

# On Tour, FFA's Learn Valuable Lessons About Cooperatives

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Lancaster Farming Staff  
NOTTINGHAM (Chester Co.)  
— A simple tour can turn into a big learning experience.

Lancaster County FFA members who toured the Herr's Snack Foods plant just inside the Chester County border Tuesday morning learned an important lesson about the value of cooperatives: take a raw product such as a potato, turn it into a potato chip, and see how its value grows.

And not just any potato chip: but a barbecued one, one that tastes like sour cream and onions, or tortillas. . . .

After the tour of the plant, FFA's were treated to some snacks before heading to the Herr Angus Farm.

"This tour illustrates the necessity of businesses to get closer to the consumer," said Dick Poorbaugh, Penn State Cooperative Education. Poorbaugh spoke to the 56 students and teachers from eight different FFA chapters in the county.

The tour, sponsored by the Lancaster County Cooperative Council, is part of the testing process to select youth from the county to attend the Cooperative Youth Institute scheduled the last week of June at Shippensburg.

Poorbaugh explained some of the purposes of the Penn State program and to share some lessons he has learned through the years in

dealing with cooperatives. The Penn State program trains the boards of directors of the different cooperatives to provide the skills, ideas, and knowledge to "lead cooperative organizations into the 21st century," he said.

The directives of the cooperatives have been to, in some cases, merge to gain more efficiency, markets, and access to foreign markets.

The tour, according to Poorbaugh, provides a good example of how raw commodities, such as potatoes, are processed and value is added to create a highly marketable product. Herr's Snack Foods sells to stores along the East Coast.

Importantly, two lessons can be learned from the experience, Poorbaugh told the FFA members. The first lesson is to think about "where you want to live and make the decisions today about where you want to be." The second was

garnered from Poorbaugh's recent experience in touring Poland.

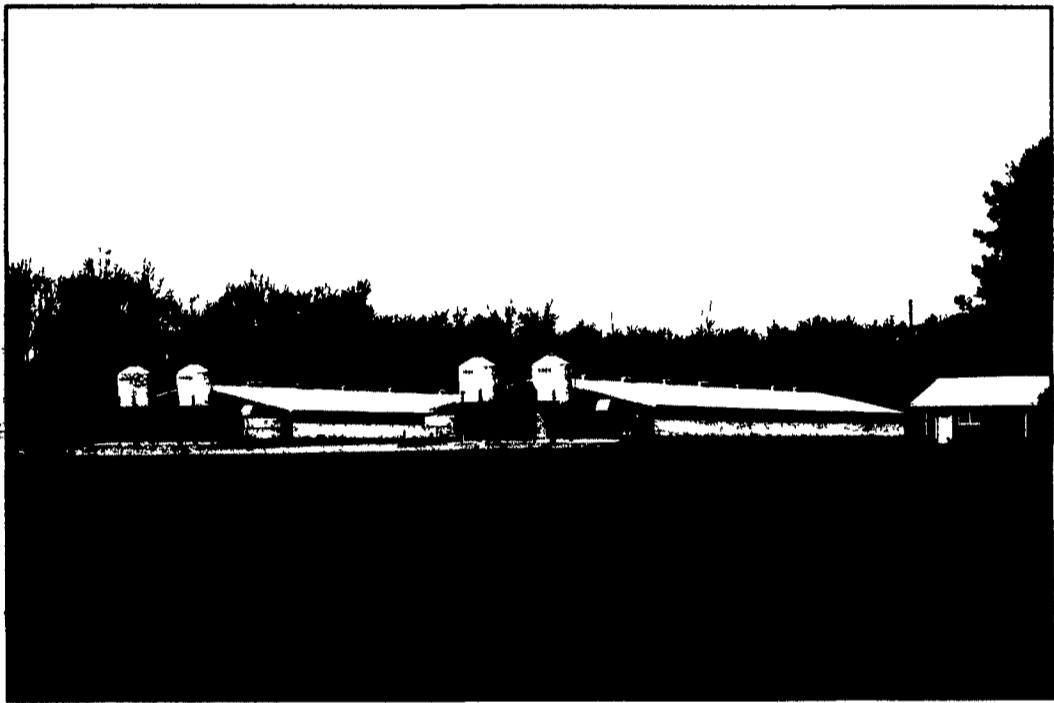
He said Poland doesn't have cooperatives such as the U.S. He

told the future business leaders to "learn to appreciate" the benefits that U.S. cooperatives provide to us.

After the snack food plant tour, FFA members, teachers, and cooperative council members  
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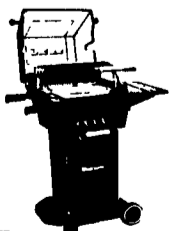
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