Hershey School Integrates Farm Into Education Program

HERSHEY (Dauphin Co.) — Hands-on practical experiences are important aids in teaching concepts to children. At Milton Hershey School, students, kindergarten through twelfth grade, have the opportunity to integrate farm and land resource experiences as part of their total educational and residential program at the School. Activities such as vegetable gardening and fruit farming provide practical learning in plant growth, soil conservation, insect control, etc., and in assuming the responsibilities needed for garden care, as well as using critical thinking skills.

Milton Hershey School is a privately endowed residential school located in Hershey. The School seeks financially needy boys and girls of character and ability from diverse backgrounds and prepares them through education and support for successful, meaningful lives. All students selected for admission receive full scholarships which include room, board, education, clothing and medical and dental care.

The School was founded and endowed in 1909 by Milton and Catherine Hershey when four orphan boys were admitted to the School. Today over 1,150 boys and girls attend the School. They live on a central campus of approximately 3,200 acres. The campus includes 89 student homes, three separate and complete educational facilities, an array of recreational areas and complete support service facilities — in a rural setting amid the foothills of the blue mountains.

In addition, the School owns approximately 6,000 acres of farm land which surrounds the community of Hershey. The concept of using the farm lands for educational purposes is not new for Milton Hershey School. However, incorporating typical learning activities related to farm and land use into the educational curriculum is.

Norman Miller, manager of the Farm Program at Milton Hershey School, cites the learning opportunities for the School's students. "Milton Hershey School has the available resources to create linkage between our classrooms and agricultural environment to enhance environmental awareness and critical thinking among our students."

The program is designed to develop understanding of the inter-relationships between vegetation, animals and humans. As part of class activities, students can study genetics, reproduction and growth of plants and animals and can relate it to their own growth.

HERSHEY — A calf has teeth only on the lower jaw, these Milton Hershey School students learn from Norm Miller, manager of the Farm Program at the school.