

THE SOWER

FALL-WINTER 1990-1991

The American Farm School

NO. 129

1990-2000, a decade to focus on the environment

The environment—and what we can do about it—becomes everyone's concern at the AFS Annual Staff Conference

"The Environment" was chosen as the theme of this year's fall staff conference, held each September several days before the students arrive on campus. Director George Draper asked the sixty teachers, administrators and supervisors representing every department to determine what they saw as their most important environmental issues, to assess what was presently being done about them and to think creatively about what needed to be done to deal with the numerous environmental factors which impact the School. Seven discussion groups then brainstormed the questions from six separate perspectives of the academic and practical programs, the livestock and the horticulture divisions, the extracurricular and dormitory activities, and the campus as a community.

Among many specific suggestions was one for a regular "Environment Day" which would involve the Farm School and surrounding communities. Students in the practical programs suggested ways to preserve open space around the campus. The safer use of chemicals, especially taking care to wear goggles, masks and gloves, and the proper disposal of excess materials and containers was often emphasized. Even more importantly, the need was seen to shift away from the use of chemicals to the increased application of processed manure. Providing the transport and distribution system for such dried and deodorized manure was given high priority. Every discussion group called for cuts in the use of energy in all activities.

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Training outside Greece sharpens Costa Kravvas' ability to understand what's inside himself, his land and country

Driving through the flat, lime green rice fields that remind one more of Louisiana than Greece, south from Thessaloniki along the National Road which leads to Athens, provided time to think about one outstanding Farm School student, Costa Kravvas. Costa is a third year lyceum student who has been abroad for the second consecutive summer to receive training intended to enrich his American Farm School education. He is one of only twenty Farm School students who is given the opportunity to travel each year to Europe — the Netherlands, Denmark, France, England or Ireland — or to the United States for experiences that will expand their knowledge and their horizons as well.

Costa is an exceptional student, with the highest grade point average in the entire student body. President of his class last year, he is an outgoing boy easy to spot by his tall good looks and the constant twinkle in his brown eyes. During his final year he is in the university preparation specialization and hopes to enter the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki next fall to major in agriculture.

Costa is also unusual for having participated in not one but two Farm School exchange programs. First, as one of six students in 1989, he came to Kimball Union Academy in New Hampshire, and this year he went to England, on a four-week training program tailor-made for him by the Ford New Holland International Training Center. While this trip was intended as a prize for a graduating student, it went to Costa because the faculty believed he was the most deserving student in the School.

Costa's home village of Halastra is a
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Maria Ousiou, a first-year Lyceum student, won a School-wide poster contest designed to raise awareness about environmental issues. Her winning message was, "Nature warns us today - tomorrow she'll threaten."

Farm School archives on display help to preserve AFS history



An exhibition of AFS archives provided an opportunity to collect material from various sources and appreciate the rich history of the School.

The Group for Student Services (GSS), the School's Thessaloniki volunteer committee, met last fall to plan to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the American Farm School. It is difficult to trace the origin of an inspiration, but when the idea of mounting an exhibit of School papers emerged, it seemed a particularly appropriate way to celebrate the Lansdales' contribution to the School's development during the year of their retirement.

The Farm School archives, consisting of letters, photographs, old maps, accounts and other memorabilia, had been lovingly sorted by the late Niki Myer a decade ago. A GSS subcommittee selected documents and photographs which served to illustrate the history and achievement of the School. The Thessaloniki Mayor's office offered help in the form of easels and glass display cases, and Maria Skouta, a designer whose father had mounted exhibits and galas for the School for many years, appeared at the eleventh hour to advise us on hanging the material. Our own public relations intern, Sophia Emmanoulides, helped the GSS committee throughout the preparations for

the exhibit. Mid-May was chosen as the time to open the show, to coincide with the Graduation and Lansdale farewell ceremonies and the Trustees' arrival for a meeting of the Board. For a location, the two seminar rooms in the Labouisse Athletic Center were found to be available. The Mayor of Thessaloniki and local village presidents were invited to a festive ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by a collation served by GSS.

And what of the archives now? The enthusiastic response of the public confirmed our own sense that the documents both require and warrant the effort it will take to catalog and store them correctly. We will search for a permanent home for the archives and attempt to fill in gaps of past events we found as we looked for particular documentary evidence we were sure must exist. The next issue of *The Sower* will bring news of post-exhibit efforts to guarantee the continuity of our documentary history.

