

Changing Society Affects Families

LOU ANN GOOD
Lancaster Farming Staff
HERSHEY (Dauphin Co.) — Each person sees the world in a little different way, Dr. James E. Van Horn, professor of rural sociology at Penn State told those attending the 36th annual Eastern Member Relations Conference.

These changes in perception often arouse conflicts between people. To demonstrate how these perceptions change when viewed from a different angle, Horn told of riding a train with a father and three sons. The boys' extremely disruptive behavior on the train antagonized many of the passengers. In

exasperation, Horn told the father that his sons were disruptive and should be reprimanded. The father responded that he did not know what to do.

Horn asked, "What do you mean by saying you don't know what to do?"

The father said that they had just

left the hospital where his wife, the boys' mother, had just died. "I guess they don't know what to do either," he said.

Horn's perception of the problem was changed by this glimpse into this family's life.

To help solve problems, people need to understand each other. The two-day conference, held May 12 to 14, focused on how membership of cooperatives are changing because of changes in society and the need to strengthen member relationships.

Hallmarks of the '90s are change, work, time, and stress, according to Horn. Recent studies show that the U.S. has a more diverse population represented by many cultures. The way these cultures perceive each other may cause discomfort. The white culture usually views time in a different concept than non-white cultures, and this causes problems in the workplace. In the last decade, population is shifting. Most of the central states have 10 percent less growth while the East and West Coasts have increased 10 percent.

- Mother is employed outside the home.

- About 25 percent of children live in single-parent families.

- Multi-generational families are now commonplace. It was unusual to have five generations of the same family living at the same time in former generations.

- Many families are undergoing monumental child care problems.

- Massive change and restructuring in the workplace as businesses try to figure out whose job it is to help families. Single parents have a higher absentee rate. Family problems relate to the economics of a community.

While today's family has changed, Horn stressed that people can not take a nostalgic view.

"I have as much belief in today's family as yesterday's," Horn said. He reminded the audience that the demise of the family was predicted when men left the farm during the Industrial Revolution.

"We cannot see change as all bad," Horn said. He suggests that stress is made easier by doing the following:

- Learn to accept what you cannot change and change what you can.

- Relax creatively. Smell the flowers.

- Get priorities in order.

Some of the changes include the following:

- Two-thirds of first marriages will terminate.

- Families have two or fewer children.

Seminar For Child Care Providers

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The Lancaster County office of Penn State Cooperative Extension is offering a "Better Kid Care" Seminar for child care providers in Lancaster County to be held on Saturday, June 12 from 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at the Farm and Home Center.

Topics include safe food handling, discipline, recognizing and reporting child abuse/neglect, and record-keeping procedures.

Cost of the seminar is \$15 and includes lunch. Registered family day care home providers, licensed

group day care home providers and group day care home assistants are eligible for full reimbursement of the \$15 fee following their attendance at the seminar through the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, KURC-HBC Directed Training Program. Individuals will have the opportunity to earn .5 Continuing Education Units for their participation.

For more information, contact Debra Naumann or Doris Thomas at the Cooperative Extension office (717) 394-6851.



Dr. James Van Horn discusses changes in families with Laura England, center, Atlantic Dairy Cooperative, and Dr. Cathy Hamlett, assistant professor of ag economics at Penn State.



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Sincerely, Jake Tate

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Bob Gilstad

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James Ives

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W.T. Lowmaster

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