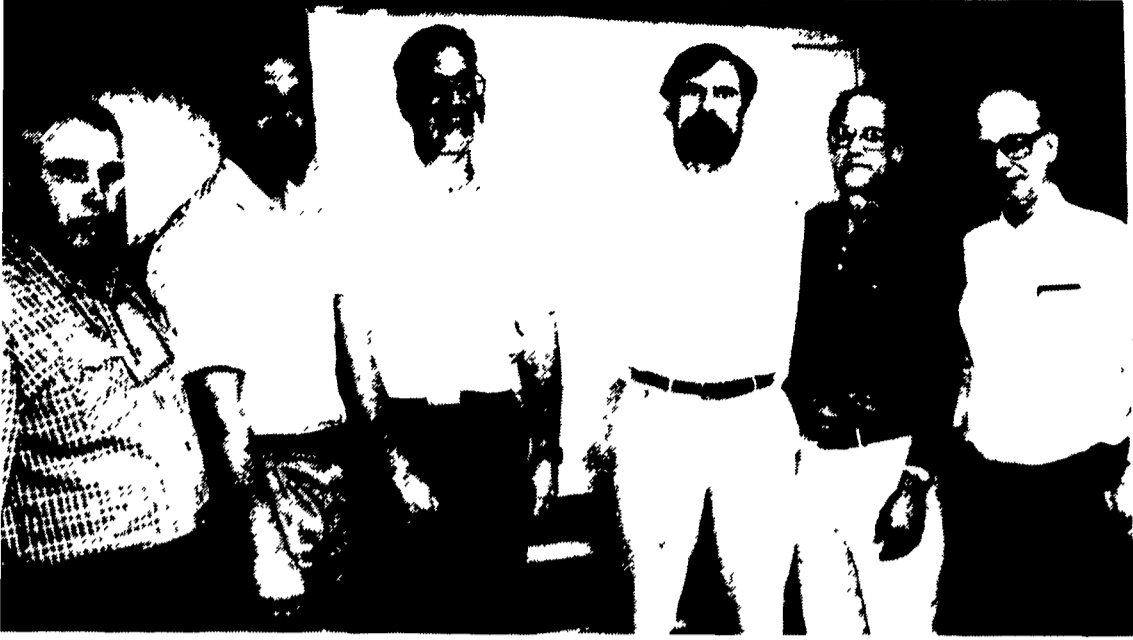


# 'Odor Crisis' Propels Team Overseas To Look At Digesters



A six-member exchange team will travel to China to study ways to get rid of the methane odor generated from manure and to supply inexpensive power for those who may want to use the technology on their farms. Standing in front of a map of China from left are Harlan Keener, swine farmer; James Kauffman, poultry farmer; Gerald Helstand, Lancaster Conservation District assistant administrator; Dr. Richard Fite, USDA, team leader; Virgil Gutshall, vo-ag instructor and swine farmer; and Dr. Robert Graves, Penn State professor of ag engineering.

**ANDY ANDREWS**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)  
— On Wednesday, a six-member exchange team will travel to China to study ways to get rid of the methane odor generated from manure and to supply inexpensive power for those who may want to use the technology on their farms.

The group, which includes two Lancaster County farmers, a conservation district representative, an ag teacher (also a farmer), a USDA official, and an ag engineer, will board a plane on July 28 for a three-week trip to China.

The exchange is being engineered through the USDA Office of International Cooperation and Development with grants from several ag industry and other organizations, including the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, a legislative agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

The purpose of the tour is to provide information exchange between the ag industries of the two countries. Primarily, the visitors from the U.S. will want to

know exactly how the smaller farms of China — many with less than 50 hogs, or 10-20 head of dairy cattle — make use of the more than reportedly one million methane digesters in the country.

"Back in the '70s, when I got started in digester work when I was in a similar position in Wisconsin, it was the Energy Crisis," said Dr. Robert E. Graves, a professor of ag engineering at Penn State, at a meeting of the group at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center last week. "Well, now I guess you'd say it's the Odor Crisis."

The Odor Crisis, caused by complaints from residential areas located near farms that have manure storage facilities, has been pushing the Soil Conservation Service and other agencies to find a way to control the odor problem. Methane digesters collect the methane generated by manure and use the gas to drive generators or to provide heat.

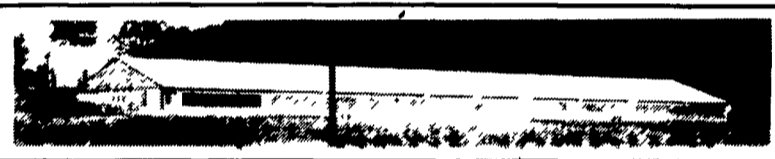
Penn State researchers and agencies have been working for more than a decade to find some way to deal with the odor problem. Farmers that have manure containment facilities, such as storage tanks, are seeking to cover the facility — but the gas remains. Many are seeking ways to deal with the potential problems of methane gas, to either contain it and burn it off or to use an anaerobic digester and convert it to electrical or heat energy.

Graves, part of the exchange group, said, "I feel woefully inadequate about good, reasonably positive, surefire methods of controlling odor from stored manure." The digesters, he said, can "get a good handle on odor."

Members of the group include:

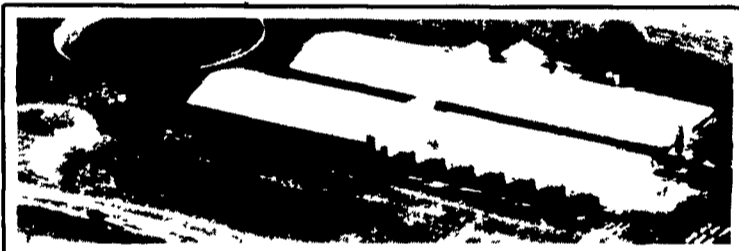
- Dr. Richard W. Fite, veterinary medical officer, USDA. Fite is the team leader.

(Turn to Page A36)



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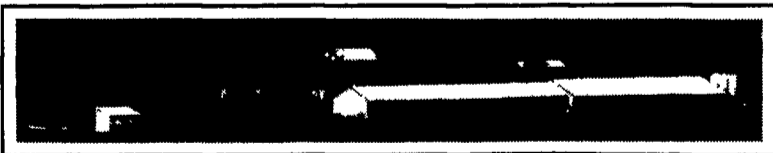
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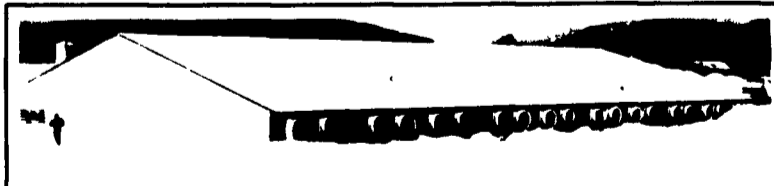
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