Charlotte Draper

Want help in organizing an event to benefit the American Farm School? Contact the Office of the Trustees for more information. ■

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The staff also learned details about the greenhouse effect, ozone depletion and global warming and about how agriculture contributes to it, from Christos Zerefos, professor of atmospheric physics at the University of Thessaloniki. Stathis Fovos, a Farm School graduate now teaching animal husbandry and overseeing the student pig and poultry projects, gave the group a lively lecture on manure from A to Z, or Alpha to Omega, as the Greeks would say. He demonstrated the value of the School's annual tonnage of animal manure when processed into methane gas and used as fuel, as well as the income potential of the remaining waste when sold as processed fertilizer. By translating the issue into dollars-and-cents, or describing it in Drachmas as the Greeks would do, he changed the perception of the School's abundant supply of manure from a problem to be disposed of into a resource that can make a vital contribution to the serious farmer's balance sheet.

Providing further encouragement to the staff efforts at the School, members of a special environmental coalition of neighboring communities, including Pilea, Thermi, Panorama and Hortiati, have met with Director George Draper to discuss the long-term studies they have initiated on air and water pollution, as well as solid waste, and to voice their interest in having the Farm School help to find and organize solutions to these growing and ubiquitous problems.

Like responsible institutions everywhere, the Farm School recognizes that it is a part of the environmental problem and that it must become part of the local, national and global solution to all forms of environmental degradation. By enlisting the help and interest of all members of the staff, their families and the student body itself, Director Draper hopes to enhance the environmental consciousness of the Farm School and to encourage it to serve as a model to preserve and improve the essential qualities of life in Greece. ■

San Francisco's mayor Art Agnos visits the Farm School with sister city representatives from America's famous bay city

Mayor Art Agnos and a group of 75 Greek Americans from the San Francisco Bay area were treated to an early morning wagon tour of the Farm School this summer. Gathering on the steps of Princeton Hall, the group applauded as AFS Director George Draper presented Mayor Agnos with an honorary "sima," the official pin worn by Farm School graduates, as well as a blue cap and T-shirt carrying the School's sheaves of wheat insignia. The Mayor reciprocated by giving George a beautiful silk scarf specially designed to commemorate the establishment of the San Francisco/Thessaloniki Sister City affiliation, as well as a uniquely useful wristwatch with two faces — one showing Greek time, the other, U.S. West Coast time — and an engraved silver tray. We look forward to a steady flow of visitors from the Bay Area and hope many will also go from Thessaloniki to California. ■



George Draper exchanges greetings and small presents with Mayor Art Agnos of San Francisco, who sports an AFS cap.

Please let us know your current address so we may insure prompt delivery of each semi-annual issue of *The Sower*. ■

The future over our shoulder

As you read this edition of *The Sower*, virtually every staff member of The American Farm School is engaged in the creation of a master five-year plan.

Five-year plans are as common as field daisies or dung beetles. Good five-year plans are rare.

A good five-year plan contains within itself the unique aspirations of the institution that produces it. Its creation involves everyone on the staff. And, it is located at a specific point, and headed in a specific direction, along the broad continuum of time.

In orchestrating a five-year plan at the Farm School right now, we begin with the act of looking over our shoulder at the future.

The next step will be to turn our heads and walk forward. But we begin by facing the past; by trying to understand and absorb it. By making sure we know from what direction we are approaching a future that challenges and excites anyone who thinks about it.

Back in February, when I made the ambitious promise to the Farm School's Board of Trustees that we would have a five-year plan ready by November, I began by asking department heads to sketch out a preliminary set of five-year goals. They quite rightly responded by asking me what my own five-year goals were. How could they begin to set theirs, they asked, when they had no idea of their Director's?

So I wrote mine down. My first priority was this: "To help the American Farm School preserve and nourish the community spirit and the human values that have distinguished the School since its founding." For all my excitement about the future, I wanted to begin by preserving the heart of the past.

You will read in this *Sower* about future-oriented topics as varied as underground feeders and computerized irrigation systems, laser leveling and high-tech piggeries, new academic specializations,



George Draper, Director of the American Farm School, expects to communicate with our readers regularly through the Director's Corner starting in this issue.

and the decade of the environment. I think there is no one on campus who does not realize that the School will change significantly, perhaps in some ways radically, over the next five years.

