

Michigan 4-H'ers Visit Mifflin Countians



During a week-long summer exchange program, new friends from Gradiot County, Michigan, visited Mifflin County. Members of the Mifflin County Junlor Leaders Club plan to reciprocate next year with a trip out west.

Gail Strock

Mifflin Co. Correspondent

The Wolverine State's 3,258-mile shoreline is longer than any other in the United States except Alaska. While this shoreline touches four out of the five Great Lakes, Michigan's interior farmland produces crops similar to those grown in Pennsylvania, corn, soybeans, wheat, cherries and apples. It also produces lesser grown crops such as sugar beets and potatoes. While Michigan's leading farm commodity is milk, it's rural counties also raise another product commonly found in Pennsylvania - 4-H kids!

As the end of the July sweltered into the dog days of August, members of Mifflin County's 4-H Junior Leaders club welcomed 14 Michigan teens and their chaperons in a week-long cultural exchange experience. The group from Gradiot County, Michigan, stepped off the train in Lewistown tired and hungry but also looking forward to new friends and experiences in Central Pennsylvania.

"You can get lost out here!" one youth exclaims of central Pennsylvania's twisty Appalachian roads. Coming from a perfectly square

county where all roads run either directly north-south or east-west, these youth describe their own county as very flat. During their visit, thye youth joined their hosts in their busy pre-fair week preparations and saw a wide variety of Central Pennsylvania's highlights.

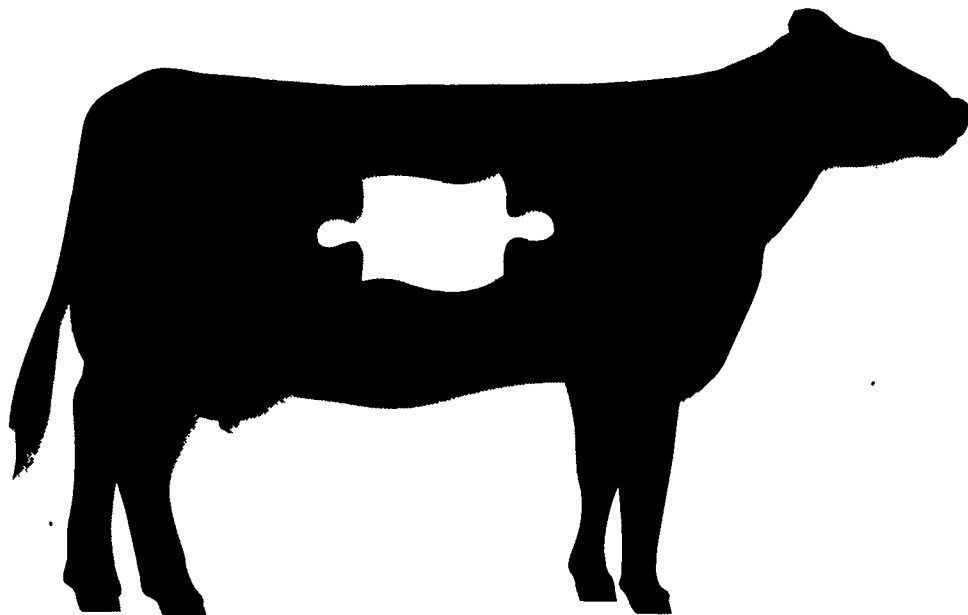
"We plan to visit an Amish farm and to tour Penn State," says Amy Laughlin, president of the Mifflin County 4-H junior leaders. Rounding out their busy itinerary will be visits to the Belleville Livestock Auction, breakfast at A.J. Peachey and Sons, and a tour of the Ford New Holland plant. At Penn State, they visited the dairy barns, deer pens, and Beaver Stadium, as well as campus centers such as the creamery, the HUB student center, and the bookstore.

Earlier in the week, the group spent the day at Greenwood State Park picnicking, swimming in the spring-fed mountain dam, and playing baseball.

During a break in the action, a few gathered to talk about their experience.

"I came on the exchange because it sounded like fun and a good experience. I've traveled within the state, but not out of the state," Jessi Skinner says. A Michigan 4-H'er involved in sheep, steer, and food clubs, she also takes part in a club called "collections" or still exhibits. Jessi is staying with Amy Laughlin. Joined by Kelly O'Boyle, another Laughlin guest, the three girls

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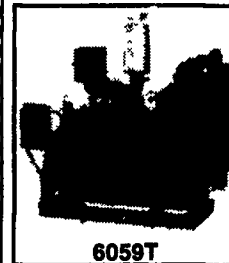
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