

Home-bred cows

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Rather than be satisfied with what he sees in sire catalogs, or magazines, Yoder will frequently go to farms and bull studs to study the animals in question personally. "I want to see a bull's daughters," he remarked during a conversation in the family's thick-walled stone house. "We don't just go by pictures."

"We like to keep a cow as long as we can," Yoder continued. "We're looking for a good, sound, type cow. The older cows, he says, are the ones which 'bring home the bacon.'"

"It doesn't matter how well you feed a cow, or how well you take care of her, if she isn't genetically bred to produce, you might as well forget it," the award-winning dairy farmer opinionized. Breeding is where the Yoders place most of their emphasis, but they don't neglect feeding and management either. Among their rules for top production one might include high quality feed, a regular feeding and milking schedule, and good health care.

Yoder's herd of 60 milking-age Holsteins boasts a classification average of 104.8 per cent B.A.A. Type is strongly considered in breeding and culling programs, the Yoders admitted. While they might keep a heifer which is a low producer, they will not keep one which is lacking good, functional type, regardless of her production.

The Yoder herd's classification score is one of several factors which are considered annually for Progressive Breeder Awards. Yoder has won 12 of them. The Holstein-Friesian Association of America sponsors the recognition. Progressive Breeder Awards require meritorious official production records, a classification average of at least 102 per cent B.A.A., herd health accreditation, state and national Holstein association membership, 75 per cent or higher home-bred herd, and up-to-date registries.

The Yoder family has numerous handsome award plaques on several walls of the house. They're into Holsteins in more ways than one. This Fall, Yoder's wife,

Reba, got the idea of making a quilt which is adorned with a drawing of the True Type Holstein cow. A friend, Mrs. Mary Jane Stoltzfus, did the artwork. They hope to have it completed in time for the Pennsylvania Farm Show. In February they'll display it at the Pennsylvania Holstein Association Convention, to be held in Reading. Plans are that the quilt will be sold at auction.

Yoder, who was born and raised on a Mifflin County dairy farm, came to Chester County during World War II to help his older brother, Raymond. In 1948 he headed West to help with the small grain harvest. That was followed by eight years of truck-driving.

After purchasing his first farm and 11 purebred heifers in 1953, he devoted a portion of his time to farming. Three years later he dove into it full-time. He remembers being the last man on the D.H.I.A. list that year, but came up rapidly in subsequent years and has been at or near the top for the past decade. "I had a 360 pound

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Yoder, who began dairy farming full-time in 1956, remembers being a the bottom of the D.H.I.A. list that year. He has been at or near the top for the past decade. His 1978 D.H.I.A. average stands at 19,722 pounds of milk and 795 pounds of butterfat. He credits his own bulls for much of the advancement.

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