

Don Robinson Reflects On 36-Year Career

(Continued from Page A1)

awareness course taught by a science teacher. The class was not vocational agriculture or affiliated with FFA," Robinson said.

But the introduction to agriculture so fascinated Robinson that he chose to study ag education at Penn State. After earning his degree, Robinson married Evelyn Gustavsen from Lancas-

ter County and taught vocational agriculture in Pottstown for four years. day with adult farmers. His duties in working with individual farmers increased, and by the fourth year of his employment, Robinson was appointed to work full time with farmers through the adult farmer program.

In this position, Robinson said his duties were similar to an extension agent, except he worked only within the school district. The plan was to include Plain

garden throughout the growing season.

"We'd follow the results, and at the end of the growing season, conduct meetings to share the results of the research."

The meetings were well attended, even drawing many farmers from surrounding states.

Robinson was instrumental in helping develop the Leola Produce Auction, which has more than \$6 million annually in sales. Since then, the Leola Auction has been used as model for the development of two additional county auctions and at least six others in neighboring counties and states.

Robinson worked one-on-one with farmers by day, and conducted educational meetings many evenings, drawing on experts in the fields.

He helped farmers lay out contour strips and waterways and worked closely with the LCCD. At age 55, Robinson took early retirement from the school district to become administrator of LCCD. For the seven prior years, he had served on the board of directors for LCCD, and his close relationship with many farmers and business persons helped in his responsibilities at LCCD.



Don Robinson, left, discusses his retirement with Don McNutt, who replaces Robinson as the district manager of the Lancaster County Conservation District.

Photo by Lou Ann Good, food and family features editor

“The opportunity to serve Lancaster County as the conservation district administrator and as an ag teacher has been a richly rewarding experience. I feel blessed to have worked with so many fine people who share the values and appreciation for our county, its natural resources, and its people.”

Don Robinson

ter County and taught vocational agriculture in Pottstown for four years.

Robinson's next three years as an Army officer may appear to be unrelated to his career, but even that prepared him for his eventual managerial position, he said.

As an administrative officer, Robinson helped organize a MASH unit for a civilian hospital in Vietnam.

Just like the popular MASH television series, Robinson experienced living with three doctors and helping operate, sometimes by sheer candlelight, while the hospital was under enemy fire.

By the time Robinson had gone to Vietnam, he and his wife had three children. Robinson moved his family to Lancaster County so that relatives could provide moral support to his wife and children during his stint in Vietnam.

After three years in the Army, Robinson was hired as a vocational agriculture teacher at Garden Spot High School.

In the first years, Robinson taught two high school classes and spent the remainder of the

Sect farmers, who paid taxes but were not utilizing any educational opportunities. Because Robinson worked with the school district and not a government office, the plain sect farmers were more inclined to learn about conservation practices and crop management and receive pesticide training.

In succeeding years, the face of agriculture began to change requiring Robinson to learn new technology and teach such things as trickle irrigation, greenhouse management, and vegetable and bedding production.

"In the beginning, we were cow and corn people who didn't know anything about produce," Robinson said of he and his colleague Bob Anderson. "We learned with them (produce farmers)."

One of the best learning methods was the trial vegetable plot, established at the Leola Produce Auction site, used for demonstration purposes.

"We'd experiment with different methods, such as using mulch, raised beds, and row covers," Robinson said. Farmers could visit the demonstration

"The biggest change was leaving the field to manage people and programs," Robinson said.

Under his directorship, LCCD grew from 13 employees to 23 to meet the demand for nutrient management programs, engineering, and environmental regu-

lations.

"One of the biggest and unexpected changes was the political ramifications involved in this position," Robinson said.

Although the political chal-

(Turn to Page A35)



CALL THE SPOUTING SPECIALISTS

For

- 5", 6" & 7" Seamless Gutters in 32 Colors
- Half Round Gutters
- Windows & Doors
- Tubular Skylights



Turn Your Gutters Into Virtually **SELF CLEANING GUTTERS**

With **Gutter ProTech**

- .027 Aluminum - Never Rusts
- 20 Yr. Limited Warranty
- 32 Colors Available
- Affordable

[SENSENIG'S]
SPOUTING

Call Today For A Free Estimate

265 E. Meadow Valley Rd., Lititz, PA 17543

717-733-7160 - 1-800-247-2107 - 717-627-6886

Financing Available

SUEVIA Waterbowls

Made in Germany Since 1923

5 GALLONS BY MINUTE

Connection from ABOVE AND BELOW

Mod. 1200

- Large bowl in **stainless steel**
- Resistant and breakproof, equipped with anti-splash
- Free running tube valve at high or low water pressure
- Flow: more than 5 gal/min.
- 1/2" NPT connection from above and below
- Stay clean bowl design

REF. 100.1200 (Cattle)

Distributed by:

ROVENDALE AG & BARN INC.
1300 Susquehanna trail
Watsonstown, PA 17777
Phone: 570-538-9564 or 742-4226
Fax: 570-538-5017

We honor: **Farm Plan**



We Ship UPS



Register Today!

The 27th Annual

Agriculture Industry Banquet

"Embracing Change"

Monday, November 24, 2003

5 p.m. - networking reception
6:30 p.m. - dinner & program

Willow Valley Resort & Conference Center



Register today to be part of the largest chamber banquet in Pennsylvania honoring the agriculture community!

featuring Keynote Speaker
Jolene Brown,
International Speaker & Farmer

Cost - \$40 for Chamber members; \$55 for non-members

To register, to go www.lancasterchamber.com/ag or contact June Mengel at (717) 397-3531 x 134 or ag@lcci.com.