

Drought

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and keep a herd of 115 Holsteins. Their rolling herd average stands at 16,860 pounds of milk and 652 of butterfat. They've increased their milk production by 2500 pounds in the last 15 months.

Today, as back in the dry spells of a decade ago, the Yosts "try to make the most of everthing" they have, explains Jim. "Every little bit of rain we got, we utilized," the deeply tanned farmer continued. Two specific management practices which came about during the dry years and which are still practiced here annually are: 1. not worrying about grain production, and 2. not selling any excess hay or corn until just prior to the next year's harvest.

The Yosts are roughage oriented and make no excuses for it. "If we have forage, we're all right, the rest we can buy," the men explained. They note that the prolonged dry spell thus far this season has left them with a shortened hay crop, but that the situation still isn't anywhere near as critical as what they had to get used to 10 to 15 years ago.

"I'd rather plant corn in the dust, than have dust in August," commented 35-year old Ed. They've found out that hay won't amount to much if rain doesn't fall after the first cutting. Consequently, they've learned to shift their cropping intentions accordingly. They've had better luck with corn and have already made plans for planting some of their less productive hay fields in corn. "We can still plant corn as late as July 15, but hay won't grow if it's dry," Ed affirmed.

Ryelage was another one of their solutions to roughage scarcities during the last decade. They've planted the grain as late as mid-August after plowing down 600 pounds of fertilizer per acre. It was sown in dust, the Yosts recalled, and then green-chopped from the end of September to early December. "We wouldn't do that today, but when it's dry you do anything," they added. They generally fed beet pulp along with the wet, freshly chopped forage to soak up some of the moisture.

It's a different ballgame today, although the Yosts are trying to be versatile enough in case a drought strikes again. This past week their 84 milking Holsteins were averaging 58.8 pounds of milk per day per head. They're doing it on a ration which includes 20 pounds of corn silage, 13 pounds of shelled high moisture corn and 24 pounds of alfalfa haylage per head. That's what the better half of the herd receives. Lower producers get the same ingredients, but only four pounds of shelled high moisture corn. In either

in a mixer wagon as a complete feed. Additional protein is added at a rate of five pounds per 100 head. "It's a balanced feed at each feeding - we believe in having all of the nutrients available with each mouthful," Jim explained.

The feed program still requires that some protein still be offered in the parlor, although the brothers wanted to get away from parlor feeding altogether. Other than that, the Yost's cows are fed entirely on the lot.

High quality haylage is a mainstay on the Yost's feeding program. Ed is in charge of preparing it, and all three stress the need for making it right. They like to cut the crop during the early bud stage and then let it wilt down to 40 to 45 per cent moisture. With the price of soybean meal being what it is, they've been especially appreciative of their forage supplies.

The Yosts claim high moisture shelled corn is responsible for much of their production improvement. They had been using ear corn for high moisture corn previously. "We were off with our energy before," 33 year old Richard explained simply enough.

The brothers operate as a legal partnership, with each being considerate of the other's interests, and each drawing wages. Jim, 41, took the initiative of forming the bond 10 years ago since they had grown up with the idea of staying together. He persuaded his father to buy a second farm in 1962 to allow for future expansion and sufficient income for three families. Two of the brothers live on the main farm, while the third lives on an adjacent property. Responsibilities are divided up equally. All pitch in where ever necessary.



Handling some of the feeding chores at Tri-Y Farms is Dick Yost, youngest of the three-brother partnership.



Jim Yost's primary responsibilities in the Yost Brothers' partnership revolve around field work.



An average production of 58 pounds per milking cow per day was recently recorded at the Yosts' farm near Bernville in Berks County. Ed Yost, above, works with the cows and keeps the records.

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