

## Poland Ag Leaders Visit Solanco H.S.

QUARRYVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — After undergoing a major government reform, the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Food Economy intends to revitalize their agricultural technical school programs to prepare youth for the new agricultural industry in Poland.

Although this change is occurring many, many miles away, the agricultural program at Solanco High School and its instructors are helping to "shape" the agricultural reform in Poland.

In an interest to set up support services such as FFA, 4-H, extension programs, and others, the Polish Ministry of Agriculture asked Penn State agriculture officials in February- 1991 to visit Poland and assess their vo-ag schools.

Extension service teams (ES-USDA) worked in Poland from June to December 1991, and four additional teams visited from January to June 1992, including several teams from Penn State.

In February and March 1991, a Penn State team visited a group of schools in Poland and toured the country.

"Their school system was not as bad as they thought," said ZoAnn Parker, extension agent for Lancaster County from the Penn State College of Agriculture, who participated on the assessment team.

Parker said the team submitted

a report explaining the proper linkages between high schools and extension services, and between high schools and universities pertaining to vocational-agricultural studies.

"They (in Poland) currently have no youth development," said Parker, referring to organizations such as FFA, 4-H, etc. However, they are interested in establishing these services, she said.

After receiving several reports from the Penn State and other ES-USDA teams assessing their current program, agricultural officials from Poland recently visited the United States to learn more about ag programs here and how an agricultural program can fit into a comprehensive high school program. With the reform, Parker said she sees the thrust of their education to be aimed at youth education, where the much-needed changes will be learned and will occur more readily.

During their month-long visit, the Polish ag leaders spent two weeks in Alabama and two weeks in Pennsylvania observing various agricultural programs and extension services and how they work together to complement each other.

Selected as a visitation site on the Pennsylvania tour was the Solanco High School ag program. According to Parker, Solanco was selected for its "extremely excel-

lent program" as compared to others in the state. Parker added that she wanted the visitors to see the lessons and record-keeping process from Dr. Arba Henry's program. Henry is the department chairman for the agricultural department at Solanco.

Parker said the Polish agricultural leaders also needed to observe and ask questions about the traditional high school setting here, because Poland is interested in placing agricultural studies back into the traditional high school setting. Currently, Poland operates its schools on a career track where students are placed in schools based on their career choice.

Penn State representatives and Polish ag leaders visited Solanco High School on two occasions last month. Jay Irwin, former county extension director for Lancaster County, and ZoAnn Parker brought with them Jozef Flaga, the director of the Agricultural Advisory Center in Boguchwala and Jozefa Wilczak, an extension specialist at Boguchwala. The group discussed with Henry the importance of record-keeping and how to interpret records, teach quality control, develop budgets, and how the ag program at Solanco operates within the boundaries of a traditional high school.

On May 26, Parker returned with Donald Evans, assistant dean



Seated, from left, Jozefa Wilczak, Dr. Barbara Szablewska, Dr. Anna Potok, and Mr. Leszek Janusz. Standing, from left, Donald Evans, Dr. Arba Henry, Carl Beck (assistant superintendent of Solanco School District), ZoAnn Parker, and Daniel DeNinno (School High School principal).

of the College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State, along with Dr. Anna Potok, former national vice minister of agriculture and food economy until 1991; Dr. Barbara Szablewska, director of extension at Leszno; Mr. Leszek Janusz, a translator; and Jozefa Wilczak returned again as well. This group met with Henry and thoroughly discussed agricultural programs at the high school, middle school, and elementary school levels and adult education classes. As a result, they walked away with a better understanding of how the ag

program fits into the comprehensive school system.

They also talked about the importance of extension services and youth development services and the cooperation between the schools and state programs.

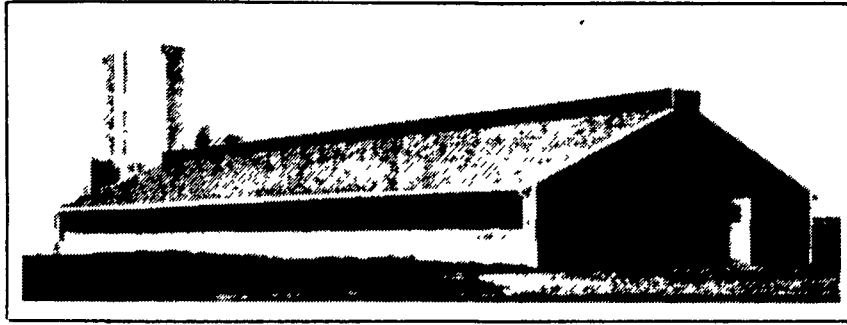
According to Parker, the guests from Poland gained an increasingly better understanding of the various ag programs in the month they were here.

"They need to take an adaptation of our programs to fit into their present school system," she said.

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