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National Officers Share Enthusiasm For FFA Program

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Lancaster Farming Staff
HERSHEY (Dauphin Co.)

Six of the nation's brightest and most articulate teens gave vibrant testimony to the advantages of participating in FFA recently.

The six are national FFA officers who presented a leadership workshop for Milton Hershey School students. The three-day workshop offered a glimpse into the opportunities and growth the FFA team experienced through their FFA involvement.

"It's the greatest experience of my life and something that could be yours," Travis Hagen told the 50 students who were selected to attend the pilot program.

It was the first time the national FFA officers presented the workshop, for which they developed the curriculum. This pilot program will be fine-tuned and presented to state officers across the U.S. as the national officers spend 320 days on

the road and log 150,000 air miles fulfilling their year-long term.

Each national officer worked with a team member to present workshops. The topics varied from the structure of FFA's founding 68 years ago to issues confronting agriculture today.

The national FFA officers are headed by president Corey Flournoy from Chicago. As an urban student, Corey's interest in agriculture was sparked in 1988 when he decided to attend the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences.

"I attended the school because it was strong in math and science, not because I was interested in ag," Corey said. "But every student at the school is involved in FFA. I was motivated to participate by teachers who were excited about opportunities available through the program."

That enthusiasm was contagious. Corey's interest in career

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National FFA officers gather at Milton Hershey School to teach how FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agriculture education. From left, Travis Hagen, secretary; Lee Schroeder, Eastern region vice president; Corey Flournoy, president; Greg Vetter, Western region vice president; Trisha Bailey, southern region vice president; and Jennafer Neufeld, central region vice president.

Environmental Regs, Consumer Groups Challenge Poultry Producers

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff
MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.)

Heavy government regulations in countries such as The Netherlands have made it tougher to produce poultry products. As a result, educators and industry personnel have had to forge viable working relationships to help solve the ensuing

environmental and economic issues.

In fact, it is becoming a challenge to try to control poultry food-borne and other diseases simply because industry has its hands tied by many regulations as a result of intense lobbying by powerful consumer advocacy groups.

And the controversies never

cease. In one case, according to a visiting professor from Holland, a consumer organization went to a supermarket, bought 100 broilers, and claimed to newspapers that up to 35 percent of the chickens were "contaminated" with Salmonella — when in fact, only five or six had small amounts of the bacteria in them.

The Netherlands export a lot of poultry products, but have had to deal with the problems of manure, according to Dr. Ron Meijerhof, visiting professor from the Centre for Applied Poultry Research, Spelderholt, The Netherlands. Meijerhof spoke to about 35 poultry producers at the Penn State-sponsored Poultry Management and Health Seminar on Monday at Kreider Farms Restaurant.

Meijerhof said The Netherlands are known for several exports, mostly flowers. Also high on the export list are poultry and hogs to Germany and beer to many countries.

Meijerhof spoke about the general research under way to deal with the environmental issues of high production of poultry, about

the research on layers and broilers at the Centre, and about the techniques to manage the huge amounts of manure to contain the ammonia and phosphorous.

At the research farm, the breeder houses are constructed of all brick with special equipment for air inlet control and other measures. "We build our houses (to last) almost forever," he said. "That makes it quite costly."

A great deal of the layer

research is on how to produce more efficiently with less waste, while looking into the economics of the production. Also, different types of equipment are used to aid in the study of breeder production and layer management.

"We put quite a lot of money in all those little things that we have in that house, a lot more than you do here. It's not a matter of good or bad or better or worse or whatever,

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Districts Honor Soil Stewardship Week

KAREN BUTLER

Maryland Correspondent

FREDERICK, Md. — "A partnership to develop, promote, and deliver conservation resource programs and to meet resource management challenges" is how Royden Powell, III, assistant secretary of agriculture for the state of Maryland, described the teamwork among many agencies repre-

sented here at a recent soil stewardship luncheon.

Powell was the guest speaker at the Catocin and Frederick Soil Conservation district's luncheon recently, in honor of Soil Stewardship Week.

Daniel C. Poole, chairman of the Catocin Soil Conservation District, welcomed a group of

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Family Farm Business Helps Post-Coal Economy

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.

Lancaster Farming Staff
SACRAMENTO (Schuylkill Co.) — Keith Masser is a family farmer and seventh-generation potato producer in the Schuylkill County town of Sacramento.

He wears a ball cap and sometimes a blond beard stubble.

His striped work shirt has his name tag sewn over the left breast, and he wears work pants and work shoes.

Masser plows, plants and he plans. His hands have calluses.

As president of Serman Masser Potatoes Inc., he also employs, full-time, 35 people at his potato-packing plant that he built on the home farm, expanding his father's original 100-acre potato farm.

Sacramento developed, as did many small communities in the rolling ridge and valley area, primarily as a coal town. But miners needed food and a number of farmers supplied miners' tables with milk, meat and vegetables.

The name of the town means little outside of the area, but its

location is just west of Hegin, a place reeling in good fortune, ever since the town's historic live pigeon shoot was targeted by an extremist animal rights group as a place to find victory in defeating an "animal abuse."

Locals there chuckle at how the annual shoot, held to raise funds to operate the town park, was on its way out because of a lack of attendance, until the event became publicized and deemed evil by the anti-animal use group.

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Keith and Helen Masser stand at the entrance to Serman Masser Potatoes Inc., their Schuylkill County family farm business.