

Agent To Bring 4-H To Poland

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bit care, swine, foods, "and some fun ones," she said, "just to show kids that they can have fun, that 4-H is also social."

Teaching directives

Because of recent changes, the directives of teaching have fallen from the hands of the government's student educational arm to the ministry of agriculture.

Because the ministry's main concern is commerce, said Parker, they have asked this team to review their high school agriculture curriculum. It is hoped that, with a few changes in the coursework offered, today's student will be better prepared for the international ag market.

The southern region of the country is made up of 5-6 acre farms that will have to be combined to make them more efficient and profitable. When this restructuring takes place, the youth from these farms will need to become the service and sales personnel.

"They're the ones that need to be retrained into becoming service-oriented people running co-ops, doing fertilizer sales, machinery operation... so they're the ones we really need to reach through education," said Parker.

Lot of improvements

Parker said the water quality is "a real problem" in Poland, and the people must boil their water. "You would never just open a tap and drink a glass of water," she said. "So they have a lot of

improvements to be made, but the improvements are out there. It's not that you have to recreate anything, it's just that slowly but surely they need to be given the decisions and the opportunities."

Several teaching "models" will be suggested at the schools, such as the FFA model, 4-H model, the Pennsylvania Council Co-op Youth Scholar program, and the Governor's School, all in use in Pennsylvania. Parker said even if they don't adopt those models independently, given time, the Polish government can choose the best for their purposes.

"We're only making suggestions," said Parker. "We're not going to go in there and say you *must* or you *will*. It's how it would fit into the system you already have."

The work of former Lancaster Extension Director Jay Irwin and his recent visits to the country have helped paved the way for Parker and the team. Several local 4-H programs were started in the country. According to Parker, when Irwin spoke to the minister, the government became extremely interested in the U.S. models and wanted more information about setting up similar systems.

Share concerns

Lancaster County and Poland share many concerns and opportunities in ag, said Parker. Because of small acreage farms in the southern region of Poland, horses and mules are used to work the soil.

"The farmers *here* know how to

use their land to the fullest, and so do the farmers in Poland," she said. "The difference lies in the quality of inputs available to the Polish farmer."

"With support from the U.S. and up-to-date information, the Polish farmer of tomorrow (today's student) will be able to make informed decisions concerning their farms and agribusiness."

Parker hopes to bring some of the educational experiences home to Lancaster county.

Better training

"It will be very interesting to see how the adults and youth perceive 4-H, FFA, and the other opportunities we present," she said. "I may be able to offer better leader training for Lancaster County 4-H leaders once I have seen volunteerism through Polish eyes."

For the children of Poland, there is "nothing but a bright spot ahead of them," said Parker. "And 4-H can teach them the leadership skills and the decision-making skills that they'll need to put the country back on its feet and to

become agriculturally strong. And their future lies in their youth. 4-H can only strengthen their youth."

In the past, children in Poland were directed at an early age into a program for life.

"Now that they're no longer a

communistic society, children get to choose what they want to be," she said. "But no one has taught them how to make the choices, how to make leadership roles, how to be responsible for their own destiny. 4-H does that. And we've done that for years."

Leshner Joins All American

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Lolly Leshner, a long time dairy enthusiast will be joining the Pennsylvania All-American Dairy Show staff, according to the president of the Pennsylvania Dairy and Allied Industries Association (PDAIA).

"The Pennsylvania All-American Dairy Show is a highly successful national dairy show, and we will continue to build on those successes. Her activities will further enhance industry relations and better serve the commercial exhibitors," said Obie Snider, president of the PDAIA.

Leshner is succeeding the late David Yoder, as coordinator of fund raising and commercial exhibits.

A graduate of Penn State University, Leshner has a broad background in dairy industry relations. She and her husband own and operate Way-Har Farms in Bernville, Berks County.

Prior to joining the staff of the All-American, Leshner worked for the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program and more recently for Dietrich Milk Products Inc.

The Pennsylvania All-American Dairy Show is to be held Sept. 21-24 in the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg.

This nationally recognized dairy event annually serves as host to four national breed shows. Exhibitors bring about 2,000 dairy cattle for competitions.

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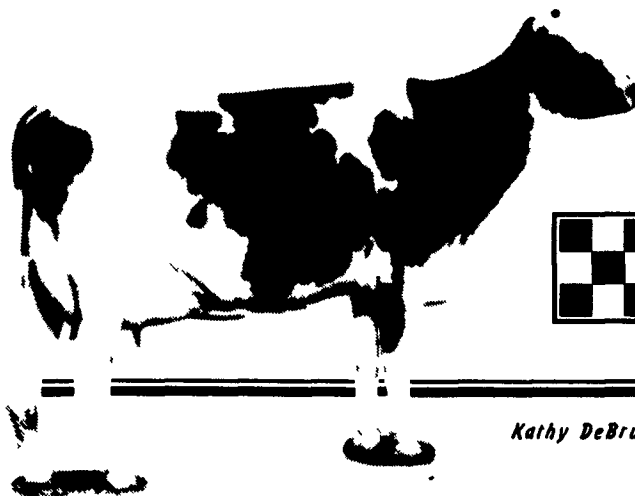
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