

County Agent Exchanges Ideas With Poland

BY LINDA WILLIAMS

Bedford Co. Agent

BEDFORD (Bedford Co.)— Jim Weiler, regional Extension farm management specialist, considers himself quite fortunate to have been chosen for an exchange trip to Poland. But, he's not anxious to return... at least not for some time.

"I had to get used to cold showers and warm drinks," he smiles. "But, we adapted."

Weiler was part of a 15-member group who visited Poland's farming country for a month long tour. Only two of the group represented Pennsylvania. Weiler and Lou Moore, a professor at Penn State, and a native of Bedford County.

Most of the others were from Michigan State where the agreements for an exchange program had been worked out.

"What we saw was like step-

ping back into the 1940's," Weiler says. "Sometimes even further back. In the southern part of Poland, they still farm with horses and machinery that most of our grandparents would be pressed to remember."

"It was just luck that we got to Poland just as so many freedoms are at long last granted. We saw places and met people who had never before met Americans. Had we gone there a year ago, the government would have made excuses as to why we could not visit there."

A large private farm in Poland, according to Weiler, would be 50 to 100 acres. The largest private farm he saw was 300 acres. "State farms, on the other hand, were something else. They would be up to 2500 acres."

Hog farms are modern and built much like those here in the United States. But then, the primary meat

of Poland is pork. There are no freezers and, therefore, no one has beef. The people do not even eat their lambs. No one has developed a taste for it. Three times a day, they eat pork. "And, they don't worry about their health. That craze just hasn't hit there. They drink, smoke and eat diets high in fat. The number one killer is heart disease."

"The people are warm, friendly, and hard working," Weiler continued. "There was not animosity shown to us as Americans."

The pork, which is consumed so abundantly, is quite high in fat, attributed to the diet of the hogs which is mostly cereal grains. "Here, we feed them corn and soybeans," Weiler points out. "There, it's barley, wheat and triticak (a cross between wheat and rye)."

"They grow a lot of rye because Northern Poland is flat and has a soil high in acid. Rye does well.



Jim Weiler, regional Extension farm management specialist, recently returned from an exchange trip to Poland. Here he points out on a map some of the areas he visited. Farmland in the north is flat and dry. In the south, it's quite rolling and hilly.

The Polish people eat their grains in bread. They don't eat cereal. "But, then the milk sets in cans and is picked up in unrefrigerated trucks. I saw milk bottles setting in the sun at 8 or 9 in the morning. When you drink it, it was warm and tasted like cottage cheese. Who could eat that on their cereal?"

He said the Polish farmers do not have an adequate protein supplementation. They use fish meal and rape seed. "But, rape seed has some toxins which affect animals' growth. Hogs don't grow out as fast."

The Poles are presently able to feed their own people. They export oats and Polish hams which tend to be fatty. "When the oat bran craze hit the United States we imported some oats from Poland," Weiler explains. "They must have thought we had a lot of horses."

The average Pole lives on \$100 a month and spends 50 to 60 percent of his income for food. Their main form of transportation is a two cylinder Fiat which costs \$2,000 and is paid for by payments made prior to delivery. Weiler did see some farmers driving their families to church on a tractor. "There was probably more room in that tractor cab than there is in a Fiat!"

"There was all kinds of construction," he recalls. "But there is a definite lack of pride in workmanship. This may change with the new freedoms."

The group was fascinated to visit an outdoor market in the town of Pluck where live chickens were sold and fatty pork was cut in the open air.

At a fish farm, they were surprised to find carp being raised as a delicacy. The farmer fed the fish grain. Carp is a Christmas treat in Poland.

They grow horse beans which is a protein food, sugar beets and lots and lots of potatoes. "We had them for every meal."

Bee hives were shaped like small houses and churches and caught Weiler's eye as a tourist attraction.

Poland has the only processing plant in the world for chicory which is used in coffee.

Pheasants are raised and exported to West Germany to help the balance of payments for sport hunting.

Fruit farms were the first in the group had that they were still in the 20th century. "They have climate controlled storage just like we do," he said.

Other farm related industries were cut flowers and carrot seed.

Poland is not without pollution problems. "They have no control of pollution from factories or cars," he said. At one place, he saw raw sewage being dumped into the river.

On the positive side, they have liability problems. There are few lawyers and no law suits. Animal Rights were never heard of.

Dairy farmers seemed to have the largest problems. "It is costing them twice as much to produce milk as they are getting for it," he said. The cows in Poland are mostly a Holstein variety. "But they call them black and white flat landers," Weiler laughed. "They are smaller and beefier than our Holsteins."

The group was solemnly reminded of the ravages of World War II when they visited a concentration camp and saw all of the hair shaved from the heads of those who were executed in the gas chambers. "We were all quiet when we boarded the bus," he says.

History tells us that Poland was once the bread basket of the world. "No wonder, it looks like Kansas."

"It makes us wonder what would that country be like today if they had been given the help and freedom that other countries have had since the war."

Escherichia Coli

Escherichia Coli — even the name sounds scary — is another potential food bacteria. E. Coli, as it is more commonly called, normally lives in the intestines of humans and animals. Most types of this bacteria are harmless, but one type causes severe diarrhea and abdominal cramping. E. Coli can find its way to the surface of raw meats during processing. Cook your steak and chops and the bacteria is killed. But in the case of hamburger and ground meat, the E. Coli that settled on the surface is distributed throughout the meat in the grinding process. Unless your hamburger is cooked

well done, you may become the victim of food poisoning.

Even how you cook can make a big difference in reducing your risk for food borne disease. Never partially cook foods and then store for later cooking. Foods, especially meats, must reach a high internal temperature in order to kill bacteria. For example, if you pre-cook meats in the microwave, immediately transfer to the grill or oven and cook until done. Even though your barbecued chicken may be cooked completely done, it may not be safe if the cooking was interrupted.

Look To LANCASTER FORD TRACTOR UNDER THE SIGN OF QUALITY



New Programs

Waiver of Finance - No Payment till 1991

OR

0% APR for 12 Mon.	7.4% APR for 24 Mon.
0% APR for 24 Mon.*	9.4% APR for 36 Mon.
0% APR for 48 Mon.**	10.4% APR for 48 Mon.
11.4% APR for 60 Mon.	

OR

Big Cash Incentives

Ford
Credit



* Compact Diesels and Tractor Loader Backhoes Only

** Prior Model Industrial Only

SEE LANCASTER FORD TRACTOR DISPLAY
AT THE FOLLOWING FAIRS:

SOLANCO - SEPT. 19 to 21

W. Lampeter - Sept. 26 to 28

Manheim - Oct. 8 to 14

LANCASTER FORD TRACTOR, INC.

The Counties Oldest & Largest Ford Tractor Dealer

1655 Rohrerstown Rd., Lancaster, PA 17601

(717) 569-7063

