

# Ag Classes Near Capacity

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town," said Seibert.

Seibert also went to the students involved in their junior high ag club to learn what they wanted from an ag program.

By September 1985, Seibert began formulating Manheim Central's new curriculum and by fall of 1988 the new curriculum was in place for freshmen. Flexibility has been designed into the program. Students now have three options:

- one shop class and one classroom class
- two shop classes or two classroom classes
- one shop or one classroom class.

This has increased enrollment a great deal because it permits students take an ag class as an elective.

### Ag Offered As Electives

"We opened up the curriculum to make sure students were able to get their math and science credits so they could meet college requirements. Previously our ag students were not interested in college, but now we have a lot more flexibility that allows our students to prepare for college and pursue their interests in agriculture, too," explained Seibert. "Now students have available to them many aspects of the program, animal husbandry, livestock, small gas engines, natural resources, small pet care and more."

McSparran feels the program works because it gives students more options. "Our wide course selection allows them to become more specialized in a certain aspect of the ag industry," said McSparran.

The program is divided into agricultural mechanics and agricultural technologies. There is only one requirement for the ag program: students must take the first year program, which is either

ag mechanics I or ag technologies I. The following year the student is allowed to specialize.

"Part of that requirement is to get them in the class. Once we get them in the class we feel we can keep them and we give them a basic overview of the agriculture industry," said Seibert.

Ag Tech I includes introductory units on animal science, natural resources and plant science. Students learn the importance of agriculture in Pennsylvania and the world.

Also, students explore agricultural careers and the Future Farmers of America.

Ag Mechanics I is the prerequisite for all other ag mechanics classes. It provides a basic overview of ag related repair, construction and maintenance. Shop safety is stressed. Students identify tool and hardware and are instructed on tool use, maintenance, simple metal and wood work, welding basics, painting. Students may also obtain tractor driving certification which is required by law for students who work on any farm other than his or her parents farm.

The SOE (Supervised Occupational Experience) continues to be an essential learning tool at Manheim Central's ag program. Each ag technologies student is required to develop one project in either production, work experience or wildlife conservation, or direct laboratory experience.

"We still have the pure production ag type student who raises animals or crops, but we are also seeing a new type of student who lives in urban Manheim and can't have a production project. There are numerous agribusiness companies in the area which are willing to hire ag students. In fact, we receive more calls for students to work on farms or in agri-businesses than we have students available to fill the

positions," said Seibert.

After completing Ag Tech I students may specialize in:

- Natural Resource Management
- Livestock Production I
- Livestock Production II
- Meats and Animal Health and Techniques
- Livestock Judging along with Public speaking and parliamentary procedures and ag salesmanship
- Forages and Field Crops, Livestock Feeds and Nutrition.
- Farm Business Management and Environment Management
- Genetics and Reproduction, Lab Animals and Pet Care

These are units are taught for one semester and are alternated each year to offer students a greater variety and to be able the program to serve more students.

After successfully completing Ag Mechanics I students may specialize in:

- Small gas engines
- Agricultural Equipment
- Introduction To Construction
- Agricultural Welding
- Advanced Construction
- Tractor Overhaul and Repair

- Ag Mechanics Specialties
- Individual Ag Mechanics Projects

The Senior Coop Work Experience is open to seniors completing Ag Tech I or Ag Mech I plus one semester study in a specialized field.

The ag mechanics classes are the most popular, and facilities are filled to capacity for the 1989-90 school year.

Dominic Centonze joined the staff as ag instructor two years ago and is also the Young Farmer Advisor. Manheim Central's Young Farmer Program has the largest paid membership program in the state.

With enrollment up, Seibert and Centonze are running out of teaching time, but they are not complaining. Seibert will be teaching three shop classes next year. Centonze is teaching six which is the limit under the current teachers contract. Teachers must get additional compensation when they teach more than six class periods a week.

At maximum capacity for the shop, the alternatives are to either

begin turning away students which, neither Seibert or Centonze want to do, or to expand class size. For safety reasons, Seibert wants to keep the shop class size average at 17.

"When you have students working with equipment and then instructing the students on the proper use, you shouldn't have more than 17," said Seibert.

### Updating Ag Education

Without funding the modernization of Manheim Central's ag ed department would not have been possible. Obtaining the funding is a long process. First Seibert had to sell the new curriculum and the need for new equipment in the ag department to school administrators. Getting the council's approval allowed Seibert to apply for Federal Vocational Education Funds made available under the Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984.

Clair Green, vocational consultant for the department of education, helped Seibert with the long, complicated application process. Prior to this year, vo ag had received only several hundred dol-

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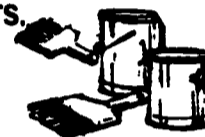
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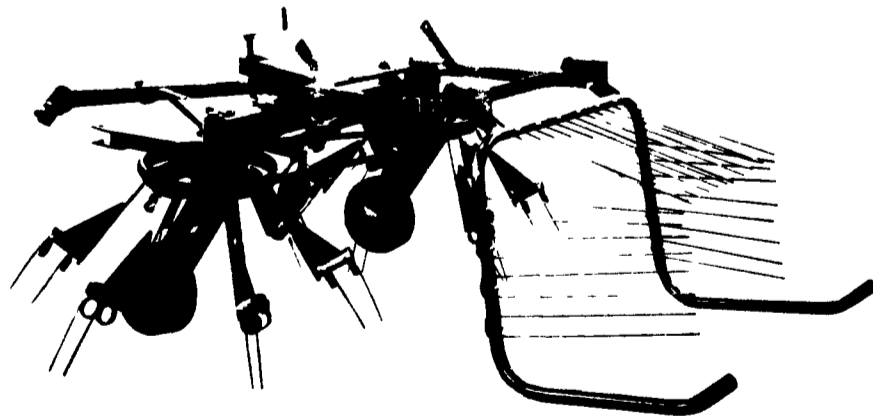
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