation with a veterinarian, Wayne R. Freese, D.V.M., of Worthington, MN, told editors here at the annual meeting of the American Association of Agricultural Editors.

Dr. Freese, President of the American Association of Swine Practitioners (AASP), detailed the costs of poor reproductive performance at a Livestock Health News Conference co-sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and three other national veterinary organizations.

Litter sizes have recently increased from an average of 7.2 to 7.4 weaned pigs to 7.5 to 7.7, Dr. Freese said, and the best herds are already achieving litters in the range of 9.5 weaned pigs. "There's a lot of room for performance improvement," he emphasized, nothing that the average sow now brings 1.5 to 1.6 litters per year when performance in the range of 2.3 litters is attainable.

The key to increasing reproductive efficiency in swine herds is better animal husbandry, according to Dr. Freese. "That means better management of people and facilities to improve performance

and prevent disease," he said.

Reproductive efficiency is one of the two most important determinants of profitability on a pig farm, Dr. Freese pointed out. The other is the efficiency of conversion of grain to pork.

Major components of an efficient herd management program included in Dr. Freese's presentation to the editors are:

- Record keeping and interpretation;
- Making sure the farrowing house is clean and comfortable;
- Keeping sows cool in hot weather when baby pigs ought to be born into a 90 degree environment;
- Helping producers match hog breeds to their facilities and climate;
- Assessing boar fertility;
- Making seasonal adjustments in the amount and type of feed used;
- Controlling the diseases that affect performance by vaccination and treatment.

"Most hog farmers recognize the importance of reproductive efficiency, but we don't see many

farms where they have put all the pieces together to make a program work," Dr. Freese said.

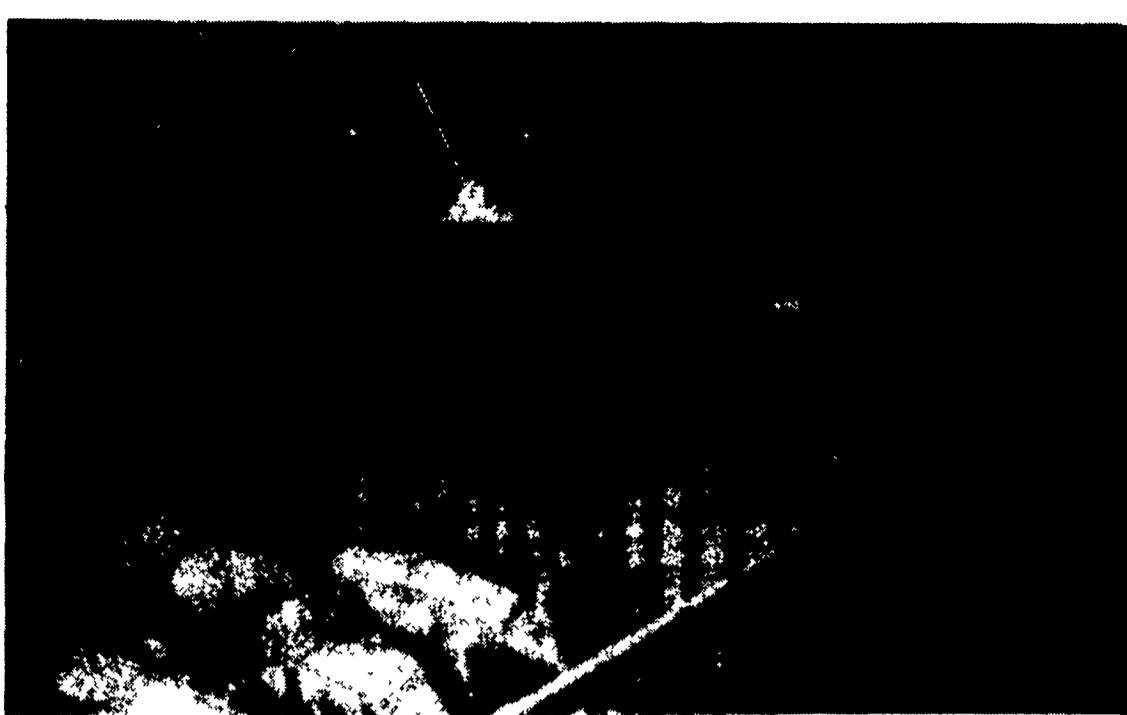
"A veterinarian can be relied upon to give the producer a non-commercial second opinion on everything that's being done to achieve reproductive efficiency. The veterinarian knows what ought to be changed or altered to achieve efficiency, and he or she is not selling feed, equipment or facilities," Dr. Freese said.

