

# Ernest Hall

(Continued from Page 108)  
 Kendra all had a show string out on the road. They would converge at the end of the season at Montgomery County Fair. Florence recalls her kids were pretty "hot" when she won every class at Montgomery, on their last year of snowing there.

In 1971, Florence was named the Maryland Shepherd of the Year, by the Maryland Sheep Breeders Association. She was the first woman in the state to be so named. (Florence said the award was really "Sheepman of the Year", but subsequently changed to "Shepherd".) Ernest received the same distinguished title in 1977.

Whether it was mutual agreement, or the fact that the Halls have been married for 30 years, they both said "Don't get into something unless your willing to be a success."  
 With their children off on their own direction, the Halls sold their champion Cheviot flock in 1975. Thinking they were done with the sheep



The Halls sheep pose for their picture. "The base of the hair determines the wool color" said Ernest Hall. They use Finnish Landrace, Rambouillet, Merino, Romney, Dorset, Cheviot, and Corriedale sheep in their colored wool cross breeding program.

business (their friends knew better) a pure-bred breeder approached them with a black fleeced lamb. "We bought it just for fun" Florence said. This became the beginning of their interest for colored wool breeds.

At the same time, Virginia Polytechnic Institute was conducting experiments for multiple lambing. They were using Finnish Landrace (Finn) rams on Rambouillet ewes. A black ewe was produced from that cross. The Halls found out, and brought her home. She was affectionately named

"Socks" and has produced 14 lambs for them in four years.

The Halls rapidly got caught up in the colored wool business. They took a trip to Michigan expecting to bring back truck load of Romney ewes. They returned with two. In West Virginia they found their truckload of Romneys. "The man wouldn't sell us his fleeces though because he was using them as insulation for his house. Can you imagine?" Florence said.

Florence said they were "principally raising black sheep for a variety of hand

spun wool. Spinners want the wool colors varied for different things." The Halls sell their breeding stock throughout the United States and Canada. There wool is sold across the country. "We don't advertise anymore, Ernest said "because we can't meet the demand."

The Halls keep accurate records on all their sheep. "We can tell you everything about every sheep that's been on this property" said Florence. (She pulls out a large notebook and gives her husband the background on a ewe he had asked about

(Turn to Page 133)



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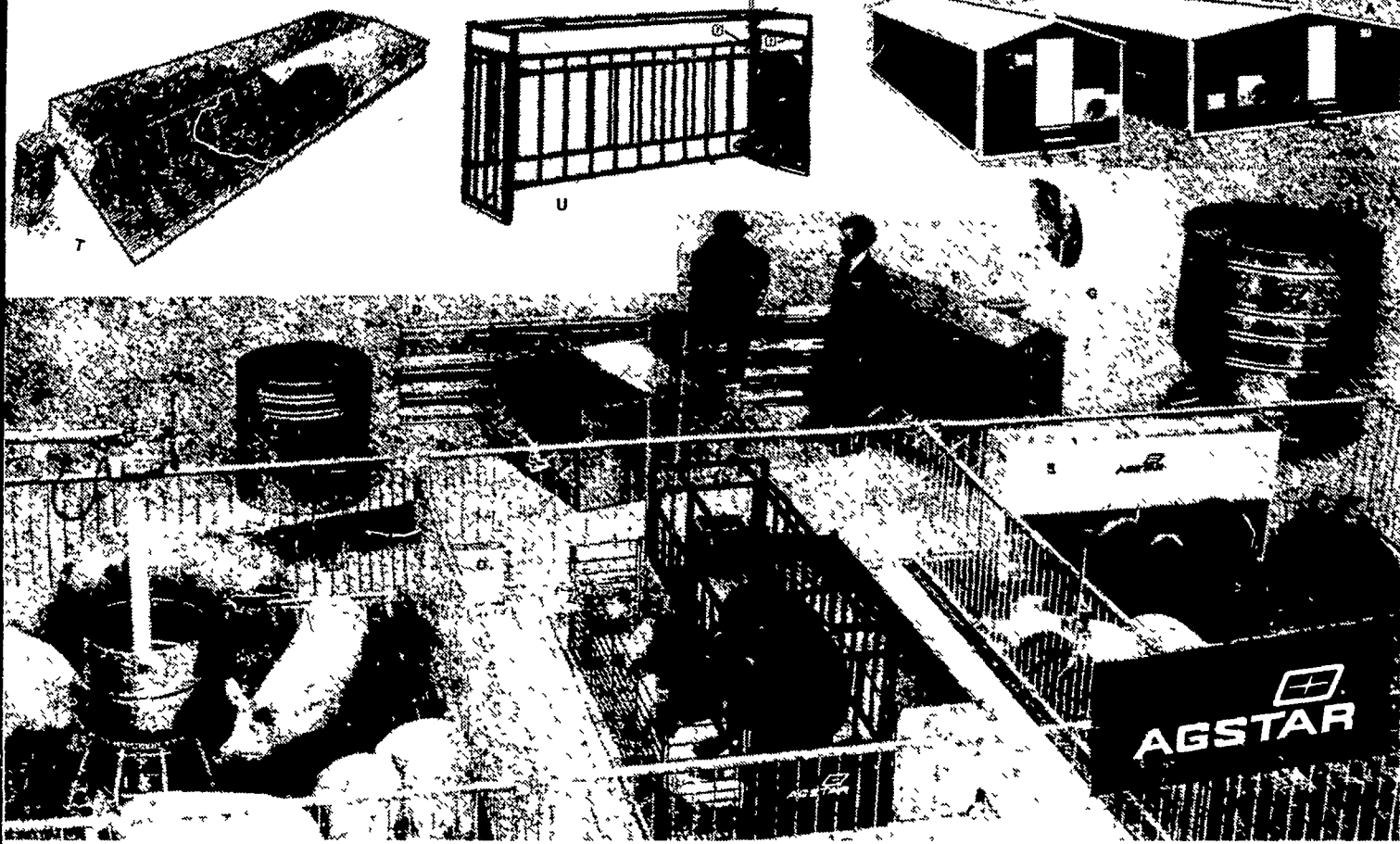
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