But in considering future developments, we do not forget that for eighty-five years continuity has sustained the momentum of the Farm School. As we greet the future, stride towards it, we move in the continuum begun by John Henry and Susan Adeline House, and carried forward by Charles and Ann House and Bruce and Tad Lansdale.

Charlotte and I feel carried forward particularly by the momentum generated by the School's thousands of friends. I hope as you read this issue of *The Sower*, you will share some of the excitement we feel as we look ahead — over our shoulders.

George Draper
Director

New "majors" introduced to aid Farm School students prepare for the future



A specialization in horticulture and ornamental flowers provides a unique opportunity for AFS boys and girls to equip themselves for a productive future.

The 1990-91 academic year marks the introduction of two new "majors," or specializations as they are called at AFS, now available to Farm School students. George Draper hopes that a third specialization will be started in the near future. The aim

of the added programs is better to meet the training needs of rural Greek youth while making the School's "capital" — staff, buildings, animals, facilities and equipment — ever more productive.

In their final year each student selects an area of concentration. Aside from the few who are qualified for university prep, the selections have been limited to three; horticulture (i.e., crop production), farm machinery and mechanized agriculture. To these the School is now adding animal husbandry and commercial flower and vegetable cultivation. These types of farming enterprises require less land and lower initial investment than normal crop production, a clear plus for young men and women starting careers in agriculture or who intend to modernize their farms.

The specialization in animal husbandry takes advantage of some of the School's outstanding farm facilities. In addition to classrooms and laboratories, it has dairy, poultry and pig production units and the experienced staff that goes with them. Expanding the existing teaching curriculum to include dairy, sheep and goat, pig and poultry raising incurs a low incremental cost while providing a new recruiting appeal for students.

EC's social fund provides AFS staff with new training opportunities

Through the European Community's Social Fund and the Greek Ministry of Labor, twenty AFS employees from the farm, maintenance and dormitory departments are scheduled to receive 2,500 hours of special training this year.

According to Dimitri Michaelides, head of the Personnel Department, the training is designed to help the staff keep up with changes taking place in Greek and European society. In this complex, technological and inter-dependent world almost nobody can work in isolation. The key is cooperation and "it is difficult to cooperate with someone who is not trained," says Michaelides.

The program Mr. Michaelides has designed began in meetings with the department heads. Here they assessed their most immediate training needs and designated members of their departments to participate in the upcoming seminars. After these meetings, the Personnel Department was able to fill in the details of the curriculum and locate experts outside the School to handle specific areas. Basic course materials were written. Then the department heads gave their final approval to staff, content and scheduling of the training programs.

In June, three groups of six employees
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Greenhouse management, ornamental flowers and the growing of high quality, off-season vegetables can play a vital role in the future of Greek agriculture. These pursuits have a special appeal to women in agriculture. Although many of the girls now enrolled will not begin their majors until next year, seven girls of the class of 1992 will begin receiving the intensive practical training that will prepare them for vocations in commercial greenhouse and garden management.

A completely new and original curriculum, dubbed "Rural Economics and Management," or REM, was suggested by Bruce Lansdale prior to his retirement. A decade ago he realized that the future of rural youth in Greece, as in many parts of the world, could not depend on agriculture alone. The coming generation needed rural enterprises, small-scale specialized businesses that can grow, package, distribute and sell their produce; local tourist facilities to capitalize on unique village assets; craft centers to provide an outlet for local products; and the full array of shops and special services needed for modern village life.

One half the population of the European Community, some 150,000,000 people, lives in rural areas, according to a recent report by The Economist Intelligence Unit. Despite the overall prosperity of individual countries, the outlook for people living in many of these regions, especially in the mountains and isolated districts of Greece, remains bleak.

REM, which Director Draper hopes to launch as early as 1992, is a two-year program teaching students to develop human and material resources to improve the economic well-being of their villages. Girls and boys will learn record-keeping and cost analysis, consumer issues and small business management using the School's various operations as their training sites. Some of these include the vegetable gardens and greenhouses, hen and broiler units, sewing, weaving and pottery centers, typing and computer labs, plumbing, welding, electricity, carpentry and painting shops, the campus grocery store, and Cincinnati Hall, the guest house.

One of the Farm School's traditional strengths has been to seize the opportunities of a changing world to provide a brighter future for Greek youth. These new specializations continue that tradition into the 1990s. ■

Info program that serves AFS grads draws praise and attention from Brussels EC HQ

A Farm School program in operation for five years has drawn the attention of the European Community's Directorate-General for Information, Communication and Culture. Seeking ways to inform and better organize the rural areas of its member nations, EC representatives learned of the School's Information Dissemination Program. Under the leadership of Tassos Pougouras, the program has been keeping graduates in all parts of Greece up-to-date on the latest research and reports in their fields.

