

Ag Secretary Leads Trade Mission To Mexico

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Building for agriculture's tomorrow, Agriculture Secretary Sam Hayes recently led an agriculture products group to Mexico with 18 students from Delaware Valley College and eight students from W.B. Saul Agricultural High School on an Export for Scholars trade mission. The scholars were accompanied by administrative leaders and faculty from the two agricultural schools.

"We live in a global marketplace," Hayes said. "Pennsylvania agriculture needs to maintain its ability to compete at home and around the planet. The Export for Scholars

program provides an opportunity for Pennsylvania agriculture students to have a hands-on learning experience in a real-world marketplace. There is absolutely no reason why we should delay a person's entry into the international arena. The students did very well on the trade mission. It was a good opportunity for them to learn about the professional world in which they will have to compete throughout the 21st century."

The goal of the Export for Scholars program is to promote the marketing and exporting of Pennsylvania Holsteins and to familiarize students with the export principles that operate in the international arena of agricultural trade.

In addition to learning "Pennsylvania Agriculture has Products for the Planet," students at W.B. Saul Agricultural High School and Delaware Valley College, for several weeks, managed Holstein heifers at their dairy facilities. Students were introduced to export principles such as customer needs, animal selection, price, international border requirements, the role of trade missions, the need to build relationships, and the importance of understanding the significance of culture in the global marketplace.

Hayes, the students, and other agriculture professionals hosted a Pennsylvania Holstein Field Day during the trade mission, and also attended many business meetings, dairy ranches, the Queretaro Livestock Exposition, agricultural colleges in Queretaro and Guanajuato, and New Hol-

land's farm machine factory in Mexico.

The Export for Scholars program was initiated by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and the recent trade mission as the second of its kind conducted through this program. In 2000, Secretary Hayes led Delaware Valley Col-

lege and Saul students to Puerto Rico, which entailed the actual export of bred dairy heifers.

Upon completion of the recent trade mission to Mexico, student participants reflected on their experiences.

"I learned more in eight days about international agricultural business than I could have in a semester of college," said Jake Lantzsch of Delaware Valley College. "It is a great experience for anyone in 21st century agriculture."

"Export for Scholars," said Del-Val's Audrey A. Nissly, "has provided me with a priceless international agricultural experience, and opened my eyes

to many new things. I have learned the importance of the global marketplace."

And Troy Davis of W. B. Saul High School said, "Export for Scholars is a great opportunity for students interested in agriculture. It allows you to get the experience and knowledge of exporting animals."

Pennsylvania export of live animals have averaged about \$17.7 million dollars in the past three years. One-third of the state's live animal exports were cattle and calves (dairy and beef). In 2001, total exports of Pennsylvania agriculture products totaled over \$1 billion.

Over 80 Holstein heifers were sold and exported to Mexico as part of this Export for Scholars program.

An order for another 250 dairy heifers was received by the scholars and trade mission group while they were in Mexico. It is expected that this group of dairy heifers will be exported after the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Agro 2002 in January.

The Pennsylvania Holstein Association participated in the selection of registered heifers for this export package. Dave Lenz of the Pennsylvania Holstein Association said, "The Export for

Scholars program not only resulted in Pennsylvania heifers being sent to Mexico; but, the trade mission came back home with an order for more heifers. This is good business for Pennsylvania dairy breeders."

Dairy professionals joining the trade mission were Burket Falls Farm and Bardale-McMath Farm, both of whom are engaged in the export of dairy heifers to Mexico through the efforts of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

John Burket of Burket Falls Farm and Vice President of the Pennsylvania Holstein Association (Turn to Page A44)

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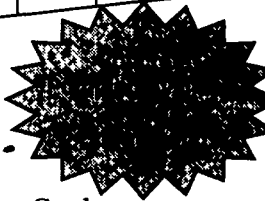
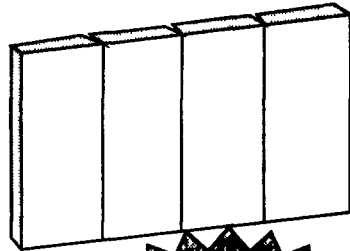
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