

# Marty Stutzman Receives American Farmer Degree

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Somerset Co. Correspondent  
**MEYERSDALE** (Somerset Co.) — Marty Stutzman, in November was the only Somerset County FFA member to receive the American FFA Degree at the National FFA Convention held in Kansas City, Mo.

The 20-year-old Meyersdale FFA Chapter member has continued his active supervised work experience on Friendship Farms, at RD3, where he hopes, one day, to become its manager. His parents are Jim and Doris (Miller) Stutzman.

Rolling over the valley at the southern base of Hunsrick Summit, and around the energetic waters of the Casselman River, where increased precipitation and a man-designed project has curbed earlier aquatic damage from old mine drainage, Stutzman sees the ancestral lands. Lands owned by his maternal forebears for more than two centuries.

That's why, besides working at home, his pursuit of a degree in agricultural business management at the Garrett Community College in McHenry, Md., is vitally important to the preservation of this heritage. Knowledge and experience will carry it into the fast-approaching 21st Century.

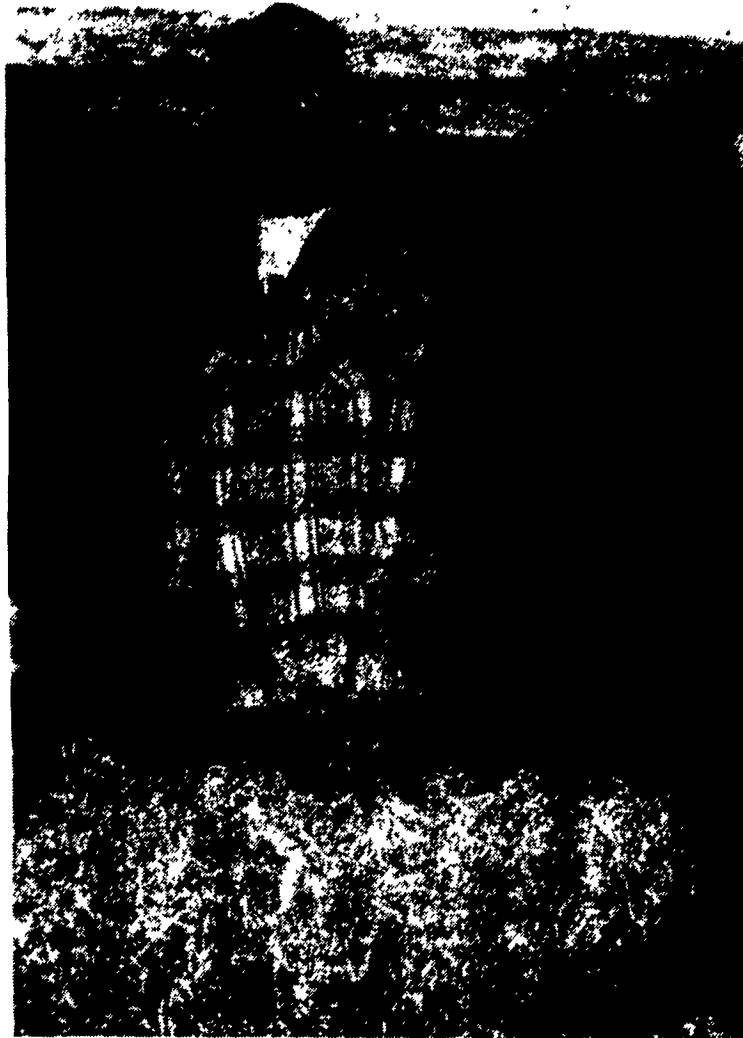
"I think growing up on a farm has really helped me in college because I already had a grasp on agriculture," reported the full-time student.

"I tried going to school part time but it didn't work. I was still working too much on the farm," he said.

Stutzman's mandatory 2,000 hours of supervised work were completed under supervision of his dad, a junior high science teacher in the Meyersdale Area School District. It included operating the 40-head Holstein dairy and the 15 to 20 head of beef animals they keep, besides raising crops.

Partnering is primarily what the son and his dad do.

"Dad won't make a major decision without me and I won't without him," said Stutzman, now the



At Friendship Farms, Meyersdale, Somerset County, square bales of hay are more practical for the small Holstein operation run by Marty Stutzman and his dad, Jim Stutzman.

third American Degree recipient in the Meyersdale FFA Chapter.

"My mom does most of the accounting." He added with a twinkle, "My dad makes the bills and she pays them."

They commercialize on whatever corn, rye, oats, and alfalfa their own animals, which are fed in a conventional way, won't need.

On an average, the stockpile of square hay bales is some 20,000. The square bale issue entwined a good debate in Stutzman's classes where the round bales were touted as having the greatest efficiency.

"Some things that are taught

aren't as realistic for some farmers as for others," he observed about round bales as opposed to the square ones. "Some things will work and others won't."

"If you have the facilities, it is an advantage," he said. "Square bales, however, are more marketable than the round ones."

A few things that do work, however, are lessons on keeping records and doing income taxes. Livestock and crop management, understanding market trends and changing technology are important tools for any farmer according to the Meyersdale Young Farmers Association member.

"We had to set up a budget for a farm," he said, explaining that some classes were taken on-line through the University of Maryland.

Stutzman, who with his sister, Becky, a teacher, still live in the big old farmhouse with their folks, says "It's nice to have a roof over your head and food in your mouth."

The family chuckles when they relate, but have no proof of the legend that "the farm was purchased for two bottles of whiskey and 14 deerskins."

Peter Miller, one of Stutzman's great-grandfathers ironically, was married to a Mary Stutzman from 1756 to 1818.

Next door, another big house was built in increments. Half of its bricks, reportedly, were poured in one winter and the other half, the following winter. Then, some onery cats, trespassing, ran through the forms. To this day their paw prints remain preserved in several of the bricks, said the eighth generation descendant.

Stutzman, who always played FFA sports, earned his state FFA degree as a high school senior. He still joins various community league, sport teams, and is a Meyersdale Church of the Brethren member.



Bottle-feeding a three-week-old beef calf is one of numerous tasks adding up to at least 2,000 hours of supervised work for Marty Stutzman, the only FFA member in Somerset County to receive the American FFA Degree at the 69th FFA National Convention, held in Kansas City, Mo.

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