The School's information program began at the specific request of AFS alumni, many of whom live in isolated rural areas. With working schedules that make it difficult for them to seek out new information vital to their agricultural livelihood, they are too often left in the informational dark. It also grew out of the School's sense that its library, primarily designed to serve the student body, could increase its value by reaching out to the AFS graduates in Greece.

How does it work? Every two months each of the alumni receives an announcement listing some thirty recent articles on subjects from hydroponics to laser leveling arranged in several categories: crop production, livestock, vegetables (including greenhouses), trees, technology and a generous category of miscellaneous. Most of the information is in Greek, though some is in English or another foreign language. Using an attached order form, graduates select articles that interest them. Copies of these are then sent free of charge.

Mr. Pougouras keeps in touch with the information needs of the graduates by visiting their homes and farms, and by meeting regularly with the Alumni Association. As graduating seniors depart, he explains the program and encourages them to join.

Currently there are 500 graduates on the mailing list. Roughly half are established farmers along with a few retirees. Half are people who graduated in the last

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Field crops program looks ahead

What's new in the field crops at the American Farm School? People, land, crops, tools and planning. Since the appointment of Lou Linn as Assistant Farm Manager working under the guidance of Dr. Aleco Michaelides, the field crops at the School have undergone a gradual yet thorough transformation. With the help of such consulting experts as Trustee Jack Kakis and Carl Bell of the University of California, the School is taking a critical look at all its current farming practices to be ready to meet fast-approaching future technologies and market needs.

Even some of the Farm School's oldest friends may be unaware that the School is now farming two separate land areas. The first — the nearly 200 acres surrounding the 138-acre campus — comprises land of below average quality. When founding the School eighty-five years ago, Dr. John Henry House quite consciously chose such poor land to demonstrate that local village farmers need not own top quality land to farm successfully.

A second 200-acre parcel of farmland is located about thirty-five kilometers west of the campus, on the opposite side of Thessaloniki, on the Axios River. The

Zannas Farm consists of high quality soil and enjoys an ample water supply.

Today these two farming areas are gradually taking on distinct personalities, as all fields tend to do, and thus starting to play special roles in the Farm School's future.

The main objectives at the farmland surrounding the School are twofold: 1) to improve the soil to introduce demonstration crops — such as soya, sunflowers and sweet corn — which will benefit Greek farmers — and alfalfa, barley and vetch, tyfon turnips, peas, fava beans and grass mixes — to reduce the cost of livestock feed by producing high-quality forage crops and, 2) to demonstrate innovative cropping techniques by experimenting with greater use of low-till, no-till and organic farming methods.

The Zannas Farm, on the other hand, is ideal for the creation of another sort of demonstration farm. Because of the high quality of the land, and the relative abundance of water, it lends itself to high value crops and to model water conservation projects such as laser land leveling and high-tech irrigation systems.

Environmental goals apply to both
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Corn as "high as an elephant's eye" is still a staple of the Farm School field crops though new methods of tilling, growing and storing are being introduced.

AFS summer programs more international than ever reflecting AFS' world concern



Agriculturalists from Africa regularly bring a new perspective to the School and learn about its history and methods through TITP, the international program.



New friendships are often made and sport rivalries easily arise between different groups.

The Thessaloniki International Training Program (TITP) welcomed trainees from more countries than in any of its first three years. Twenty-one agriculturalists attended from 12 different countries, including

Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland, Zaire, Zimbabwe and even two from Bulgaria. The Summer Work Activities Program, SWAP, included twenty-five young workers from nine countries, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, Greece, Nepal, the Netherlands, Poland and the United States. In this picture Judith Gerretsen and Wido Derks, "SWAPIes" from the Netherlands, clown with Dr. Irvine Mariga of Zimbabwe (left) and James Tsabedze of Swaziland (right), both TITP participants and agricultural teachers in their home countries. SWAP and TITP maintained a lively intramural volleyball rivalry throughout the programs. Everyone, however, was a winner, having the opportunity to carry the Farm School's practical, hands-on appeal beyond the borders of Greece to their homelands. ■

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each began their training with a general overview of the history and future direction of the Farm School. They looked at the most pressing social and economic trends that affect the School and their own employment. Then the three groups were given expert instruction in their specializations. For example, the six farm workers were taught the human health hazards of using agricultural chemicals by Carl Bell, a visiting agronomist from California who is thoroughly familiar with conditions at the School. The maintenance group from the Physical Resources Department was shown health and safety practices by an engineer specially trained to help raise the level of industrial safety in Greece.

