



Ken and Connie Rutt, who have travel extensively, are forming the International Exchange 4-H Club to give 4-H'ers a chance to develop friendships with youth from other countries. The Rutts believe that the only way to bring the world closer together is through understanding.

Newly-Formed 4-H International Club To Build Relationships With Other Cultures

LOU ANN GOOD
Lancaster Farming Staff
LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)
—“The only way to come closer in the world is to understand each other,” Connie Rutt said.

One of the most effective means in understanding others is to live together, learn to know each other's families, friends, and talk together.

Connie and her husband Ken are doing their part in bringing the world closer together. After years of traveling throughout the world and in opening their home to international visitors, the couple is forming a new 4-H club. Called the International 4-H Exchange Club, the purpose is to educate 4-H'ers about another culture and give them a chance to experience it.

Connie has taken five trips to Poland through the Penn State Extension. She took part in the International 4-H Camp with students from several European countries such as Hungary, Poland, and Latvia, and helped set up a 4-H program in Poland.

Several county 4-H'ers were selected to participate in a 4-H exchange with Poland.

“It was life changing,” said Gerald Boyd, one of the participants.

He was especially intrigued with the importance of multi-generational families in the Polish culture. “All the members of the family came home at lunch time just so they could spend time together,” he said.

Team members spent three weeks living with a host family in Poland. Gerald and other teens said that the experience made them much more aware and grateful for what they have.

“I had more clothes in my suitcase than my host sister had in her whole closet,” one 4-H member reported.

Attitudes and concepts such as these develop naturally when students become immersed in other cultures.

In addition, participants are amazed to find out that youth in other countries know a lot more about the United States government and history than they themselves know.

“We want the International 4-H Club to be an educational experi-

ence. We will study about the country we will be visiting,” Connie said.

In addition, the club will visit nearby attractions with a cultural influence and learn to cook foods typical of the area.

“Members who join the International 4-H Club can give input into selecting the country to visit, but it must be a country that has invited us,” Connie said.

By that, she is referring to countries that have seen how Penn State Extension has helped Poland and have issued invitations for the Extension to come and do the same thing in their countries.

The Rutts don't want the International Club to be made up of members whose parents can afford to pay their own travel costs. Instead, they want members to raise travel costs through fundraisers and other ingenious events.

“I am amazed at the ideas youth come up with,” Connie said. “One fellow offered to clean up for farmers and collected scrap metal that he sold.

Transportation costs are the primary expense since youth stay with host families and have basically all food and sightseeing costs provide by the hosts.

The Rutts have been foundational in the success of the county 4-H program. Both were 4-H'ers growing up. In fact, they met each other through 4-H. They have both served as 4-H volunteer leaders for 21 years and have raised three children who were active in 4-H clubs.

In 1984, the Rutts participated in a farm tour that covered eight European countries. Since then, they have traveled independently to numerous countries.

The Rutts sold their dairy cows within the last year, but continue to crop farm their Quarryville farm called Edgefield Farms with their son Phil. A daughter is married and has lived in Mexico, Russia, and now Hungary. Another son is a civil engineer in New Jersey.

For the past three years, Rutt has been involved in an agriculture project in Nigeria. In a joint venture with the United Nations, Rutt has been breeding native West African cows by using artificial insemination of Brown Swiss,

Jersey, and Holstein breeds.

Rutt said that the African cows produce little milk because they go months without eating and drinking much. A group of native doctors who had studied in the U.S. and returned to their country want to encourage milk drinking among their people to prevent numerous illnesses and deficiencies.

Diabetes is prevalent in Nigeria, and a theory is that sugars in milk prevent diabetes.

“Because the native doctors are behind this venture, it isn't like the U.S. coming in trying to change their culture,” Rutt said.

Rutt travels to Nigeria about three times annually and spends several weeks at a time there. Rutt's goals are not only to produce milk, but to show the natives how to produce milk and to provide employment for the natives on the ranch.

Although the natives are curious and watch insemination closely, they are skeptical. It's difficult for the natives to understand a concept that they can't see.

Rutt is confident that when they see the offspring, they will want to have their cows bred also.

Using the latest technology in breeding cattle, Rutt said they have had an unbelievable 94 percent success rate in breeding.

The ranch is located in an isolated area. People live in huts and farm completely by hand. No electricity or refrigeration is available.

He said that many techniques that American farmers take for granted are not easily understood in other cultures. For example, after he assisted in planting corn to feed the chickens and the chickens were consistently laying eggs under his watchful eye, Rutt left and was told that the chickens had stopped laying eggs. Upon further inquiry he learned that the chickens had not been fed for several days.

He also had a difficult time convincing the natives to plant only one corn kernel per hole. He needed to show them how it grew when only one was planted in the hole but if four were planted there nothing could be harvested.

“Work is slow in another cul-

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