

# 'American' English, problem for visiting German

By Rex Seline

Traveling through Nebraska and living on four different farms may not sound like the most exciting way to spend a summer, but 22-year-old Michael Houk will return to his native Germany with "more than enough memories" of such an excursion.

Houk spent time this summer in Nebraska as an exchange student under the auspices of the International Farm Youth Exchange program, (I.F.Y.E.) a 4-H program. Houk also said he received aid from the German government to come to Nebraska.

He visited Lincoln last week as a guest of the AgMen Cooperative at the invitation of AgMen President Don Wellensiek. Wellensiek is involved in 4-H, according to Houk, and extended the invitation through Dr. John D. Orr, professor of the Agricultural Extension Service and associate state 4-H leader.

Houk said he visited California first when he arrived in the United States in April, and traveled that state before reaching Nebraska

in July. The travel program allows German students who qualify to study on foreign farms before returning to Germany to farm and teach prospective farmers, he said.

Houk said he was impressed with Nebraska farmers who are "better businessmen, more flexible than Germans." But, he added, "Americans seem to waste a lot more."

Brought up on a farm in southwestern Germany near Heidelberg, Houk said the area he is from is similar to Nebraska. He will take over his father's farm next year.

According to Houk, farms are much smaller in Germany.

"You couldn't go two miles in my area without hitting another town or farm, but here you could go for twenty miles and not reach one," Houk said.

"There are still too many farmers in Germany although it is changing now," he said.

The smaller farms mean that farmers spend more time per acre in their fields and

the "work on the fields is much more intensive," according to Houk.

Houk lived with four different families during his stay here and said they were more active in outside affairs than their German counterparts.

He planned to leave Lincoln for Halsey, Nebraska and then spend two weeks traveling the country before going to Washington, D.C. In Washington he will report on his trip to national 4-H and IFYE leaders.

Although Houk said he is going to return to Germany and "get married and have some kids," he said he someday hopes to return to Nebraska because he likes the people and the area.

Outside of adjusting to living with four different families, Houk said his most difficult problem was the English language.

Even though he had learned English in school, before he got used to speaking "American" English, it seemed to him that "Americans talked like they have a hot potato in their mouth."

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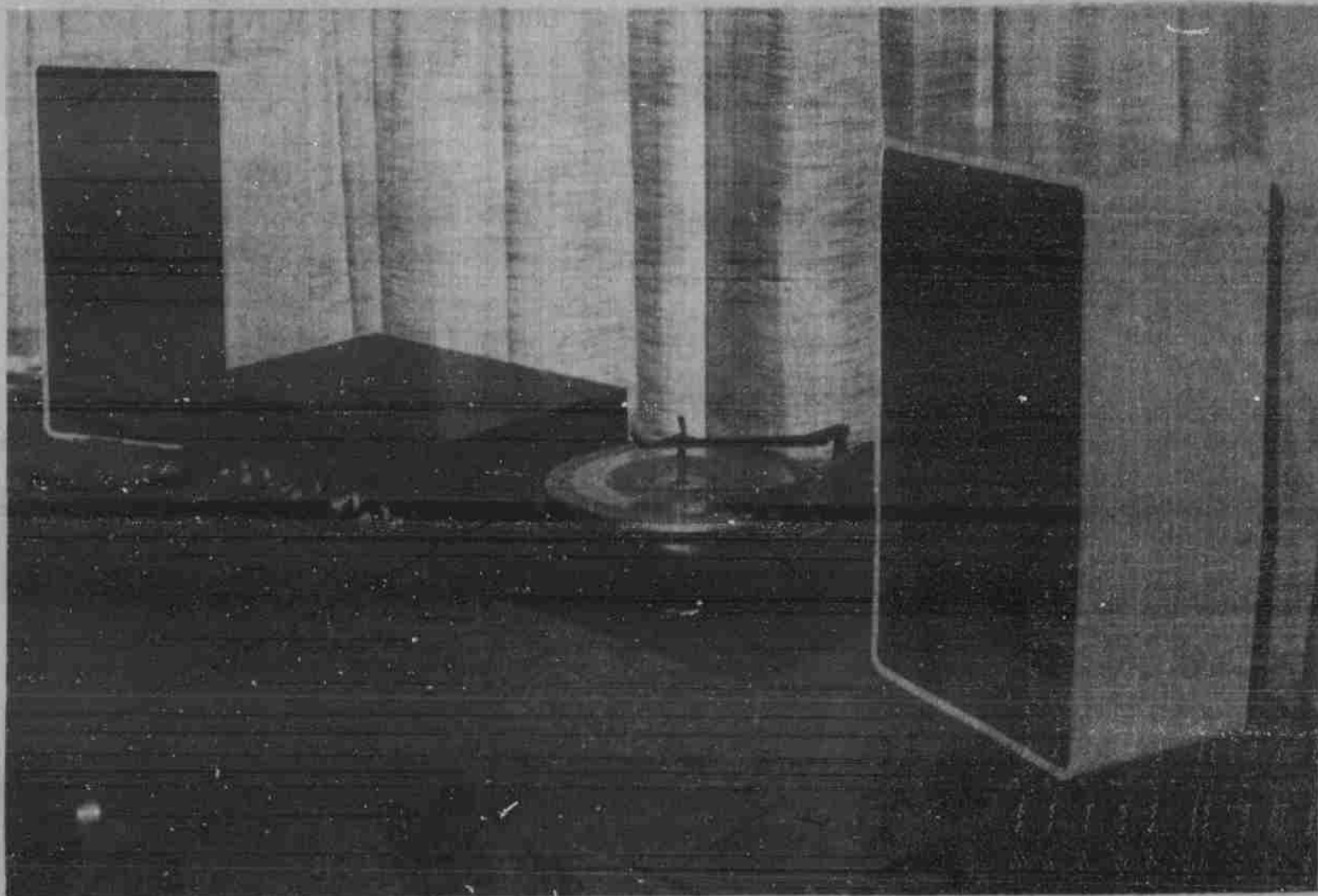
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