

New Zealand Exchange Offers Farmers A Working Vacation

FERGUS FALLS, Minn. — There are tour bus tourists, and there are tourists like Dan Harris of Anita, Iowa. People who want more out of a vacation than sightseeing with a tour guide.

"I'm not a 'look through a window on a tour bus' kind of person," said Harris, who was one of the first participants in Communicating for Agriculture's (CA's) new exchange program to New Zealand for established farmers.

The 45-year-old Iowa grain farmer isn't your typical tourist. Instead he's the kind of person who doesn't mind getting his hands dirty helping on the farm or camping in the wilderness.

He had been considering a motorcycle tour of New Zealand when he heard of CA's exchange offer that began in the winter of 1998. The program is patterned after CA's international agriculture exchange program for young people but does not have an age limit and is for shorter periods of time. The idea is to place established American farmers at New Zealand farms where they worked with the host family during the busy winter harvest in exchange for room and board.

"It sounded like it had my name on it," said Harris, who applied for the exchange when he first heard about it in November of 1997. By Jan. 13, he found himself flying to Auckland where he was met by Geoff and Rochelle Spark of the Rural Exchange New Zealand, CA's partners in the exchange program.

The Sparks brought Harris to Claxby Farm, a 4,700 acre flatland farm on the Canterbury Plains, 30 minutes north of

Christchurch. Owned by Richard and Margaret Spencer, Claxby is predominately a sheep farm where they run 6,500 half-bred ewes and 500 merino ewes. They also have a simmental herd of 30 cows and feed additional cattle for market.

However, it was the cash crop aspect of the farming operation that attracted Harris. Used to farming his own family farm of 1,000 acres in southwest Iowa, Harris found both similarities and differences helping his Kiwi hosts with the January harvest.

For one thing, it was a hot January with temperatures in the 80s and 90s and a drought taking its toll on the irrigated crops. Unlike the open fields of his farm, Harris said the Claxby Farm is bordered by mountains on three sides and uses windbreaks and hedges to prevent soil erosion. Harris found himself "opening more gates than I ever had in my life" as he learned to farm Kiwi style.

His hosts use a boarder dike irrigation system installed not long after Spencer's great-grandfather settled the land in 1852. Although Harris doesn't irrigate his land, he did work on the Spencer's other irrigation system, a spray irrigator, when it needed repair.

"It was a typical harvest season just like at home — full torpedoes ahead all the time," Harris said. "They were feeling a bit guilty about not having enough time to spend with me, but I didn't feel abused or anything. They certainly didn't ask me to do anything they weren't doing themselves."

Harris found the work experience and discussions with his hosts to be an excellent way to understand the differences

between the farming systems — everything from crop and soil differences to government subsidies. Living with a host family also meant he grasped a better understanding of the cultural differences.

"I really enjoyed it. Living with the family was an experience," said Harris.

Himself the father of two grown children, Harris joked about the antics of the Spencer's three children, Sam, 14, Olivia, 12, and Marcus, 6. Being with the family gave him a perspective he would not have found as a tourist, he said.

"You get to know the people this way," Harris explained. "They were very polite and easy to get along with and always interested in what you're doing."

His hosts open their farm to

tour buses and sensed their CA exchange guest was not your typical American bus-tour tourist. So they invited him on a camping trip to a remote area near Lake Summer.

"Lake Summer is a natural lake that's tremendously deep and blue. They brought what they call a caravan, a little trailer, and we camped out there without water or electricity or anything," said Harris, an avid fisherman and hunter. "You can only get there with a four-wheel drive — that's my kind of thing."

That and a trip Harris took along by car gave him a chance to explore the geographical, climatic and vegetation contrasts of the island. He saw red deer being raised as a cash crop for venison, wildly overgrown river regions, cattle "grazing in grass

up to their bellies," mountainous areas and coastal regions.

It was a working vacation that gave Harris a chance to farm during the winter, meet new people and travel to an interesting land. It was a chance to explore New Zealand and whet his appetite for more of the same.

"I was pleased with my stay there," he said. "I'm definitely going to go back."

Anyone who is interested in learning more about CA's 1999 Established Farmer Exchange Program to New Zealand that will be offered around Feb. 1, 1999 is asked to contact Beverly Gilmartin at Communicating for Agriculture, 112 E. Lincoln, Fergus Falls, MN 56537. Phone 800-432-3276 or e-mail her at beverlyg@cainc.org.

Not All Children Play Alike

(Centre Co.) — Two kindergarten children — one European-American, one Asian-American — are busy playing together with equal amounts of clay. The Asian-American child calmly takes some of the clay from the European-American child. An argument ensues, and the teacher intervenes. The teacher's first thought is that the Asian-American child is a bully, yet the child's manner is otherwise polite and respectful.

