

Vermont Environmental Report

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE VERMONT NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL, A NON-PROFIT CITIZENS' CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION SUPPORTED BY MEMBERSHIP DUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS. VNRC, 26 STATE STREET, MONTPELIER, VERMONT, 05602; (802) 223-2328. CHAIRMAN: DAVID R. MARVIN; EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: SEWARD WEBER; EDITOR: NATHANIEL FROTHINGHAM.

Young Farmers Speak OUT!!

THE SERIES ON "FARMING & YOUTH" CONCLUDES WITH MORE INTERVIEWS AND TWO FINAL STATEMENTS FROM BENJAMIN HUFFMAN AND WIN WAY.

4. Michael Angier

Mike Angier, 25, is making a break with tradition.

In the Champlain Valley, near Addison, Vermont, in the heart of the richest dairying country in the State, Mike Angier has established a successful pig farm operation. He began some time ago with 22 pigs and will "finish out" this year with 800 to 1000 hogs.

Angier tells how it all started.

"I was in high school. I was interested in farming. My father was raising corn for grain. I started raising pigs. That gave (my father) a market for grain. Now he wouldn't have any problem."

Angier is emphatic about his personal choice between pigs and cows. He prefers pigs although he admits that Vermont is suited to dairy farming. "I was not raised on a dairy farm," he relates. "I don't like the idea of being married to a dairy cow." Viewed in a larger perspective, Mike Angier thinks that agricultural diversity makes a lot of sense for Vermont or as he says, "It is not a good idea to put all our eggs in one basket."

Finding money to start a pig farm was not easy.

Angier had attended the University of Connecticut. He tells about sending off to Middle Western colleges for everything on pigs he could lay his hands on. As he explains it, the loan people at the Farmers Home Administration had a definite prejudice in favor of dairy farming. He doesn't entirely blame them. They had been 'burned' with some big losses on beef, particularly.

For Mike and his wife, Sally, finding the start-up money was a two-year trial of patience. "It was a matter of convincing the Farmers Home Administration people that we were serious," he says. Their first application was for beef cattle and hogs. There were other applications, with more or less land involved. Angier was fortunate enough to be able to purchase one of his father's farms, 150 acres, most of which he now leases out. "I was tempted to start a dairy operation," he confesses honestly. "It would have been a defeat."

"Finally," he says, "we got it for pigs!"

Of all the problems that Mike and Sally Angier have encountered nothing has been more difficult than the lack of operating capital. They

The Vermont Natural Resources Council is the Vermont affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation.