



Jim Goold, one of the students of Devereux Schools, the Foundation which now runs Soleil Farms, helps with some of the work of raising the

## Soleil Farms

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Now, as then, Soleil Farms is run by Conrad Grove, a native Virginian who has been managing purebred cattle farms for 30 odd years.

Under his direction since 1959, Soleil Farms has taken more top banners and plaques in Angus competition at the Pennsylvania Farm Show than he has even bothered to keep a count of, even though his high ceilinged office is lined with the lavender and gold banners much in the style that a hunter's den would be mounted with animal trophies or a castle with shields and coats of arms. And, there are more banners in boxes on the floor.

"Those are good at collecting dust," he says exhibiting his subdued southern drawl and good sense of humor, as he glances up toward the ceiling at the banners that only go as far back as 1967.

While most of them are from the Farm Show, there are some interspersed that come from the various shows he goes to such as Eastern Nationals, Keystone International Livestock Exposition, Maryland State Fair and others.

Naming each title would be a tedious job, but one outstanding Farm Show year for Soleil Farms was 1967 when the operation took all four banners in the Angus competition. Grove supposes that this was his best year, but many others come close. He's also proud to be able to say that Soleil Farms has never entered "Best 10 Head" without taking the banner.

Yet, if there is any class that he feels is most important to win, it is "Get of Sire," where four animals are sired by one bull.

"If you win that class, it proves you have a good program going at home," he explains. "Anybody can buy top animals to exhibit," he continues, "but, when they all come from one bull, you've got something good going at home."

After "Get of Sire" Grove believes that the next important class is champion bull and then champion heifer.

Over the years, Grove has observed that the number of breeding cattle are dwindling at shows. He says this is happening at almost every show, mainly because it's so costly to exhibit. Monetarily, there is the cost of motel rooms for three or more nights and the price of transporting the animals to the shows. Then there is the cost of being short a man at home to get the work done, and the time involved in preparing the animals for exhibition. On top of this, the titles are difficult to win, and even if a showman does take a first place, the premium involved is only \$37.50 for first place at the Farm Show. So, farmers are beginning to look, rather than participate.

Grove usually exhibits eight to 12 animals each year, and this year has entered 11. Actually, he had entered 14, originally, but because stall room was needed at the Farm Show, he dropped his total by three. It wasn't mandatory to withdraw but he chose to in order that other breeders might have a chance to participate.

For this breeder who exhibits at international shows, the competition at the Farm Show is not as tough as some he encounters, simply because it's strictly

steers. Goold will be attending the Farm Show with Conrad Grove this coming week.

Pennsylvania animals. He actually employs this January show as a display window for his operation at home, letting other breeders appraise his animals for themselves.

The Downingtown operation this coming Spring will consist of breeding and calving 300 purebred Angus cows. Of the resulting calves, Grove says that the top 20 per cent of the bulls and top 50 per cent of the heifers will become breeding stock, and the remainder will be steered with some going as 4-H Club calves and show steers. The balance of these animals will go into the feedlot and into the Devereux School operation.

"This gives the school top quality beef," says Grove, adding that it is also an aid to improving his herd.

"With the operation set up the way it is now," he says, "we never have to make excuses for anything we don't like in our animals. If they don't suit us, we have an outlet for them." Because of this, only animals perfect by Grove's standards are ever sold.

In his operation, Grove keeps the calving cycle at 90 to 100 days. All the calves are weaned at once and grouped into bulls, steers, and heifers. They are also weighed at seven months and fed alike to 12 months when they are weighed again and compared. He gives them parainfluenza shots two weeks prior to weaning and worms them at about one month after weaning. The flu shots keep them from getting colds and pneumonia during weaning and when they change to new rations of food.

A cattle judge as well as Angus breeder, Grove has some definite opinions on the type of animal he feels breeders should be turning out.

"We're in the meat business," he says, "so I'd like to furnish bulls that improve cattle which go into the feedlot." He has in mind heavy muscled animals that are fast gainers, but most important, efficient in the feedlot.

To be able to breed animals like this, he employs several of the latest techniques available to him. In conjunction with the University of Maryland, he has his bulls checked with a sonar, a type of X-ray technique that measures the back fat, marbling, and size of the rib eye in his bulls. He does this on five or six bulls he plans to keep.

