German Ag Diplomat

(Continued from Page A1)

The statement from von Heydebrand was made Tuesday after he was visiting the equine demonstration area of the Ag Progress Days Rockspring farm, located several miles west of Boalsburg.

Heydebrand was touring the agricultural research and technology fair with Joy "J.D." Dunbar. chief executive officer of RULE. The horse area was at his second stop, watching from crowded stands while Herb Amuar was demonstrating his team of Hafflinger draft horses in the horse show

Heydebrand's presence was made known when he requested to drive the Amuar's team. The change in schedule was allowed and von Heydebrand was introduced by the ring announcer.

· According to von Heydebrand, these were the same breed of horses he trained and used while growing up on his father's farm in Germany. The ride rekindled memories he said and when he finished he received loud applause.

But in conversation after the handling demonstration, von Heydebrand said he wanted American farmers to know that German farmers are not their enemies in production.

It was von Heydebrand's second trip to the State College region in his year as a German agricultural attache to the U.S.

He said that his responsibilities include being involved with policies affecting agriculture, forestry, fisheries and dealing with bilateral issues. He said that while trade issues are a mainstay of his job, he is also "closely watching the agriculture policy here in the United States and report (back to Germany)."

He is also involved in the negotiations of the Uraguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and on smaller and various issues, such as differences in pesticide residue levels in food and wine labeling differences.

He does not directly come into contact with developing trade partnerships between American and German private interests, that is the role of the German Central Marketing Board, he said, to act as a trade developer and business liason.

It is also important for Americans to understand that Germany, as a member state of the European Community, doesn't have autonomous control of the EC and thus its own agricultural policy.

On other topical issues, von Heydebrand said that he suspects that there will be no ban on bovine somatotropin (BST) by the EC, which is expecting to decide policy this fall. Anti-BST and anti-biotechnology organizations, erroneously reported within the past weeks that the EC had "banned" BST.

However, while a ban was recommended by a political advisory group to the EC board, von Heydebrand said he suspects the EC and Germany will adopt a moratorium on the product, but a longer moratorium than the 90-day moratorium sought to go into effect here, pending approval of its use by the federal Food and Drug Administration.

While von Heydebrand said that the safety of the milk derived from cows treated with BST was not a problem, the driving reason for the EC and Germanic call for a moratorium is based solidly in industry fear that consumer confidence in dairy products may slip.

"From Germany's point-of-view, we appreciate the moratorium," von Heydebrand said.

"The technological progress in the agricultural area is quite high," he said. "But the willingness and the ability of the consumer to accept (the technological advances) is not," he said, "because (with agriculture) you eat the product."

He said that it is generally perceived that the consumer, while quick to take advantage of technological advances in the automotive industry and with such new devices such as computers, microwave ovens, video cameras, etc., and various electronic and medical advances, are less inclined to eat a new product because it is actually going into their

He said that consumers eventually will accept technological advances in agriculture, "but it takes longer."

On other matters, he said that while the EC has a lot of work to do in order to achieve its goals, he said he strongly believes that the problems are not insurmountable. 'So far it's very positive," he said, adding that he has confidence in the stability of the EC.

Von Heydebrand also praised the work of Penn State University and its extension force for establishing relationships with governments in the now emerging countries which had comprised the former Soviet Union, such as Poland and several other nations from Europe to Egypt.

According to him, the role of educator and helper, not director, is the perfect role for the United States. "The relationship the university has with Poland (helping to establish a Penn State University style extension system) is doing just the right thing."



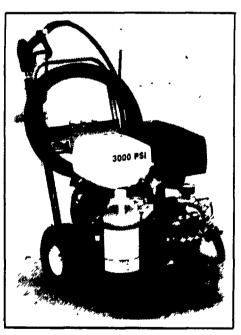
From the left, Herb Amuar shakes hands with Hans Christoph von Heydebrand, first secretary of agriculture (agricultural attache) at the German Embassy in Washington D.C., as Heydebrand returns the reigns of Amuar's team of Hafflinger draft horses. Amuar was part of an Ag Progress Day demonstration when the unexpected visit from the foreign dignitary.

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