

Stonesifer

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"Anyone open-minded enough to try something can do it," believes Stonesifer. "But you've got to be willing to try."

Two years ago, the family moved into the 140-acre farm at 1120 Baust Church Road, near Union Bridge. An additional 350 acres are rented for the cropping program of corn, hay, small grains and pasture. A free-stall barn and double-four milking parlor house the almost completely registered Holstein herd.

Rolling herd average on DHIA for the 135 milking string is 16,300 pounds of milk and 598 pounds of fat. Cows are split into two production groups, with a cutoff point at 60 pounds milk per day for cows and 55 pounds for heifers. A 20 per cent complete protein feed complements the forages of corn silage and timothy - clover - alfalfa hay. High moisture eared corn is to be incorporated into the feeding program as well.

Stonesifer's herd has racked up impressive marks in type scoring. During recent classification, five new animals were upgraded to the converted Excellent designation, giving Stonesifer a total of seven head, including an Elevation son, in the top scoring bracket. The unofficial BAA (Breed Age Average) of the herd is 104 points, boosted by 42 cows scored Very Good and 50 head at Good Plus.

Several of the highest rated cows trace back to the purchase of an animal from 4-H'er Gary Duerr. Duerr is now employed by Stonesifer, along with recent high school graduate John Miller

"We have really terrific fellows for us," emphasized both Betty and Jim, with nothing but the highest praise for the job performance of Duerr and Miller. "We value very highly the people we've come to know through the dairy and the registered Holstein business."

Activities within the 4-H program are claiming a large portion of interest from the younger members of the Stonesifer family. These outgoing youngsters display a keen interest in the farm and are already assuming responsibilities in the day-to-day chores.

Chris, the oldest, is eleven and will be in seventh grade. Her 4-H show animal has been scored Excellent and has given the youngster three daughters as a bonus, a record that many career dairymen would eye with envy. Another basic

philosophy of Jim's is paying off for Chris.

"I want to see that the youngsters get good foundation heifers," figures Stonesifer. "They get two gift animals to start; from then on, they must buy their own."

Ten-year-old Susie is a sixth grader and nature lover who is happiest when she can be off and playing in the woods and fields of the farm. Like the other children, Susie helps with rounding up the cows at milking time, feeding the calves in the hillside hutches, and keeps busy with 4-H projects.

Betty Stonesifer is dedicated to bringing up her children to enjoy reading and takes them regularly to a nearby library. Brian, who is eight and will enter fourth grade, is "the reader," says his mother. After exhausting borrowed library materials, Brian has been known to resort to pouring over the family encyclopedia in search of new information. Also a 4-H'er, he's quite fond of working with baby calves.

Karen, though the youngest at seven, has found her own special way to make a most valuable contribution to the farm. Jim terms Karen, "the heat detector."

At milking time, two of the children stand guard between the pasture and the barn and two others, accompanied by the family's collie, Pixie, go to bring in the cows. Karen knows almost all the cows by name and has become very efficient at alerting Jim to the herd individuals showing signs of heat. If she doesn't know the animal's name, Karen mentally notes the eartag and relays that information.

Betty manages to raise her family, help around the farm, maintain a garden, and still work full time as a secretary at American Telephone and Telegraph in nearby Finksburg. She's also served on planning committees for the district's middle school and day care center and helps with congregational activities at nearby Baust United Church of Christ.

One of Betty's concerns is that too many food consumers today don't really know what a fresh, whole, cold glass of milk should taste like. Promotion is one area of the dairy industry that she feels must receive more attention and participation by every dairy producer.

"We must not completely rely on promotional agencies to do all our public relations



Already assuming responsibilities within the Stonesifer family dairy operation are, from left: Susie, Karen, Chris and Brian, flanked by Pixie, the devoted pet collie.

work for us," insist the Stonesifer couple. "Each farm family must do their own part toward telling the dairy story."

Jim and Betty have joined with neighboring dairymen in forming Genuine Genetics, a sire sampling and breeding syndicate. By working together, the syndicate members can spread out the considerable

cost involved in testing new bulls and gather more data on daughters bred by group participants in the program. The aim of the localized syndicate is to test a new sire every 18 months.

Devoted to the belief that "someone must take time to get involved," Betty and Jim are avid supporters of breed and related farm groups.

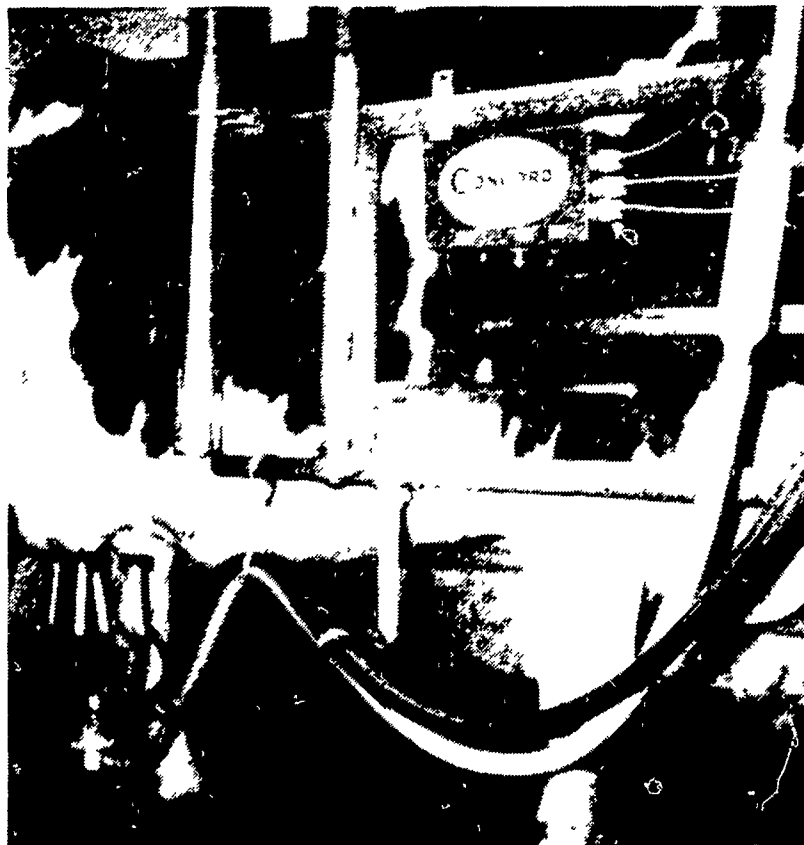
In 1974, they were selected

Maryland Outstanding Young Farmer couple by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. Active in the local and state Holstein organizations, Jim has served in a variety of offices within the group, including the presidency of the Carroll County Association. He's president of the local district and a state director of the Maryland Artificial Breeders

Cooperative and is a state director and past county head of the DHIA program.

"But our farming operation today would not exist if Mom and Dad hadn't taken us in and been willing to serve as partners with us," credits Jim. "Dad helps with the operation every day. It's a family farm — and we want it to always stay that way."

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