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Metro / NE Iowa

Future of Grout Museum farm-city program unclear

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WATERLOO

Urban dwellers who want to get their final glimpse of the farm through the Grout Museum's "A City Slicker's Look at Farming" can milk it for all it's worth Thursday evening.

This year's final installment, "Dairying: From Moo to Milkshake," wraps up the inaugural season of the "City Slickers" program, but the fate of the program for 1997 is unclear.

Carolyn Carpenter, education and programming director for the Grout Museum, said she would like to continue the series, but its future form is still not clear.

"I expect to see at the very least the family working farms tours, and I'd like to see 'City Slicker's' carry on," Carpenter said.

The program consists of a lecture series and an on-site farm tour.

Local support will probably dictate how the program will operate in 1997, Carpenter said.

Money is an issue. Carpenter estimates it costs about \$200 to run each installment of the program. A major portion of the cost is running a bus for field trips, but Carpenter said there's no other way to do it.

Funding for the 1996 series came

Final program

The "City Slicker's" program finishes its season Thursday at 7 p.m. with a lecture on dairy farming at the Grout Museum.

That will be followed Saturday by a 3 p.m. field trip to the Jay and Jean Hansen farm to view the milking process.

Cost for each segment is \$2.50, the event is free to Grout Museum District members.

For more information contact the museum at (319) 234-6357.

from the Iowa Humanities Board and National Endowment for the Humanities. Those groups contributed \$4,850.

Carpenter noted when the exhibit closes in March, the Humanities Board may be less likely to fund the "City Slicker's" program again.

If that's the case, the Grout Museum might look to other sponsors to keep it alive.

The Black Hawk County Farm Bureau and Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District also has supported the series.

Even with the future cloudy, Carpenter said she expects the series, or a part of it, to return in 1997 — especially the tours of working farms,

something the museum did on two occasions this year in conjunction with Silos & Smokestacks, a local group trying develop a "heritage park" chronicling the history of agriculture and food production in Black Hawk and several surrounding counties.

The four-part informational series drew about 20 people to each meeting over the course of the year. Topics of lectures and farm tours included an overview of changes in farming during the last 100 years, soil and water conservation, harvesting and dairy production.

"I thought we had good interest, and the people who came really enjoyed it a lot," Carpenter said.

The program is based on a similar series in Johnson County. It was born as Carpenter was putting together the exhibit on 100-year-old farms and businesses, and realized urban people were "out of touch" with farms and their changes.

"I believe a lot of city slickers still think farming is a simple life," she said.

She points to the number of technological advances and decisions farmers face.

"I wanted to develop something that would give people in the city a chance to see that," Carpenter said.