"This is an example of a culture clash in play," says Dr. James E. Johnson, professor of early childhood education at Penn State. "Compared to children from some other ethnic groups, European-American children tend to be more individualistic and competitive in their play."

Asian-American children, on

the other hand, place a special value on cooperativeness and sharing. Thus, they see nothing wrong in taking from what is perceived as a common stockpile of clay.

"The teacher, realizing this, puts all the clay together and lets the children take what they need within fair and sensible limits," Johnson notes. "This stops arguments over the clay and promotes cultural awareness."

"This scenario shows the paradox of play," he says. "While all children play, children from different cultures play differently."

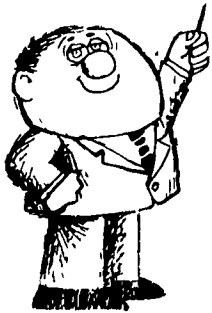
Johnson and Dr. Jaipaul Roopnarine, professor of Child and Family Studies at Syracuse University, are co-authors of the paper, "Play and Diverse Cultures: Implications for Early

Childhood Education," an invited paper recently presented at Wheelock College in Boston, Mass. The two experts have collaborated on research and publications on play and diverse cultures for several years.

In foreign countries, even very young children tend to be fond of games with clearly defined rules. For instance, Brazilian children will start playing soccer at the age of two or three.

American children prior to the age of eight prefer a less structured approach to play, according to Johnson.

"Play encourages problem-solving, social competence and a sense of humor, while at the same time promoting tolerance and understanding. It is the universal language of children," Johnson adds.



A LESSON WELL LEARNED... LANCASTER FARMING'S CLASSIFIED ADS GET RESULTS!

BOUMATIC

Equipment & Systems To Improve Your Bottom Line



First In Product Innovation

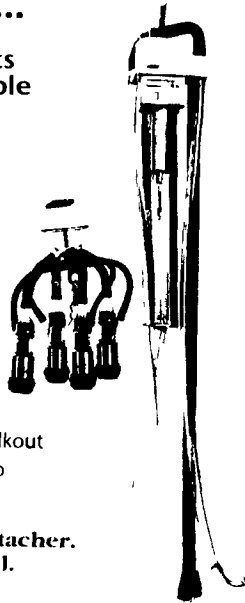
Because good companions are hard to come by...

Bou-Matic introduces its new Companion Portable Stall Barn Detacher

Finally! A portable detacher that milks your cows as reliably as a faithful companion. Plus the companion offers other great features like:

- Full-flow sensing and non-restrictive shut-off that reduces vacuum fluctuation and vacuum drop, so cows are milked faster
- Programmable, filtered alternating pulsation, so you are able to customize your herd's milkout
- Adjustable letdown delay, to help prevent premature detachments

The Companion portable detacher. Dependable, reliable, faithful. Only from Bou-Matic.



The Dairy Equipment Division of DEC International, Inc.

Perfect your dairy operation...

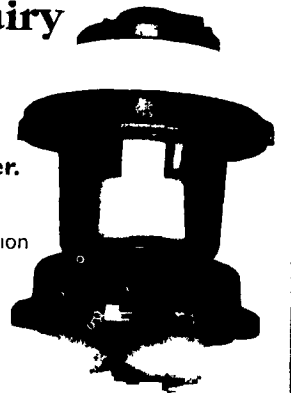
With the Bou-Matic Perfection 3000 milk meter.

Unsurpassed milk measurement accuracy. That's what the Perfection offers you. But that's not all you get:

- Small, compact design
- Simple, non-motorized operation
- Built-in milk conductivity sensor

Of course, what really matters in a milk meter is how accurate it is. And that's what the Perfection excels at.

Plus, if you use the Perfection milk meter in conjunction with the ProVantage Integrated Management System, you've just added an endless amount of management possibilities.



The Dairy Equipment Division of DEC International, Inc.

We Can Help Improve Your Dairy Business... See One Of These Dealers Now!

See one of these Dealers Today:

JONES-DAIRY SERVICE
Massey, MD
1-800-801-2082

W and J DAIRY SALES
Oxford, PA
717-529-2569

TRI-STATE FARM AUTOMATION
Hagerstown, MD
301-416-7340

DAIRY-LINK, INC.
Meadville, PA
814-724-5011

PRINGLE FEED STORE
Greenville, PA
412-588-7950

McNEAL FARM SERVICE
Towanda, PA
717-364-5460