

A large driveway runs down the barn. Cattle are in four separate areas on either side. Huge laminated beams, covered with aluminum, form the half-circle shell.

*Latest in Free Stall Housing Draws Dozens*

# Huge New Dairy Barn Toured

Some 75 to 100 area farmers attended the open house tour of the new barn at the Triple G farm at Stevens RD1 recently.

Designed for 270 milk cows, the main section of the huge barn which houses the animals is shaped like a culvert cut in half length-wise. It's 300 feet long—as long as a football field—and 86 feet wide.

Connected to the middle of one side of the barn like the bottom of a T is a 114 by 45 foot section for milking, breeding and milk processing, functions outside the cattle living area.

**Wouldn't Change**

Irvin Graybill, who operates the dairy, said he has been milking with the new set-up for a year now and if he could start over, there's "very little I would change."

He would have made the building four feet wider to allow a little more drive down space in

the cattle areas for cleaning purposes, he said.

But overall, he's very satisfied. "I've never had cleaner cows," he said.

And he milks the 150 Holsteins now in the barn in an hour and a half, the same amount of time it previously took him to milk his 37 cows before he and two brothers pooled their resources to build the new barn.

"It took me longer to get used to that (milking so many cows so fast) than it did the cows," Graybill said.

He has 25 heifers and is gradually increasing the size of the herd to the barn's capacity.

**To Meet Demand**

"I'm developing the herd to meet the demand as it grows at the store," he explained.

The store, operated by his brother Donald, is the outlet for the farm's milk. It's sold for 45 cents a half gallon and 90 cents a gallon out of the store located

near the Reamstown Denver intersection on Route 222 just north of Ephrata. The store is about a half mile from the new barn.

Graybill said the entire production of the 150 cows is sold at the store. Sometimes there's some extra milk that has to be sold elsewhere and sometimes it's necessary to buy some milk to meet customer needs, he said.

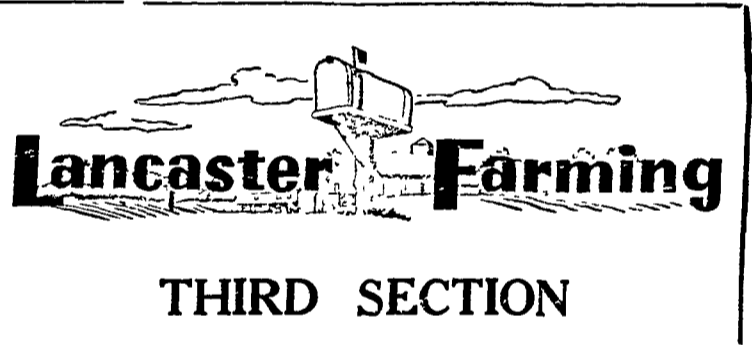
The brothers started selling milk in the fall of 1966.

A third brother, Arthur, runs a layer operation of about 10,000 to 12,000 birds. The eggs are also sold at the store.

**Income For Three**

Asked why the Graybills decided to retail their produce, Irvin confirmed there's a good income from the retailing end. "It was necessary to branch out to give all three brothers a good income from farming, he said.

"I wouldn't recommend it (both production and retailing)



for one man," he said. He said the dairy operation alone is plenty for one man. Altogether "three fellows can run" the milking operation, including huck help, he said.

This includes growing most of the feed for the animals. He buys some corn. Each animal consumes six pounds of hay and eight pounds of high moisture corn a day, plus corn silage.

The hay is fed once a day, silage twice and corn is fed in the parlor and to certain groups in the barn.

Just outside the barn, a 24 foot diameter sealed silo for haylage is under construction. It's 76 feet high.

**Bunker Silo**

Nearby, a 150 by 40 foot bunker silo still has some corn silage in it after being used over the winter.

Graybill said he would have to build three standing silos to hold as much material as the one bunker silo and it costs only a fraction as much to build the bunker silo.

Roger Grout, Penn State agriculture engineer, who supplied Graybill with some technical information on the new barn, said the facility is "one of only a few in the state with a drive down center." The driveway enables a tractor to drive in one end of the building and out the other end.

In addition, there's an open area at the top of the leg of the T. The perpendicular open space

actually divide the cow area into four separate pens.

**Animals Grouped**

Graybill makes several uses of this split up of the herd. He groups the animals according to production. Now, for instance, he keeps the non-producing heifers to themselves in one pen.

The grouping also assists milking. He milks 18 animals at a time. The remainder of the animals in a pen, up to 57, can be enclosed in an area just outside.

As the animals are milked, they are routed back into the pen, providing a continuous flow of animals that makes an uninterrupted milking operation possible. The smoothness of the operation helps explain how all 150 animals can be milked in an hour and a half, Graybill said.

Grout said the drive down the center "has a lot of possibilities" and can be used for "any number of feed arrangements."

Victor Plastow, associate county agent, noted the bunker feeding can be done in four or five minutes. The feeding by chuck wagon eliminates the costly installation of an auger system, he said.

Plastow also noted that the drive area makes possible viewing of the animals without wearing boots.

**Enclose Free Stall**

Within the four individual pens, the animals are free to rest in two rows of stalls, move in the circular walkway or eat.

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Irvin Graybill (right) discusses his new dairy operation with some visitors recently.