A professionally planned herd management program will produce a designated number of weaned pigs with high potential for survival and growing efficiency, using the minimum number of sows. Such a program will also produce pigs free from diseases that can be transmitted, Dr. Freese said.

Joining Dr. Freese at the news conference were George E. Washington, D.V.M., of Purcellville, VA, President of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners, and Robert Ashley Robinson, BVSc, Ph.D., Vice President of the American Association of Sheep and Goat Practitioners.



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Neil is now able to review computer readouts quickly to ascertain what needs to be done for each group of hogs.

Mrs. Charles tutored Neil on a one to one basis for three years. Although she quickly adds that it would have taken half that time if Neil hadn't been so busy with the farm. Sometimes they met only once a month during the busy season.

The course had several advantages to Neil. At last he found a course that taught at his level and the classes were held whenever he and Mrs. Charles found a time that suited both. Neil also liked the one on one approach, noting that if he didn't know something he didn't hold up the whole class asking questions until he learned it. The only cost to Neil was approximately \$15 for books which are now being supplied free of charge to students in the CSIU area (Union, Montour, Columbia, Northumberland and Snyder Counties).

Mrs. Charles says in their five county literacy program they currently have about 200 students. Considering the latest statistics that one in every five adults can't



Wertz reviews weekly computer readouts.

read, there are many more people who need to improve their reading skills.

"One of the fallacies, too," Mrs. Charles notes, "is we often think when people can't read that they're retarded and that's not true. It's nothing to do with the fact that they can't learn, it's just that somewhere along the line it didn't happen."

Through everything Neil's family has been most supportive. "We're behind him," Susan states, adding, "I wasn't going to push him into this. He knew he needed it and I knew he needed it and when it came time for him to go, he went."

Besides needing to keep up on farm happenings, a compelling reason Neil enrolled in the reading program at that time was the advent of a new computer on the farm. His brother, Leon, who does the harvesting and planting, presented Neil, who runs the hog end of the business, with a sizable sheaf of weekly computer readouts concerning their swine operation.

"Because I read so slowly, it took me a couple days just to get through that stack of papers," Neil recalls. Since he would be receiving the readouts weekly, he knew he had to take action to improve his reading.

Also, on the personal side, he mentions a daily irritation that greatly motivated him. It occurred every time the mail arrived. "I would get the mail and take it to Susan so she could read it to me," Neil recalls. Then in a voice echoing with exasperation, he continued, "And she always read it to herself first -- I always had to wait until she read it to herself first!"

Since he's become a better reader Neil notes positive changes around the farm and in his home. He no longer has to struggle to read the computer sheets, and when he has time he pursues the farm maga-

zines to keep abreast of farming changes. He can read warning labels on spray chemicals and keep accurate records on his hogs more easily. He says he's delighted to be able to take down telephone messages instead of trying to remember everything.

One of the best parts, he feels, is that when he needs to know something in a hurry, he can read it for himself. Additionally, he is now able to read to his children. "I didn't read any books to Gerald or Jennifer, but I can read to Alan."

Neil and Leon are continuing to farm the family farm. The brothers formed a partnership in 1976 after their father suffered the loss of his sight. Neil and his father had a herd of milk cows but gradually Neil became involved in raising pigs. In 1975, he says, he built his first hog finishing house. Now they keep an average of 120 sows year round. With the younger pigs, they have a total of 1100 hogs on the farm at all times. "We sell what we don't have room to raise," he states.

A variety of crops are grown by the brothers to satisfy the appetites of their porkers, they put out approximately 230 acres of corn, 140 acres of soybeans, 30 acres of barley, 30 acres of oats, 10 acres of wheat, and 15 acres of alfalfa hay.

Etheletta Charles considers Neil a good student. "He's a very good student. He was determined to learn and he worked at learning," she said.

For the one in five adults out there who haven't yet learned to read fluently, Neil has the following advice:

"If they want to learn to read better or easier there is help out there. One of the things I liked was the 'each one teach one.' If you have the time there is someone who will give the time to teach you."

The literacy hotline number for Pennsylvania is 1-800-222-2451.