



Day raises about 70 dairy goats with 30 in his milking herd. He says the milk he sells is "strictly a health food store item."

## Goat milk is health food store hit for the Days

By JOAN LIESAU WOMEUSDORF — Tucked back in the hills of Womelsdorf, a different type of dairy operation is being run. Steve and Claire Day of Triple Creek Farms raise dairy goats.

The Day's have raised a herd of La Manchas for seven years. Relatively new in the commercial dairy business, the Day's received their raw goat milk bottler and distributors license in May of 1978. Their herd of about 70 goats consists of 30 milkers, 20 kids and five

bucks. Although Day keeps some other breeds, he says he is "shooting for all pure bred La Manchas."

Day will leave the new born kids on their mother for five days "to give it a good start." He then takes the kids to the "kid house" and begins milking the female.

An open sided six stall milking parlor is used twice a day to milk the goats. Day also uses a bucket milker at a vacuum level of 11 inches. Six goats at a time enter the parlor from a holding pen. While being milked the goats

are grain fed. "They are virtually the same as a dairy cow," Day stated.

At peak production, they put out over 60 quarts of milk per day and about 18 quarts in December.

Day would eventually like to increase his milking herd to 75 goats and put up another six stall parlor.

Day uses five bucks for breeding. He said "it is easier to care for 200 pound bucks than a 2000 pound bull." Goats are seasonal animals. They breed in late August and early September

(similar to sheep) with a five month gestation period. The goats are fresh in the Spring and become dry in November.

Because of the seasonality of the animal, Day tried experimenting with artificial lighting to provide a constant, equal flow of milk year round. He began exposing the goats to 20 hours of artificial daylight in January and February.

From 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. he turned the lights off. In March, Day turned the

artificial lights off, simulating the start of Fall.

So far, it seems to be working. Day exposed the bucks to the lights. He said "you can tell when it's working because the bucks start to smell again." Day explained that the bucks begin to smell as breeding season approaches.

Particularly concerned with the purity of their product, the Day's organically grow their wheat, oats and corn. They buy pelleted protein from a

local mill to bring the total ration up to a protein level of 16 per cent. The milkers get fed alfalfa hay while the dry goats and younger ones are fed a coarser hay "to keep the rumen working."

Day described the goats as "browsers rather than grazers." They eat trees and wood. He explained that goats eat the labels off of cans, thus becoming known as tin can eaters. He said the goats are also fussy eaters. He said that they need

(Turn to Page 27)



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