Farmers from America

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THE AMERICAN PEOPLE are sending a novel type of ambassador to Germany. This ambassador is young, an undergraduate in an American college or university, generally an agricultural institution. He has no diplomatic passport, nor letters of state. He is unschooled in formal diplomacy, unlettered in protocol. If, however, the mission of an ambassador is to keep his country in favor abroad, then these boys and girls are fast becoming America's most successful ambassadors to foreign shores.

They are members of 4-H Clubs. They were carefully chosen from thousands of applicants, sent to Europe by the National 4-H Federation of America in what has been termed the International Farm Youth Exchange Program. Their trips are made under the auspices of the US Department of Agriculture.

These cow-college consuls descended on Europe as soon as school was out at the end of May. Forty-three of them are currently living on European farms, working for their board, and performing all the tasks and chores of a European farm boy and girl. Three of them are now in Germany, where they have lived on Hessian farms for one month. From Hesse, they tried their green-thumbs in Wuerttemberg-Baden and then were slated for Bavaria. They are youngsters, aged 19, 20 and 21, full of American enthusiasm, full of American friendliness. So far, they have more than won the respect, admiration and love of their Hessian "families."

OVER IN A SLEEPY country village called Klein Eichen in the North Hessian Hills, Ivan W. Schmedemann was found eating a home-spun lunch of soup, potatoes, spinach, salad and black bread with Karl Mueller and his family and refugee boarder. The younger Mueller son, 19-year-old Ernst, had just left for the United States on a Brethren Service Commission teen-age exchange project. Ivan was living in Ernst's old room.

Ivan is a well-set-up 20-year-old of Junction City, Kas. A junior at Kansas State College, majoring in agricultural education, he is representing the 4-H clubs of Kansas. Ivan, a real farm son, who hails from a 530-acre diversified farm, has been well-trained in organizational...
activities. Former 4-H Club president, he has received county, state and national recognition for his activities in health work. He knows where he is going and what he wants to do.

Before taking over his father's farm, which is mainly devoted to wheat, corn and alfalfa, he wants to teach, since "the best way to learn is by teaching others." After he has had his teaching experience, he wants to devote more acreage on the family farm to raising beef cattle.

This personable, bright young American farmer — and he is an experienced farmer despite his youth — came to Germany to learn: to learn other peoples, other methods, other cultures. Yet, because he is an American, he is also teaching. He was accepted completely by the Mueller family, and old Karl, an experienced farmer himself, found Ivan an excellent, willing worker. Impressed with Ivan's education, knowledge and intelligence, Herr Mueller was most impressed by the American's willingness to chip in with all farm chores.

Ivan, on his part, was most impressed with the thriftiness of the German farmer and his ability to make use of every square inch of soil. He stated that the American farmer works just as hard as the German, but is more efficient with his time, probably because his fields are not as scattered as the German's.

E LAINE C. SERFASS, 19-year-old junior at Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pa., is most impressed by the lack of mechanical farm equipment in Germany. A 4-H member for the past eight years, Elaine has completed projects in home economics and agriculture. The only member of the trio who talks German well, she comes from a small vegetable farm in Palmerston, Pa.

Elaine completely charmed the Stumpf family of Harbach. Her best friend there was the Stumpf daughter, 21-year-old Anna, with whom she split chores. Both girls expressed mutual admiration and respect for each other's home-making ability, cooking and diligence, and taught each other their own little tricks. One of the things Elaine was learning from Anna was how to milk a cow, while Anna learned sanitary home economics methods from Elaine.

Dean C. Allen, a senior at Michigan State College, where he is majoring in horticulture, comes from a 160-acre fruit and dairy farm near Grand Rapids, Michigan. A veteran 4-Her, he is a past president of the county 4-H Leaders Club, past president of the State Service Club, 4-H representative to the Agricultural Council and winner of seven cash awards for 4-H projects.

He spent his month in Hesse with the Desch family of Laubach. Like his colleagues, he was accepted by the Desches almost as a member of the family. He has noted the same things recorded by Ivan and Elaine, and reached about the same conclusions.

His "family" has also reached the same conclusions reached by the Mueller and Stumpf families, that American farm youngsters are sincere, friendly, intelligent and diligent young people who also are excellent farmers and homemakers. The 4-H motto, "to make the best better," and the 1,000,000 membership in the 4-H clubs have impressed the Germans.

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