

Stauffer Homestead Farm Rooted In Local History

(Continued from Page 1) widow Lydia Martin Stauffer and daughter Edna.

In 1940, Mrs. Groff and her husband the late A. B. C. Groff, started operating the farm as a stock farm using the name of "Stauffer Homestead Farm." An addition of 40 feet was built to the barn at this time.

In 1949 a modern farrowing house built of cement and glass block with radiant heating and controlled ventilation was added to the farm. The swine herd

was all Registered Hampshires, and Stauffer Homestead won many championship ribbons at various state fairs.

The barn originally built in 1884, was completely destroyed by fire in 1951 and was rebuilt on the old stone foundation. The present Michigan-type 52' x 142' barn with corrugated aluminum roof was constructed. Its ground floor accommodates approximately 80 cattle during the winter months.

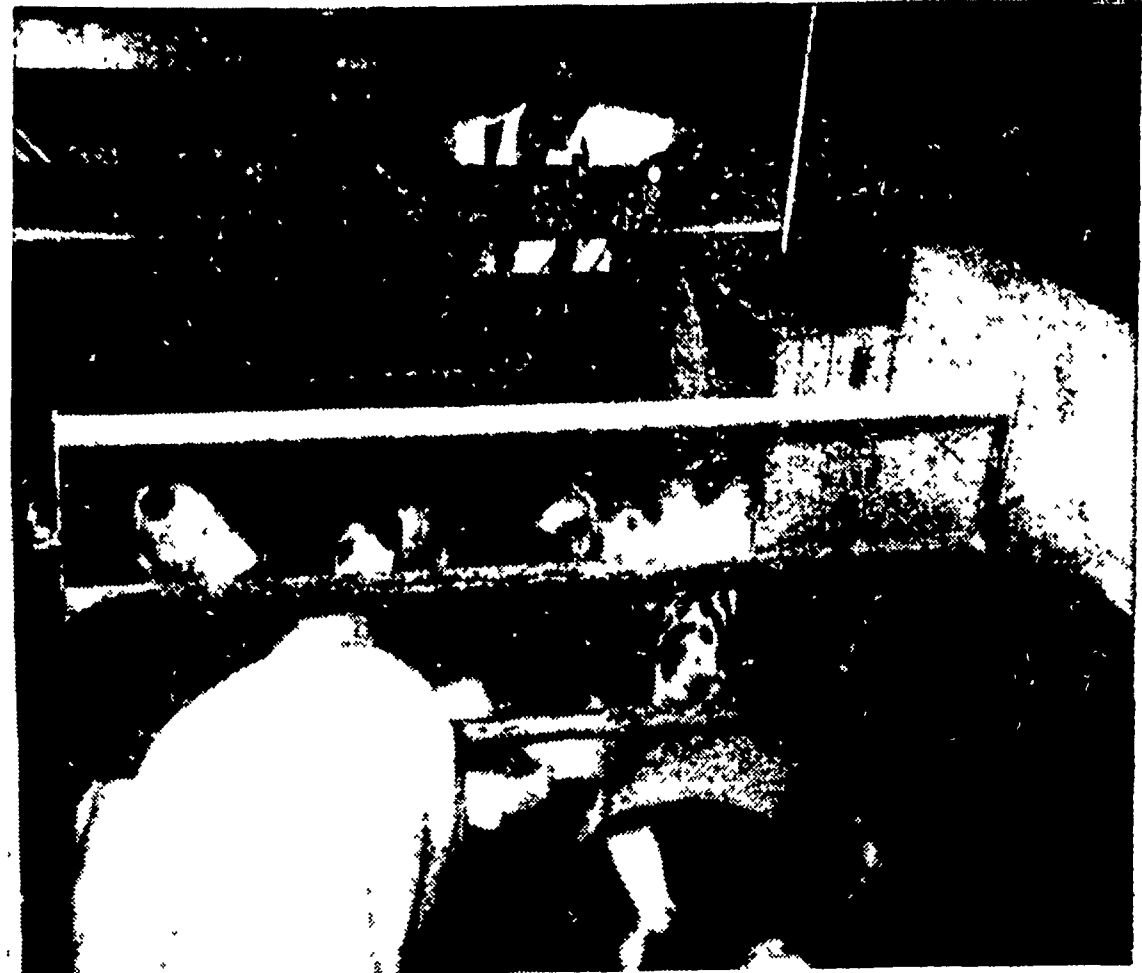
A registered herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle also made its appearance in addition to a flock of purebred Suffolk sheep. The color scheme throughout the farm was therefore "black and white."

