



Jon Bish's FFA work projects are small grains and the market hogs he has raised and sold for the past two years. His career goal is to become a full-time farmer, possibly with a custom-work operation along with field crops.

York FFA Leader Wins Trip To Kansas City

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York Co. Correspondent

EAST BERLIN (York Co.) — An eighth-grade introduction to the vocational agriculture program set a new direction for Jon Bish's high school years and possibly for the rest of his life.

Bish, 18, a senior vo-ag student at Dover High School, was recently named the winner of the York Fair's FFA special award. The honor includes an expenses-paid trip to the National FFA Convention and the American Royal Livestock Show, both being held in Kansas City, Missouri, during the week of November 7.

"I like working with my hands," explains Bish in relating why the Dover High School FFA chapter's recruiting program to eighth-grade students immediately captured his interest. "They went over the different courses involved, and the mechanics interested me. It sounded like the kind of thing I wanted to do."

For his first vo-ag project, Bish planted wheat on some of the John Bish family's owned and rented ground around their 10-acre East Berlin R2 farm. The initial small grain venture was "an experiment" for him and his father and they were disappointed with yields on that first crop. After a few more years of experience, Bish was pleased with the results of the most recent crop of wheat.

Dover FFA advisors Larry Redding and Nick Stollar encouraged Bish to expand to swine last year.

"They wanted me to get involved with swine production, which would show a faster turnover of investment," Bish says. Two of his three market hogs were entered in the 1993 York Fair, despite his never having raised or shown an animal before.

"I didn't know much about showing, like watching the judge more than my pig," he relates, a situation which cost him lower placings in the classes.

With that experience behind him, and advice he sought from fellow FFA hog producers, Bish took two of this year's project crossbreds to the Fair's market classes. Not only did his animal do better, Bish placed second in fitting and showing competitions.



FFA York Fair winner Jon Bish tackles some of the paperwork required to apply for achievement awards through the vocational-agriculture program. His fair award earned him an expenses-paid trip to the upcoming National FFA Convention in Kansas City.

Raising hogs has led to some interesting moments for Bish, who runs his hogs outside for the exercise to better develop a lean, firmly muscled pig.

"They have minds of their own and short attention spans," he admits with a grin. Once he came home from school earlier this year to find all four market hogs out of their pen. After "trashing" the barn, they had busied themselves at rooting up the lawn.

How to raise, show, and round up escaped hogs is just a small part of the knowledge Jon Bish has acquired through vo-ag and FFA participation.

"I've learned there is a wide choice of careers in agriculture, not just farming, things like animal science and hydroponics," he explains. Still, his career focus is to farm, if not full-time then at least part time, possibly expanding to some custom farm work.

"Farming is a different kind of career: it's interesting to me. I don't like to follow the crowd. And as the population grows, more food will be demanded. New technology will help farmers produce food even better than they do now."

Alone with his vo-ag enterprises, Bish is currently on the school's work-study program. He is employed by Kampel Enterprises,

Wellsville, working with maintenance and groundskeeping on the airstrip the firm operates, and the various product lines they manufacture.

Through FFA activities, Jon Bish has also expanded his own personal abilities.

"I don't like getting up in front of a group of people, but I have learned to do that," he says, crediting his FFA involvement with overcoming a familiar fear. Bish has held numerous leadership roles in the Dover FFA chapter before accepting the president's gavel, including vice president, chapter sentinel, and chairman of numerous committees.

Bish has participated in livestock judging and agronomy contests at the state level, as well as county competition in meats identification, tractor driving, and livestock judging. For his involvement, he was named Star Chapter Greenhand and is a recipient of the York County FFA White Rose degree. Along with his agriculture interest, Jon is a four-year member of the Dover High School soccer team.

Bish recently learned that he will be receiving the state FFA's Keystone Farmer degree, which will be presented at the state FFA convention, held in Harrisburg

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