

# Twin Valley's Ag Science Students Do What Many Classrooms Merely Teach

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 came from local industries. The remainder of the money was provided by FFA chapter fruit and plant sales.

Frederick would like more students from different parts of the

school to use the facility for research and other projects. Unfortunately, the school does not offer science credits in their ag program.

In the future, ag students may be able to secure science credits from taking courses in horticulture or

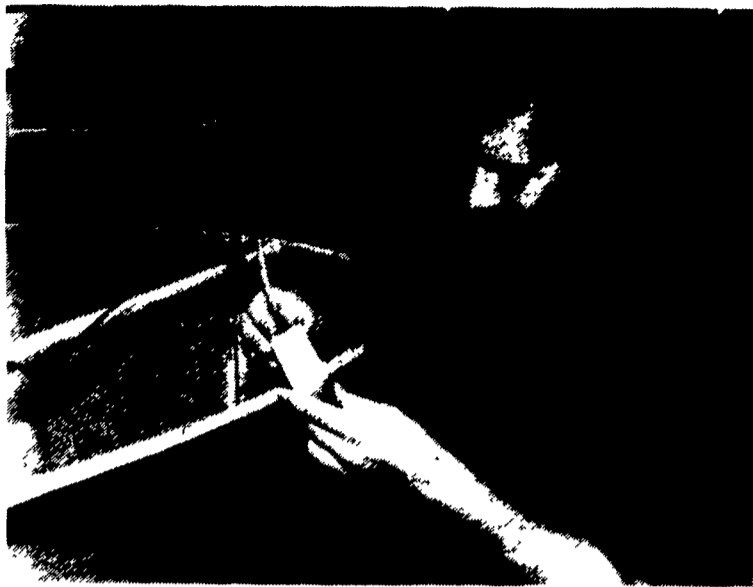
aquaculture. "We've proposed it," said Frederick. "We've also proposed merging the ag and science departments so that we can work more closely together. But right now, it's not happening."

"As teachers, we can't work closely together," he said. "But we're still giving kids the wrong message when we don't give them science credit for ag. We're saying it's science, but if they don't get science credit, they don't really believe it."

The school will soon implement major renovation plans. Frederick wants to include a new biotechnology/plant science laboratory in those plans. Also, the ag science department has asked for a small facility to house all the small animal projects.

However, like many ag science instructors in school, pressure is being placed on them from animal rights groups to back down on animal studies.

"If you kill a few fish, nobody gets excited," said Frederick. "But if you try that with rabbits or



Twin Valley FFA'er Ben Dodd holds an aeration stone from the huge aquaculture tank.



The focus will be on feeding systems and feed conversion studies for fish. Here, Rich Strausser, left, and Dan Elston feed the tilapia and catfish.



The school sells the plants to the middle and elementary school students for special occasions such as Mother's Day. Here, Jeremy McCallcher looks at a hanging basket containing Schennilleover.

chickens or something, you've got animal rights people breathing down your neck right away."

Frederick admitted that times have changed for ag instructors.

"At one time, we used to bring a full-sized sow into the shop and have her farrow in here," he said. "But that's not socially acceptable anymore."

"We've raised pigs for the Farm Show under the shed roof already, and we've raised veal calves out under the shed roof, and things like

that, but those days are gone, I think."

Some animal studies are still undertaken, including 18 rabbits used for pet therapy and other projects. Also, students study how chickens produce eggs with 20 laying hens. The department raises other small animals for a variety of ag science projects.

Frederick said the department has tried to involve every student from every class in one aspect or another of either the hydroponics/aquaculture system or the horticulture system. Students in shop classes have planted flowers in the greenhouse, and students in ag management system have worked out cost factors in economics.

"We have tried to make sure that every student in the whole program, in one way, shape, or

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