

Paul Witter Is Named State Young Farmer Winner

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Franklin Co. Correspondent

SHIPPENSBURG (Franklin Co.) — Paul Witter is probably one of the most busy farmers around this area.

He fills his time working on two farms, which would be enough to tire anyone out. But then, Witter takes on a variety of projects to help his local community.

Still, no matter how busy he gets, Witter always keeps one philosophy in mind. "I try to keep it simple," he said.

His philosophy must work because Witter has been chosen as the state winner of the Young Farmer Award, given by the state Young Farmers Association in the Over-30 Division of its membership.

The award was given to Witter for his talent at farming as well as his involvement in his community.

According to the Y.F. Association, Witter deserves the award because he won it the hard way, by working for it in the barn and in the fields and by trying new methods to make his farming more profitable.

Witter owns two farms of 160 acres and farms a total of 260 acres. He grows wheat, corn, barley, alfalfa and soy beans.

One of the farms he bought from his grandfather, who still lives on the land. His grandfather

bought that farm in Southampton Township in the 1930s.

Witter knew what he was doing right from the start because he was born and raised on a farm. His father still is in farming as well.

Witter struck out on his own in farming in 1981. He bought his grandfather's farm in 1988. He also has four brothers and all of them are involved in farming either full or part time.

Witter himself has 55 milk cows — milk grade and registered animals of all breeds. He said he doesn't raise his own heifers — that is part of his "keep it simple" philosophy. Also, he said, that method saves money.

"I buy my replacement cows when the market is right," he said.

Witter said he raises a cash crop of wheat and corn. He said he sells some hay and straw also.

Some of the feed he gives his animals is liquid whey, a byproduct of the cheese making process at the nearby Raskas cheese plant in Shippensburg. Raskas provides the whey to local farmers on sort of a lottery basis. Witter said he was quick to become one of the people on that list.

As a sideline of sorts, Witter raises hogs over the winter.

However, farming only takes up part of Witter's busy life.

He is a regular helper at the always busy Shippensburg Fair. He played an important role in



Paul Witter climbs aboard his tractor for a day of work on his farm.

getting a manure handling ordinance passed in Southampton Township. Right now he is running for township supervisor.

If that isn't enough, Witter also has been an agricultural advisor for students in the Shippensburg Area School District.

Witter is busy helping out when the snow falls as well since he

runs one of the snow plows for his township.

In addition to all the good works he has done locally, Witter now has an opportunity to make his mark on yet another continent — South America.

His family — his wife, Carla, and his daughters, Nancy and Paula — are hosting an exchange stu-

dent from Brazil, Laiz Brito. The girl lives on a ranch in her native land, so she is interested in farming United States-style.

Laiz came to the Witter's home in January for a six-month stay as part of a program run by the American Institute of Foreign Studies.

Heifers To Romania: Glorifying God, Not Man

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff

MIDDLETOWN (Dauphin Co.) — One of the largest shipments of cattle possible out of the Middletown airport took place Thursday afternoon as about 100 dairy cattle heifers were loaded onto a DC8 for transport to Romania, as part of humanitarian aid by Christian Aid Ministries.

The dairy cattle are headed for a model farm that was constructed in Romania by the group as an example of how those people, trying to recover from the loss of education and independence imposed by the former Soviet Union, can survive and build a stable economy.

According to Donald Evans, who is assistant dean of the Penn

State University College of Agricultural Sciences and assistant director of the PSU Cooperative Extension, the project is about more than sending cattle to struggling people.

"It's not only sending cattle and information," he said. "We're exporting the concept of family farming in Pennsylvania."

The project was part of the ongoing efforts of the Christian Aid Ministries, based out of Berlin, Ohio, according to Evans. He explained that the ministries, which is largely supported by Amish and Mennonite people in the area, had started helping out the Romanians several years ago and that the donated heifers are headed toward the farm where Ben

Lapp, of Lancaster County has been living with his wife and six children for about a year.

Lapp went over to set up the model farm and has been working through interpreters to teach Romanians about modern family farming.

The farm was built in the fashion of a typical Pennsylvania dairy farm Evans said. And during the time that the ministries has been involved, so has the Penn State University Extension.

Penn State became involved because it was given a mission by the federal government to help out with Poland and developing countries. Evans said it is basically the extension services which these other countries are seeking to establish.

Evans said that under the former government rule in the former Soviet Union, information was controlled by the government and not made available to the rank and file citizen or laborer.

Evans said while it may seem ironic, that the fact that a social program — extension service — is considered one of the first programs to help wean the former socialist Communist Party ruled people to independent, free-market democracy, education is the key to democracy.

According to Evans, the PSU Extension Service has been helping Poland set up an extension service for some time and continues to do so. He said that the United States is the only nation in the world with such a support system.

However, Evans said that Thomas Jefferson said that a democracy was dependent on an educated citizenry. "Democracy is very fragile and can disappear from generation to generation," Evans said, adding that education is the only way to preserve it.

The Christian Aid Ministries program is ideal, Evans said, as a way of actually helping the people



These are part of the hundred dairy cattle heifers which were donated and shipped to Romania by the Christian Aid Ministries. Unusual winter-like weather coats the cattle and men loading cattle.

of the former Soviet Union achieve a better life.

Going along to Romania with the shipment of cattle was Dr. David Marshal, a Coatesville area veterinarian who said he got involved with the project through some of his clients.

"It was easy to get involved," the veterinarian said. "Besides, I know and like Ben (Lapp). So this is also a chance for me to visit."

Marshal said he is going to stay with the cattle for two weeks and hand carry shipping documents so he can be on site in case any of the paperwork is challenged in

Romania.

Ken Byler, a Lancaster County coordinator of the project, said that the project was not about the fact that people were doing anything special.

At least 100 people turned out at the Middletown farm of the Pennsylvania Holstein Association, which donated use of the facility for the cause. But Byler said that members of the ministry did not want recognition for helping out fellow mankind.

"This is about glorifying God," he said, "not about glorifying man," Byler said.



From the left, Chuck Russow, a USDA veterinarian, discusses handling paperwork with David Marshal, a Coatesville-area vet going along with the 100 dairy cattle heifers being sent to Romania, Don Evans, from Penn State Extension, and Maher Rizk, also a USDA veterinarian. Russow has worked with the Holstein Association for more than 11 years in making international shipments of cattle out of the Middletown facility and was lending his expertise.