

# Young Farmers Thank Sponsors

CAMP HILL (Cumberland Co.)—The delegation of 11 enterprising young farmers who participated in Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's first International study tour wish to express their appreciation to their tour sponsors.

The trip was made possible through the generous support from Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and contributions from sponsors contacted by the young farmers. The following agribusinesses and individuals contributed donations to help sponsor the international tour: Agway Member Relations, Agway Feed Region #7, and Agway Lebanon Petroleum, Animal Medic, Atlantic Dairy Cooperative, Berks County Farm Bureau, Elverson National Bank, Fisher & Thompson, Ford New Holland, Inc., Hoffman Seeds, Inc., Keystone Farm Credit, Meridian Bank, Nationwide Insurance Agency Manager Hugh McGinley and agent Kathy Marinkov, Reading Bone Fertilizer, Sire Power, Inc., Star Silo, Wampler-Longacre, Fred Weaver, Wenger's Feed Mill, Inc., Willow Creek Animal Hospital, and the York Bank & Trust Company.

The purpose of the 11-day farm tour was a comparative analysis of global agriculture, exploring agricultural production, global markets, international trade relationships, agricultural education, and the challenges and obstacles facing farmers around the world. The 10-day trip included tours of Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, including a two-day visit by each couple on a southern German host farm.

Tour participants included Rebekah Gross, Donald and Joanne Stoltzfus, Brian and Fay Dietrich, David and Beth Hartman, Ralph and Crystal Moyer, Steve and Bonnie Wenger and staff persons Rod and Bonnie McKenrick.

"The one item that made the biggest impression on us when comparing European farmers to their American counterparts was not the differences between the two, but the similarities," said participant David Hartman. "Their concern, and ours, is maintaining a

way of life while achieving a comfortable standard of living. Also, of keen interest to both groups of European and American farmers is being able to pass their farms to future generations."

The most prominent difference between U.S. and European agriculture is free enterprise vs. government control. Farm subsidies, or financial support from the government, can account for up to 77 percent of farm income in some European countries.

"Throughout the countries we visited, the programs in effect are double the price to their farmers as compared to the price the U.S. farmers receive for our milk and meat," Hartman said.

The milk price in these countries would range from \$23 to \$28/cwt. compared to \$13/cwt. in Pennsylvania. According to the PFB delegation, the European farmers were shocked to the point of disbelief when American farm prices were quoted.

Another difference noted by the PFB delegation is the small size of the farms visited. "The average acreage of the farms we visited was approximately 50 acres and was being heavily subsidized by the government," accord-

ing to Brian Dietrich. One reason for the large agricultural subsidies is tourism. European governments are "farmer-friendly" and very committed to keeping their small farms intact, to the point of financially supporting them.

"Switzerland wants to keep its land under cultivation for esthetic value and the Swiss government is willing to make direct payments to farmers in an effort to keep them on the land," said David Hartman.

Land in the countries visited is very expensive. Prices for land in Germany can reach into the ranges of \$15,000/acre for farm land and \$40,000/acre for residential land. According to Fay Dietrich, as many as 50 percent of the farms ran a bed and breakfast in their homes. In Switzerland, however, the inheritance tax is very low and the law states that all children must be treated in an equal manner, said Dietrich.

"Only farmers could go so far from home and still find so much time to talk about the troubles and triumphs of our operations back home. It is difficult to express the understanding one feels when talking to one of these European farmers and the feeling that we are of one people—stewards of the earth—



Prior to going on the Young Farmers and Ranchers International Study Tour, YF&R chairperson Becky Gross, center, and tour coordinator Ralph Moyer, right, reviewed the trip itinerary with Gene Hemphill, left, industry affairs manager at Ford New Holland, Inc. The farm machinery manufacturer was one of the nearly two dozen agribusinesses and individuals that contributed donations to help sponsor the YF&R tour.

farmers," said David Hartman.

According to Ralph Moyer, "All members of the tour group feel that this International Study Program needs to be continued

and enhanced on a regular basis in order to broaden the knowledge of other Young Farmers and lead agriculture into the next century."

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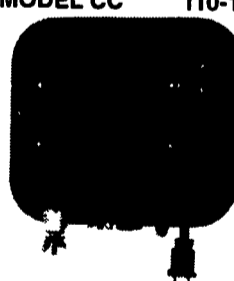
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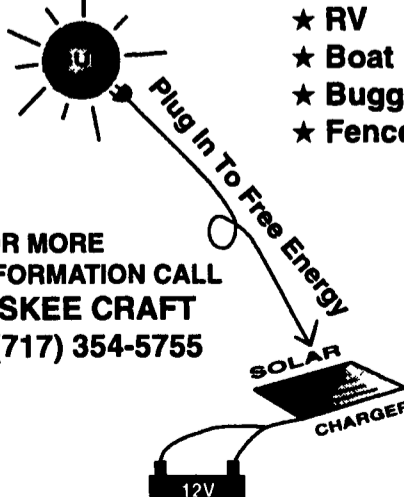


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