

At Greenawalt Farms, Public Gets Ag Education

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According to John, they quit pullets 4 or 5 years ago in favor of "spent hens," which he says allows them to adjust to the changing market more quickly. After getting in a flock of hens that have been laying for 12-14 months for another producer, they may be molted immediately and can then be back in full production in two or three months. Raising pullets takes longer with the additional problem of all the undersized eggs.

In addition to eggs, the farm produces fresh sweet corn in late spring through early summer and pumpkins in the fall. Both these products are also delivered fresh to area stores.

"For sweet corn we ask the store to order only as much as they will sell in a single day," Ina says. "We deliver every day."

At pumpkin time in the fall, there is another opportunity to emphasize fresh produce and make a contact with the stores. These additional connections provide opportunity for spaced contact with the stores and a way to keep the Greenawalt name out in the public. Though secondary to eggs, these two products add depth to the farm's produce and extra cash income.

What's the attraction?

Why would school children and families come out to see a working farm? Ina emphasizes that many of the people who visit have never been on a farm or have only a

slight idea about how food is produced. This farm tour gives kids and their parents a chance to learn something and make a connection to their rural heritage.

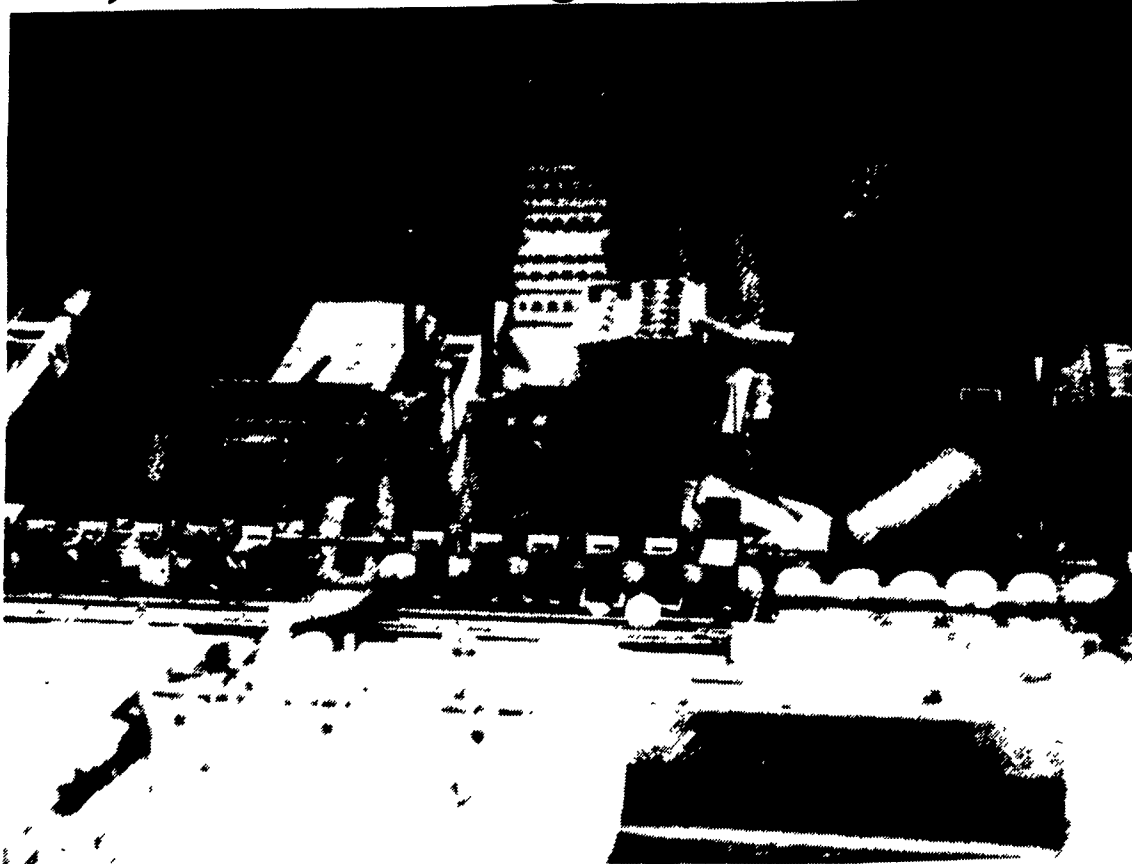
The educational/public relations effort has been a continuing concern for the business. Lead by Ina, the teaching effort includes year around tours of the farm with special emphasis on seasonal events such as the Egg Festival. Though wagon rides are available to groups all year around, they are especially popular in the fall.

For the big egg festival, the farm buys ad space in local papers to advertise the event. Vendors have caught on that many people will be at the event, and 30-40 craft and agri-business booths are set up on the property.

One example of the literature available for children and their parents includes a storybook that has both a children's story line and adult explanations. In the story, titled Sunrise to sunset A day in the life of Grech'hen the Greenawalt chicken, Lil Bird is introduced along with Grech'hen to tell visitors what happens on the farm. The story includes planting and harvest, molting hens and production.

At the beginning of the book, a direct connection made between this farm and eggs in the store. The book concludes with connect the dots, mazes and other pencil activities for the kids.

Included on the farm is a small retail outlet called the Country



This is no Easter bunny, but Sam DeArmit could be the bunny's helper. He helps bring eggs to youngsters while working with the egg sorter/grader/packer as Greenawalt Farms host thousands of visitors at their annual egg festival.

Farm Store. Greenawalt's two sons have contiguous, but independent, businesses with their parents. One son has a solid oak furniture business located with the retail food outlet. Another son has a greenhouse called B & G enterprises, which is also located on the property. A small restaurant is

also opening as part of this 14th Egg Festival.

The farm started as a 26 acre plot, inherited as part of John's family place. It's now been in the family for over a hundred years. Gradual expansion included additional land purchases in 1969 and following. The acreage has now grown to about 280 acres plus

some rented ground.

The adjusting, development and imagination that have been put into the business in the last generation will have to continue if it is to survive into the next century. But from the energy shown by the Greenawalts and their employees in the last fourteen years, that is sure to happen.

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