Kiehle Auditorium is filled to capacity, as many people enjoy amateur entertainment by young people.

The vocational agriculture department of high schools and the boys and girls 4-H clubs in the region have integrated the Winter Shows into their youth programs. For over 20 years, the first Saturday of the ten-day show has been set aside as Youth Day. More than a thousand 4-H'ers, FFA'ers, and others from the entire northwestern Minnesota and even from North Dakota gather to compete in a wide variety of educational contests, demonstrations, and clinics.

An opportunity to see young farm animals just born or being born and a chance to ride on a pony are provided by the Crookston and Climax Future Farmers of America chapters each year. Preschool children from surrounding communities find this a very special day, which ends up with tired parents and tired ponies but happy kids.

To summarize, the youth events in today's Winter Shows are stronger than ever. The lives of youth are enriched and strengthened. Among today's strong families living in the Red River Valley many speak with pride about the ribbons, the Championships won, the wholesome experiences, the fun, and chuckle over some of their mistakes at the Winter Shows.

**VALLEY FARMER AND HOME-MAKER HONORS BANQUET**

The Red River Valley Development Association was looking for ways in the 1930's to generate respect and pride into the farming scene during those difficult depression years. Under the leadership of Supt. Tom McCall, who at that time was also president of the Red River Valley board of managers and the Red River Valley Livestock Association, the leaders traveled the countryside and consulted with extension workers and other rural groups, asking how can we demonstrate to the public at large the kind of attitudes and values which really are the building blocks of communities at the grassroots level in good years as well as in poor times? How can we find them? Should we just have a top farmer and his wife honored for the entire Red River Valley or one for each county?

Out of these discussions developed a plan to honor a farm couple from each county for the good example they set with their family life, their community service, their farming operation, and their concern for conserving the natural resources of soil and water. To serve on a selection committee in each county, the group invited the county agent, the leaders of the various farm organizations, a Vo-Ag instructor if available, the director of the Red River Valley Development Association in the county, and a member of the county board. This must have been a reasonably good plan, for since 1938 it is still used in approximately its original form.

Has the program been successful? One county extension director writes:

_The Valley Farmer and Homemaker committee in the county is always an exciting committee to work with. They seem so willing to come to a meeting to search out a deserving couple to receive the honor at the Winter Shows. I have helped select 26 couples. I sense the real honor these couples experience and probably because they know they have been selected by a cross section of their peers and neighbors. I make it a point to visit with them immediately after the selection has been completed and usually they say it must have been a mistake that they were actually chosen. The committee should really find someone who is more outstanding. Seeing them early gives the honored couple time to find someone to milk the cows or do the chores while they attend the honors banquet and the Winter Shows._

The extension director goes on to point out that this is a very worthwhile program because:

_"These people are without a doubt deserving and something special. The honors banquet is a top notch event and the beautiful presentation of the plaque leaves lasting memories. I find these plagues always in a very prominent place in the homes of honored couples. Our local newspapers are very helpful and give front page space for the write up sent in by the county extension director, pictures and the like. Over the years, I have attended several of the banquets and find all most meaningful. The program has always been appropriate and succeeds in featuring the importance of the kind of leadership and the kind of values, the kind of attitudes that these people maintain in their communities. The Valley Farmer and Homemaker Honors Banquet is the finest program at the Winter Shows and let's hope it can continue for many more years."

Another quotation from another county:

_"Seldom is there an event or activity that cannot be improved. For this year's Valley Farmer and Homemaker Banquet, however, I am hard pressed to think of a suggestion. The keynote speaker was missed, but the special award given to the Builder of the Valley used that time well and really augmented the honors given to the Valley Farmer and Homemakers. I was so pleased to feel that the addition of a new award in no way complicated the honoring of the Valley Farmer and Homemakers for 1984."

Over a 46-year period more than 700 couples (usually a farm couple) have been honored in the 14 county...