According to George Draper, the long-term objective of such training is to involve employees more closely with the interests of the Farm School, creating a "management style appropriate for the 1990's." It should also, and not entirely coincidentally, enable the School to continue to recruit and retain highly skilled and motivated personnel in the years to come. ■

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farming areas. These include: 1) reducing the use of all forms of chemicals; 2) reversing the process of soil degradation; 3) avoiding competition or conflict with the environment.

One of the difficulties faced by Lou Linn and his staff is the shortage of the most up-to-date equipment. Some of the existing machinery — the front loader, field cultivators, chisel plow and gravity wagons — need to be rebuilt or replaced. New tools for the new methods of planting and cultivation would greatly assist the field crops program in realizing its forward-looking objectives.

The challenge to the School's field crops, as George Draper looks to the future, is to foster an agriculture that is efficient, sustainable and environmentally safe. This is not a new challenge to an institution that for over eight decades has preached that "tillers of the soil must be stewards of the land." But the seriousness of the global environmental issues and the rapidity of technological change bring a new sense of urgency to this challenge — and a new excitement to the Farm School staff. ■

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busy community of 10,000 residents, most of whom are involved in farming. Halastra is a very old settlement, and both the Persian King Xerxes and Alexander the Great passed through here on their marches of conquest. The Kravvas family has always been farmers. They owned one of the first tractors, a Case, as well as the first truck and first motorbike in Macedonia. Costa is a seventh generation Kravvas, and today there are four branches of the Kravvas clan living in Halastra and cultivating rice and corn on 3,500 stremmas (600 acres) of alluvial soil.

In his family's brightly lit, comfortable saloni (living room), Costa related his experiences in England. Ford New Holland conducts its training for dealers and technicians from Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and South America at its International Training Center in a stately Essex home called Boreham House, bought in 1930 by Henry Ford. Each year more than 8,000 trainees attend courses there on the full range of Ford's equipment: agricultural, compact, and highway tractors; construction equipment; balers; forage harvesters and combines.

Costa joined a course for dealers' children from all over Europe (plus one from Tasmania). The students visited the New Holland combine plant in Zedelgem,

Belgium and toured a large and diversified private farm that uses the latest machinery along with progressive, environmentally sensitive methods of cultivation. Costa spent three days at the Royal Agricultural Show, a trade fair ten times the size of "Agrotica," the annual fair in which the Farm School participates in Thessaloniki. Later in the program, he shared his training on the ultramodern Ford tractors with technicians from Asia and the Pacific. Easily the youngest trainee at age seventeen, he traded wrenches and stories with experienced tractor dealers and mechanics from Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Malaysia and India.

But the highlight of Costa's summer was a visit to Writtle College, an exciting, versatile agricultural school near the Ford training center. It has a full and part-time student body of 850, and a vast range of courses in traditional farming subjects as well as rural resource management and in-depth computer applications for agriculture. It also has farm and horticultural units that are run as commercial enterprises and double as valuable teaching resources for the college-aged students. Costa saw many parallels with the Farm School, and he sensed that Writtle students "felt connected with the school - not exactly as students, but as one society." Although rules for campus life were strict

enough, he observed there were no limits on how hard a student could exert himself. "If you want to study twenty-four hours a day, you can!"

How did the Kimball Union experience compare to all of this? "I made many connections through KUA. Students, farmers who are new friends. And just to see the latest technology, for example, — a computerized milking parlor with sixteen cows on each side, compared to the one with only four cows per side that I study about in my textbook — opens my mind." And the visits to Washington D.C. and New York "were made of dreams," Costa said.

Costa both loves his Farm School education and worries about it. It is far superior to an ordinary lyceum (high school) because those students have "only a world of books." At the Farm School the demands of the practical programs, extracurricular activities and social life, from cleaning out the pig stalls to performing in the dance troupe, "make you stronger and more capable." However, he is thinking of his fellow students as well when he wishes that the School had the very latest technology in its labs, and taught the most sophisticated farming methods. In one lab, lessons are taught on a cultivator Costa's grandfather used. "I understand that we must learn the basics on this equipment, but I wish we could be shown what is really brand new."

