

# New Ag Classrooms Prepare Students For Real-World Challenges

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**MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.)** —  
The "class-to-real-world" journey for a lot of Lancaster County agricultural science students began, in large part, back in the summer of 1994.

A trip organized by Heather Anderson, ag instructor at Manheim Central High School, to two schools in Virginia may have paved the way for the future of many high school ag science graduates and FFA members throughout the region.

Anderson, who used to teach at James Woods High School, the county high school in Winchester, Va. (one of the schools visited on

the trip), was accompanied by several ag teachers. They included Deb Seibert, also of Manheim; Carole Fay of Penn Manor High School in Millersville; Dr. Arba Henry of Solanco High School in Quarryville; Ron Frederick of Twin Valley High School in Elverston; and several others. They visited James Woods in addition to Sherando High School.

Their mission? Look at the ag mechanics and ag science structure and curriculum of the schools and see what made them successful.

The teachers took notes. Then they brought those design ideas back home to Lancaster County.

The conclusion, according to Deb Seibert of Manheim Central,



A 30- by 44-foot greenhouse was built with grant money by the department at a cost of \$18,000, noted Seibert, separate from the money used on general school construction. Manheim students, standing, left to right, are Kelly Moore, sophomore; Lori Landis, sophomore; Emily Helstand, junior; Mandi Eisenhooth, junior; Lucinda Martin, junior; Sherry Groff, junior; and Carina Gelb, junior. Kneeling, in front, from left Greg Shenk, junior; Ryan Burkhart, junior; Nick Young, junior; Derek Hershey, freshman; and Jeremy Kready, freshman.

was that those schools have successfully integrated the latest equipment into the classroom. Industry demands that students be prepared: what better way to do it than to have the latest equipment and technology available at students' fingertips?

As a result, in the past several years, three Lancaster County high schools — Manheim, Solanco, and Penn Manor — have undergone major renovations and construction. Along with new construction has come new ag science laboratories, ag mechanics facilities, high-tech classrooms, and identical equipment being used in many local ag-related industries.

In all cases, before construction began, the high school ag science instructors and FFA advisers provided input and incorporated design decisions in the formation of the laboratories.

### Manheim Central

At Manheim Central High School, instructor Deb Seibert pointed to 13 new welding booths in the small engines/welding laboratory. The booths were

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Emily Helstand plants flowers in front of the new greenhouse at Manheim.

A feature of the work at Penn Manor was a new greenhouse addition, measuring 16 feet by 60 feet, separated into three zones. Vince Metzler, president of Manor FFA, looks over the plans on the site of the new greenhouse, next to the old classrooms.



About 88 members are involved in the Solanco FFA and were responsible for setting up the trophy cases and other displays, in addition to putting the "finishing touches" on some interior work after construction. FFA officers from left are Jim Pelliccio, student adviser; Jim Kerr, county president; and Britina Robinson, second vice president.



Included in the Solanco construction is an ag biology classroom, an ag mechanics classroom, an ag mechanics lab, and office space. Ryan Kreider, a freshman, puts the finishing touches on a sawhorse.