

FHA Honors Centre County Family

The Harold W. Lucas family of Bellefonte, Pa., has been honored as "farm family of the year" by agricultural leaders, state and local officials, farmers and rural citizens participating in the Pennsylvania Rural Development Committee's Tour of the Central Susquehanna River Basin.

The award was sponsored by the Farmers Home Administration, the rural credit agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

As a boy on a Centre County farm where his parents were "hard working owner-operators," Lucas learned to love the land and dreamed of owning his own farm some day. In time, he married the former Nyna Marie

Hancock of Loganton, who shared his farm ambitions, and they began farming as tenants.

They worked hard and made progress, but found that tenant farming failed to bring the satisfaction of "building something you can keep." They continued to talk and dream of owning their own place. By 1960, they had gained enough experience and savings that they felt prepared to take the step toward farm ownership.

They turned to the Farmers Home Administration for financing to take over a farm in Nittany Valley where they would make dairy farming their main enterprise. Eventually, a suitable farm ownership loan was arranged through FHA, and in

1960 they took over as owners. An operating loan provided funds to purchase livestock and equipment.

Mr. and Mrs. Lucas with their two children, Andy, eleven, and Amy, nine, now operate a 175-acre farm in the fertile Nittany Valley, crop 160 of those acres, milk 43 head of Holsteins and care for an additional 31 head.

They reap five tons of alfalfa hay per acre, produce 120 bushels of shelled corn per acre, and ensile 28 tons of corn silage per acre.

Efficiency is a key to their success.

Contributing to the efficient operation is a detailed system of record keeping, with Mrs.

Lucas in charge. She can tell a visitor how much each cow consumes at every feeding, each cow's production record, the current status of cash outlay for farm services and equipment.

The Lucas family's participation in DIIA has paid dividends. In 1969 the herd turned in the third highest production average in the County — 16,648 pounds of milk and 608 pounds of butterfat — and won for them a gold plaque. It was the first year the herd's butterfat average exceeded 600 pounds.

What advice does Lucas offer other farmers new in the business?

Take advantage of all the professional help that's offered, he says.

Help your cows through a sound program of breeding, feeding, and management which has a scientific basis for forage testing, soil testing and Dairy Herd Improvement Association records.

The family takes an active part in community affairs. He is a director of the Centre County Soil Conservation District, member of Huebelsburg Fire Company, Pennsylvania Farmers Association, Dairy Herd Improvement Association,

Dairy Herd Improvement Association and other organizations.

Children are in the 4-H Dairy Club, Church Choir and Boy Scouts.

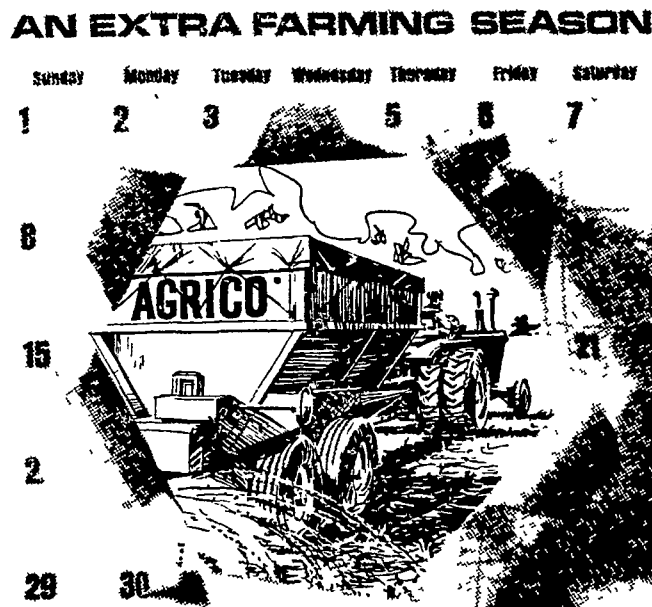
Penrose Hallowell, State Director of FIIA, stated that the State Awards Committee in selecting the outstanding farm family considers such points as appearance of the home and farm, quality and production of livestock, quality and production of crops, efficiency in the farm and home operation, the adoption of improvement management practices, financial progress and community affairs.

The Lucases were cited for outstanding achievement on the farm, in the home and in service to their community. Participating in the recent program were P. Kenneth Shoemaker, ex vice president for government relations, Heinz Company, retired, the principal speaker on a program including Honorable Herman T. Schneebeli, 17th Congressional District, Leland H. Bull, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and Mr. Thomas H. Patton, Cooperative Extension Service.

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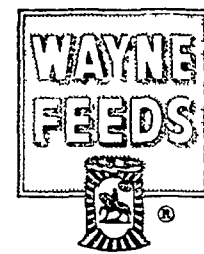
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