As for Costa, will he stay in Halastra, and one day bring along the eighth generation of Kravvases? Yes, and he will use the lessons of the Farm School as well as those of the Ford mechanic from India or Thailand, to help him solve the water riddle and make his Greek rice competitive with Italian, Spanish, or even Asian rice. Answering a question about his future, put to him by a Farm School trustee visiting AFS this spring, Costa's reply was "I have wild ideas." ■

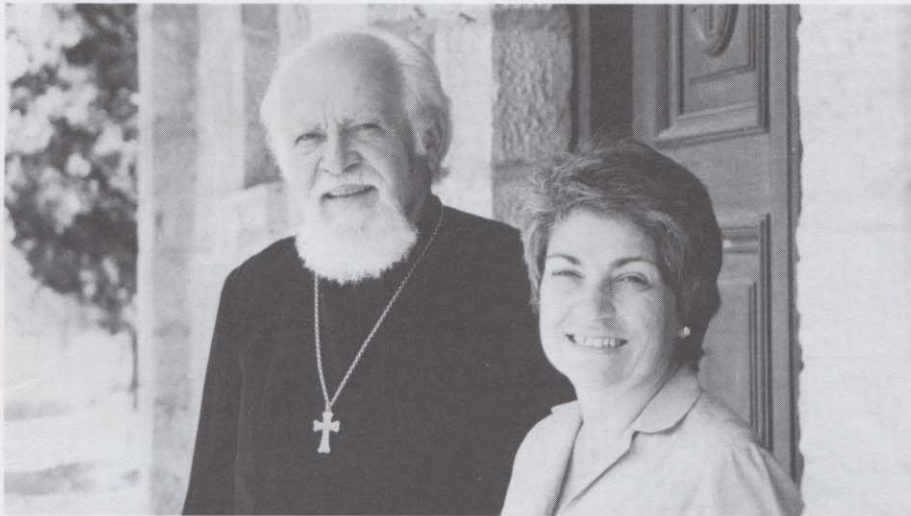


Costa Kravvas leans with pride on one of his family's pieces of farm machinery. An outstanding leader and student, Costa sets an example for others at the School.

Plan ahead for Greek Summer 1991.

Applications are now being received for the experience of a life time, a summer in Greece living in rural homes, working on a worthwhile project, seeing the classical sights and experiencing a different culture and language. Contact the Office of the Trustees for information and an application. ■

Father George comes to the Farm School



Father George and Stella Mamangakis assume responsibility for the religious services and spiritual guidance of the students and staff at the Farm School.

Father George Mamangakis and his wife Stella, known as Presbytera Stella in the Greek Church, greeted students at the September 12th blessing of the new school year at the chapel of St. John Chrysostomos. Their arrival coincided with the beginning of the ecclesiastical year and students and campus residents will benefit from the cel-

eburation of regular Sunday liturgy and the many important church holidays throughout the year. The Farm School is deeply grateful to those who made it possible for Father George and Stella to come to the School following their retirement from St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Ft. Pierce, Florida last June. ■

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five years. Although information about vegetables has been the most popular category, technology is a close second. This year there has been a burst of interest in flower raising. The fact that the majority of graduates regularly request nearly half the articles in each mailing, says Mr. Pougouras, shows that AFS alumni are increasingly open to new ideas.

Earlier this year, Jeanine Ekemans from the European Community's Directorate-General for Information, Communication and Culture, sought out the Farm School as a potential "Carrefour" or "Crossroads Center". Seven such centers are already in operation throughout the EC. They have been created to inform the local population of the EC's latest rural development measures, facilitate information exchange among local individuals and institutions in rural areas within the EC, and pass information upwards to the EC on the status of

the rural areas. In some cases they have provided data and perspectives not found in the existing statistical surveys.

To her surprise and delight, Ms. Ekemans discovered in the School's information program a program she considers, at least in part, a model for what the EC is trying to accomplish. At her request George Draper has submitted a proposal setting forth the School's qualifications to function as a Crossroads Center.

Serving as a Crossroads Center would clearly reflect the School's participation in the worldwide agricultural revolution which is now going on, wherein access to information and its proper use is a key to survival down on the farm. "We believe that our past experience and current structure contain all the potential needed for our becoming a dynamic rural center," Mr. Draper told Brussels, confident that part of that potential is already at work among our own graduates. ■



The American Farm School

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THE SOWER

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