

mm Weaver
& Sons, Inc.



169 N. Groffdale Rd., Leola, PA 17540 Phone: (717) 656-2321

WEST CENTRAL EQUIPMENT, LLC

New Alexandria, PA (NA)
(724) 668-7172

Martinsburg, PA (MB)
(314) 793-2109

Somerset, PA (SS)
(314) 445-6500
(Formerly Scheffel Equip.)

Johnstown, PA (JT)
(314) 266-6767
(Formerly Scheffel Equip.)



www.westcentraleq.com



**Complete Farm
Equipment Repair**
Dealer for Lucas Oil Products



Stop in to check our special prices

- We repair most brands of tractors and farm equipment
- Specializing in Allis-Chalmers, New Idea and Uni
- On-Farm Service Calls
- New and used parts in stock for Allis-Chalmers, New Idea and Uni
- New and used parts available for most brands

(717) 859-4598

151 Cocalico Creek Road, Ephrata, PA 17522

Random Choices Lead to Decades-Long Teaching Career

Berkheiser Reflects on Ag Education

CHARLENE M. SHUPP ESPENSHADE
Special Sections Editor

LEBANON, Pa. — Hanging on the walls of the Cedar Crest agriculture classroom are testimonials to Harold Berkheiser's ag education career.

The walls are filled with photos of state contest winners, American degree inductees and other award distinctions. His office is brimming with files filled with student project records, lesson plans and chapter information.

For 35 years, Harold Berkheiser has been a standard fixture in the school's agriculture department, teaching kids about farming, career choices and in some cases, life.

As he looks back, he said it was "random things" at crossroads in his life that led him to agriculture education. As he prepares to retire, Berkheiser reflects on his career, how teaching has evolved and the kids who have walked into his classroom.

Berkheiser grew up on a farm in Summit Station, Schuylkill County, Pa. His parents had sold the dairy during his childhood, and although the family still raised livestock and crops, Berkheiser knew the farm could not generate a sustainable income.

So in high school, he signed onto the college prep track. Discovering that he did not like learning languages, led him to drop his German class and take an agriculture class.

Back then, agriculture classes could replace language as a graduation requirement.

For college, he decided to study agriculture education at Penn State because he had friends following the same path. And ultimately, Berkheiser was hired by Cedar Crest to run its agriculture program.

A couple of years into teaching, he knew he had found his calling.

Teaching agriculture education in a public high school is an unusual blend of classroom education and real-world application through FFA-supervised agricultural experiences (SAEs) or contests.

"Our goal is to get the kids to be ag literate

and learn about different parts of agriculture," he said.

Berkheiser's days can start well before the first ring of the morning bell or run well into the evening coaching teams, reviewing FFA project progress or spending weekends chaperoning students at FFA events.

This is in addition to the regular classroom duties of lesson plans, test correcting and homework checking.

Although he is officially an agriculture program of one, Berkheiser said support from Darren Grumbine, a technology education teacher, and Jen Balmer, the young farmers adviser, provide support to the program.

The Cedar Crest FFA Chapter is a "Three Star" chapter, the highest distinction issued by the national organization.

The evolution of the student body at Cedar Crest can be seen through the growth of the school complex. Berkheiser's agriculture classrooms are in the middle of the school complex surrounded by several expansions.

On a tour of the ag rooms, Berkheiser steps outside and talks about how the greenhouses were moved to make way for one expansion. And other wings now surround the courtyard.

The student population has also changed. "The dynamics have changed a lot," Berkheiser said of the kids, referring to their backgrounds and interests today compared with his early years.

When Berkheiser started teaching, 90 percent of the students in his class were male. Most also came from farms or worked on farms.

Today, nearly three-quarters of his students are female and most do not have a tie to agriculture. They are also busier, as they take advantage of all extra-curricular activities available today.

Started as a male-only organization, the FFA integrated in 1969 to include females in its membership.

Student projects have also evolved. Originally, most student projects were enterprise-



Photos by Destiny Rodriguez, Cedar Crest High School

Harold Berkheiser watches sophomore Nick Wenger as he adjusts the speed on a small gas engine.



Harold Berkheiser and juniors Kayla Kneasel and Sherry Moore check on the lilies growing in the school's greenhouse.

More **BERKHEISER**, page A26

**Lancaster
DHIA**

ADVANCED INDUSTRY SERVICE
AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT
1-888-202-3442

A FULL RANGE OF LAB SERVICES

Microbiology Lab

Culture/DNA Lab

Pregnancy Testing Lab

Forage Analysis Lab

www.LancasterDHIA.com

ZIMMERMAN
FARM SERVICE, INC. BETHEL, PA

717-933-4114

Salutes
the
Future
Farmers of
America

CASE IH

MILLER PRO AGCO

**LEED
TRUCK
CENTER**

Purveyors of Used
Equipment

402 S. Chiques Rd.
Manheim, PA 17545

(717) 898-1200

Fax (717) 898-1300



HERSHEY
EQUIPMENT CO., INC.

FFA

For those who
believe in the
future of
agriculture, we
support you.

255 Plane Tree Drive • Lancaster, PA 17603
1-800-432-0988
www.hequip.com

**Deer
Country**
FARM & LAWN, INC.

www.deercountry.net

LANCASTER, PA
(717) 653-2340

ADAMSTOWN, PA
(717) 484-4391



LEBANON, PA
(717) 228-2650
(Lawn & Garden Only)

ALLENTOWN, PA
(610) 398-2553

Re-Covering America's Farmland,
One Barn at a Time

29-Gauge Steel SPECIAL
Roofing & Siding PANELS with warranty

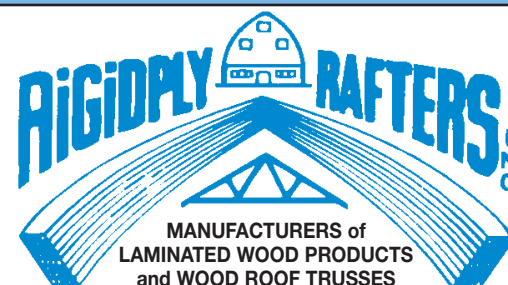


- Lumber
- Hardware
- Building Supplies
- Pole Building Kits

1-888-533-2985

alpinebuildingsupply.com

Mon. - Fri. 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sat. 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.
696 South Rte. 183, Schuylkill Haven, PA



MANUFACTURERS of
LAMINATED WOOD PRODUCTS
and WOOD ROOF TRUSSES

301-334-3977
1283 Joni Miller Rd.
Oakland, MD 21550

717-866-6581
701 E. Linden St.
Richland, PA 17087

www.rigidply.com