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York Co. Correspondent

YORK (York Co.) — By the end of the month of January, Jerry Myers planned to have visited nearly half of York County's 126 dairy farms. But continuing weeks of bad weather snarled the dairy extension agent's progress in meeting his goal.

Jerry Myers joined the York Agricultural Extension staff as dairy agent on November 15. Having paid calls on more than 30 milk producers during his first several weeks of work, Myers hopes for improved weather during the next several weeks to catch up on his self-imposed goal of personally visiting every York County dairy farm.

"A lot of our upcoming program development is still in the planning stages," says the dairy agent. "But I do want to meet as many farmers as possible. People appreciate getting to know the person behind the position; they're more likely to call if they have a question or a problem. Having worked in extension before, I know how important it is to know the farmers."

"The list of things that we could do is never ending," Myers says of extension work, then emphasizing, "But I wanted to have visited 50 farms by the end of January."

He sees escalating regulations as being the biggest challenge faced by farmers.

"As agriculture becomes more limited in numbers, so does our legislative voice. We get so busy just doing what has to be done. Agriculture's voice must be heard," Myers insists.

Even as a teenager growing up on his family's farm, Myers remembers having a sense that he would make career choices based on people-oriented job opportunities.

"I always thought I'd be doing something working with people," relates Jerry Myers. "Other people always gave me support for thinking in that direction."

Myers and his sister and bro-

thers were the third generation on the family dairy farm near Westminster, Maryland. As they grew up, the Myers siblings were all quite successful in showing their registered Holstein cattle and in 4-H showmanship, judging, and record book activities.

Keeping the people-oriented-job future in mind, Jerry earned his degree in ag extension education at the University of Maryland. Following graduation, he worked for two years as a Northeast field representative for the national Brown Swiss and Ayrshire cattle organizations.

"I put in lots of road time," he recalls of the position in which he worked with members of the two breed groups in 10 states across the middle Atlantic and New England areas.

Returning to school for a Master's degree, Myers began his graduate studies at the School For International Training at Brattleboro, Vermont. He found the small, personalized setting, with between 100-200 students, many of them foreign students pursuing English studies, to be interesting, enlightening and a lot of fun.

"A requirement of my program in International Administration, specializing in advising and training, was to do an internship. I thought it would be interesting to evaluate agriculture at an international level," he explains.

So, after his six months of on-campus studies, Jerry Myers took a three-week "crash" course in Spanish, then packed his bags to spend the next eight months in Colombia, South America. His assignment was with the national Brown Swiss association, classifying cattle, teaching dairy farm owners how to use sire summary information in mating programs and various advisory and training programs that dovetailed with his graduate program.

Myers was even asked to judge several shows during his stay, the first only about six weeks after his arrival. Though his Spanish, including the numerous cow des-



York County dairy extension agent Jerry Myers makes friends with a calf while on a farm visit.

criptive terms, was still rather halting, Myers managed to announce his reasons for each class with no major language embarrassments.

"It was nice to be able to speak without having to resort to the use of an interpreter," he says in retrospect of his sudden immersion into having to manage public speaking in a foreign language.

Living in Colombia also emphasized to Myers that people around the world are really very much the same. Too often, he believes, the media focuses only on extremes in other countries, when

in reality, normal daily family lives are very similar to those of Americans.

After concluding his graduate program, Jerry returned home for six months to help with running the home dairy and crops operation while his older brother, Jason, was relocating his herd from the family farm to begin his own dairy operation.

During the summer of 1984, Myers was asked to lead a national 4-H youth tour to The Netherlands. For six months after his college graduation, he had lived in Norway as a participant in the

4-H's International Foreign Youth Exchange (IFYE) program.

"I love to travel," Myers quickly admits. At 16, he had spent a month in Europe as a member of Maryland's national dairy judging team, touring and practicing for international competition.

After returning from the Netherlands visit, Myers accepted a position with Delaware Valley College. He was assistant professor in the dairy science department, teaching, coaching the dairy judging team, coordinating DVC's cattle show participation, and in charge of the breeding program for the college's Holstein, Brown Swiss and Ayrshire herds.

"I loved working with the students and got a lot of support from them," he says of the challenge and enjoyment of college teach-

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