Keeping up with the new advances in agriculture, Groff first started cross-breeding Aberdeen-Angus and Brahma stock which produced fine "Brangus" steers for market, and a fresh new breeding stock strain. The next step was in 1960 when he purchased registered Charolais breeding stock to cross with the Homestead Angus. This process with two more generations of offspring will result in a purebred certified herd of Charolais cattle for the farm.

Cross-bred hogs also became a common sight at Stauffer Homestead. Herdsmen began to find them healthier, faster growers, and having bigger litters. Today the swine herd is the result of a three-way cross of Hampshire, Spotted Poland China, and Landrace. And so the color scheme is gradually changing to white cattle and hogs.

Earle Fisher who came to Stauffer Homestead in 1946 as its herdsman is now manager of the whole farm operation. His son Bill is swine herdsman and is in complete charge of swine management and records. The Fishers live in the farm house built in 1886. Noah Brubaker does the feeding and tending of sheep and other stock at the second farm. Two herds of cattle are kept at the Homestead, another in Berks Co.

If Stauffer Homestead was to continue taking the hog business seriously, it became evident that additional facilities



SOWS AND THEIR LITTERS are housed in an environmentally controlled building at Stauffer Homestead. Earle Fisher (left) and his son Bill are Farm Manager and Swine Herdsman respectively. L. F. Photo

would have to be provided. For several years the owners, the herdsman, and contractor, Abner Horning worked on plans. Today a new pig nursery is the result.

Working with the Fishers, John Miller started drawing up plans. It was decided to convert a former chicken house into a new slatted-floor nursery. Gathering advice from other hog raisers and from experts at Pennsylvania State University, Miller and Fisher designed the building and supervised its construction.

Now, twenty sows and their litters can be housed in the 5' x 17' cement block pens, two sows to a pen. The pigs are protected by a creep bar as they feed from their self feeders, and their mothers are fed from the floor. Nylon valve waterers operate as a drinking fountain only when tripped, and help to keep a dry pen.

Electric heat pads are imbedded in the concrete floor in the creep area where the little pigs lie, and the heat is thermostatically controlled. Six foot wide concrete slats cover a four foot deep manure pit which is

emptied about every three months. The walls and ceiling are insulated with rock wool and 1½" urethane insulation to keep the pigs warm in winter and cool in summer.

The ventilation system is unique. Three thermostatically controlled electric fans are installed in roof ventilators along the length of the building. A four inch open strip along the south side of the ceiling allows fresh

air from ventilators to come down into the nursery, regulated by a weighted nylon curtain. This curtain acts as a valve and allows only as much ventilation as is called for by the fans. During hot summer months the windows are removed to provide maximum ventilation.

Stauffer Homestead now plans to concentrate on providing the best possible feeder pigs. (Continued on Page 9)

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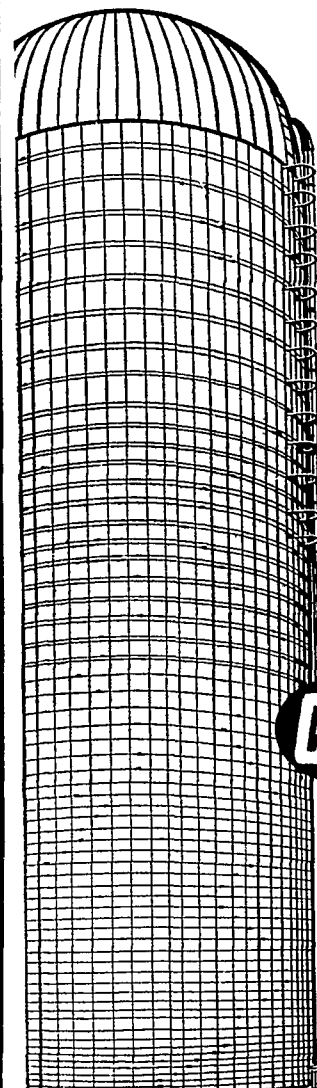
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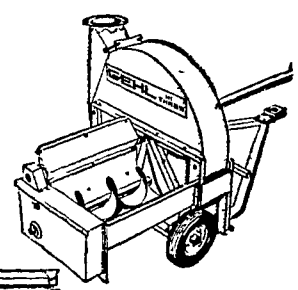
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