And, at present, he is in the process of getting the pin point system, an electronic, computerized system for checking the bulls' conversion of feed to weight gain, or feeding efficiency. With this system, each bull wears a special tag that registers his number as he goes to each, and as he leaves the feeder, the amount of feed consumed each time is recorded and tallied. At the end of a certain period, this feed consumption can be checked against weight gain to come up with the animal's feeding efficiency.

He has sold his top bulls as far south as Florida; as far west as Montana; and has purchased bulls from the Dakotas and Montana.

And, because of his good breeding, he has come up with winners at the Pennsylvania Farm Show nearly every year since he started. This year's Farm Show is still unwritten history, so only time will tell how the judges will rate the 11 animals from Soleil Farms

## Organ concert slated

KENNETT SQUARE, Pa. - Longwood Gardens, near here, will welcome the New Year on January 12, at 8:30 p.m., with a performance by Dr. Clarence Snyder of Johann Sebastian Bach's Three Choral Preludes for the New Year. Dr. Snyder is

staff organist at Longwood Gardens and organist and choirmaster at Christ Church, Greenville, Delaware. The performance will be given in the ballroom off the conservatories at Longwood Gardens. Tickets will be available at the door

on the evening of the performance for \$1.00 and will include admission to the conservatories for one hour before and after the performance so that concertgoers may enjoy the winter floral displays.

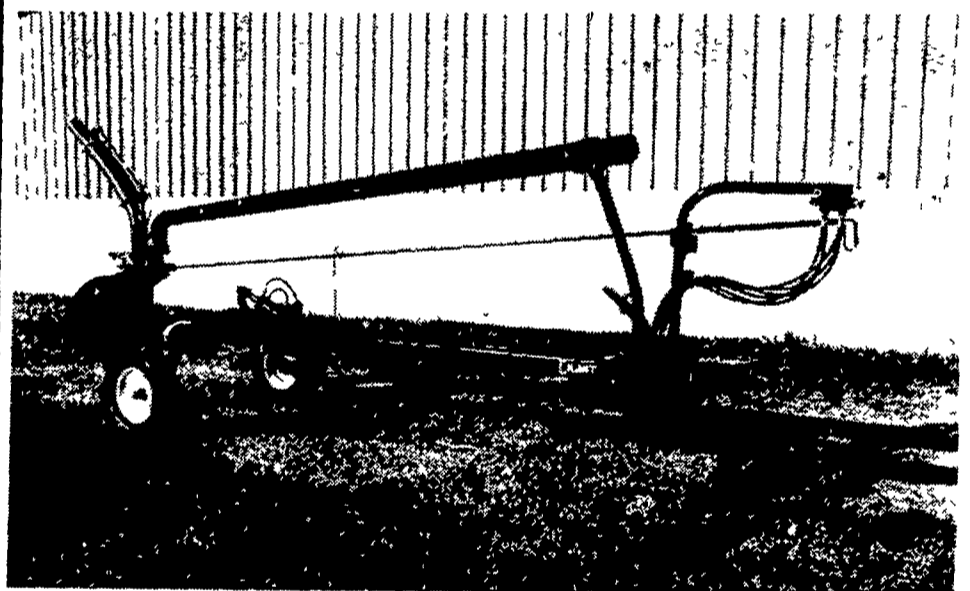
The organ at Longwood Gardens is considered to be one of the most complete in the country. Weighing approximately 45 tons, it is housed in a chamber 63 feet wide, 23 feet deep and 40 high. No two pipes in the organ are identical. Some are made of wood and some of metal. The diameters of the pipes differ, as do the lengths; the higher the pitch the shorter the pipe, the lower the pitch the longer the pipe. The organ was installed by Longwood's founder, the late Pierre S du Pont, in 1929 and rebuilt in 1957.

Cyclamen, primroses, spring bulbs and acacias will provide winter color in the January conservatory display on view before and after the organ concert. As always, the orchid and tropical foliage plants will be looking their best in the smaller glass houses. Longwood Gardens is open every day of the year, the grounds from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (6:00 p.m. in summer) and the conservatories from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission is \$2.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children six through fourteen. Children five and under are admitted free.



Conrad Grove, manager of Soleil Farms, checks weight records.

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