

# Hartle's herd management centers on feed quality

Many dairymen, in an effort to sell more milk to break even or boost profits, are adding additional cows to the herd.

But Joseph R. Hartle, Jr., newly elected Master Farmer for 1979 from R4, Bellefonte, feels that the quality of the cows in the herd is far more important than increasing cow numbers.

His 68-cow registered Holstein herd—the number

has remained constant for a number of years—last year produced an average of 20,641 pounds of milk and 776 pounds of butterfat, one of the highest levels in the state.

Not only is the now Master Farmer managing a top dairy herd, he also keeps the farm ready for visitors. Fences and buildings are freshly painted and the grounds trimmed. But he is eager to give credit to his family for their help.

His wife, Gladys; daughters Deborah and Betsy; and son, Thomas, are all involved in this family farm operation. Daughter, Linda, is married and teaches school in Bedford County. Another daughter, Janet works in the field of mental health in Lancaster County.

Hartle owns 245 acres and rents an additional 90 acres for crops. About 120 acres of corn are grown for corn silage and high moisture corn. Also 10,900 bushels of ear corn are sold as a cash crop.

Alfalfa is grown on another 100 acres, averaging 6.5 tons per acre. This is fed to the milk cows as haylage and hay. Another 20 acres of a grass and legume mixture are fed as hay to dry cows. The remainder of the acreage is either pasture or small grains.

"We keep trying to improve the quality of the feed," Hartle points out. "We regularly lime and fertilize the fields and use the Penn State forage testing recommendations to insure that the cows have a balanced diet."

Probably the determining factor in increasing milk production has been harvesting hay and haylage at the right stage of maturity, the Master Farmer notes. He considers good quality forage the backbone of any good feeding program.

"It becomes particularly frustrating when the weather doesn't cooperate at the time when the hay should be off of the field," Hartle emphasizes. "When the protein level in haylage drops below 20 percent, we topdress it with soybean meal."

He feeds the dry cows grass hay and very little grain. A mixture of 80 percent oats and 20 percent ear corn comprises the grain ration.

Haylage, protein supplement, and hay are fed along with high moisture corn to the milk cows in the morning. Then cows receive corn silage after the milking. High moisture corn is fed in a ratio of one pound of corn to three pounds of milk.

Last fall, the Hartles built a barn for older calves and dry cows. Calves are divided

into groups in free stalls. Dry cows occupy one end of a large loose housing area. This past spring, a farm shop was added for machinery repair and maintenance.

The Master Farmer raises most of his heifer calves although he sells 3 ro 4 each to 4-H and FFA members. He also raises 6 to 8 bull calves each year to sell to local dairymen. The other bull calves are vealed.

His advice for young farmers starting out in the business is buy good quality cows don't get too large too fast. And don't buy too much machinery. If you can hire someone to do custom work for the season crops, you will be further ahead, at least in the beginning.

"And a young man starting in dairying should have wife who is interested in farming," Hartle says. "There's a lot of hard work and long hours involved and it's important for the wife to be a part of the total operation."

Following graduation from Bellefonte High School in 1950, Hartle worked as a DHIA supervisor for a year then assisted his father on the home farm.

In 1955 he married the former Gladys Waite. A year later they purchased a 115-acre farm and started their dairy operation with five cows and four calves, Hartle's original 4-H animals.

Throughout the late 1950's and 1960's they remodeled and added to the barn, but the herd size remained between 30 and 40 cows. Then in 1969, they purchased an adjoining farm. Herd size gradually rose to the present level.

In addition to farming, Hartle is active in numerous agricultural organizations. He served as president of the Centre County Holstein Club, Centre County 4-H Leaders Forum, Extension Executive Committee, and Centre-Clinton DHIA.

He also holds membership in the Centre County Farmers' Association, Northeastern Breeders Association, Pennsylvania Grassland Council, State and National Holstein Associations, Dairy Shrine



Hartle advises young farmers that the key to success is buying quality cattle, not buying too much cattle or too much machinery right away, and marrying someone who's interested in farming.

## Christmas morning blaze levels Shippensburg barn

SHIPPENSBURG — A Cumberland County farm family lost their barn to fire early Christmas day, according to Vigilant Hose Co. Chief Charles Myers.

Fire equipment was dispatched at 11:19 A.M. to the farm owned by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Friese and Mr. and Mrs. Carl Kelso. The farm, occupied by the Friese family, is located at R5 Shippensburg in Southampton Township, along Route 533.

Myers said that six fire companies fought the blaze until 3:45 Christmas afternoon. He explained that they were hampered in their efforts by the long lane leading to the farm.

"With all the rain we've had, we couldn't get the fire trucks into the fields," Myers said. "We had a traffic jam in the lane which meant keeping trucks waiting out on the highway while the empty tankers came out."

He explained that the wind was working in the company's favor that day, blowing the flames and heat away from several other buildings. They managed to save a hog pen and silo, and the main house was only partially damaged.

The fire chief said that the Friese family was getting ready to leave when they noticed the fire in the barn. The family turned in the alarm and worked to remove 30 head of milk cows and some young stock from the barn.

Fire fighters arrived minutes after the alarm was turned in. They put on air packs, breathing apparatus, and entered the barn to

rescue several young calves, saving all but one calf.

The barn, which was filled with hay and straw, was lost to the fire, along with a wagon, elevator, and some other miscellaneous items.

The blaze is believed to be the result of an electrical fire, according to Myers. He stated that it was not considered suspicious.

Chief Myers said his company was assisted by South Newton Twp. Co. and Westend Fire and Rescue's whole stations. Extra tankers were supplied by Penn Twp., Newburg-Hopewell, Newville, and Pleasant Hall fire companies. And Cumberland Valley Hose Co. provided the ambulance and air wagon. Several fire fighters sustained minor injuries. SM



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