

Raw milk sales are their bag

BY PAT KAUFFMAN
HERSHEY — Nestled within sight of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Al-Har-La Goat Dairy struggles to turn a dream into reality. Alda and Harry Davidhizar along with their

son, Larry, call four level acres here home. And they and their herd of mostly registered Saanens are doing what they enjoy most, making milk.

In a barn, which they have built themselves, Larry says

he has more things he'd like to do. Meanwhile, 22 mature goats and 16 kids contentedly munch hay.

Arriving at milking time, one finds a pot of hot coffee on the milk cooler, and all three members of the family pitching in to hurry the does onto milking stands measure feed, and proceed with the business at hand.

The milking parlor is U-shaped and has space for 4 does at a time. In the center of the U, scales, paper, pencils and milking machine are conveniently located. Harry explains, "We designed the milking parlor so that we can reach everything we needed with only a step in either direction. From here I can reach both the in and out doors, as well as any of the 4 does."

The Davidhizar's explained that while stanchions for 2 does at a time would have been acceptable, they feed grain only when

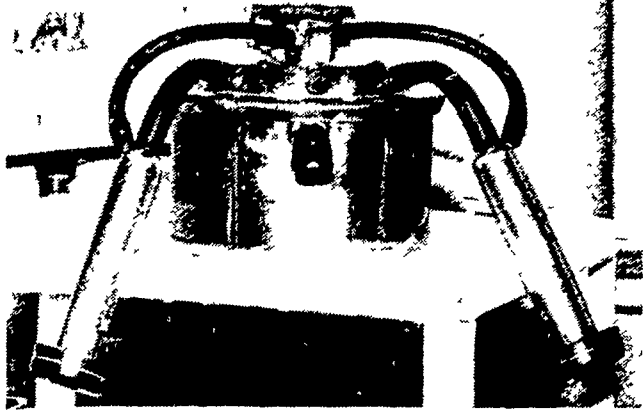
milking and the does would not have enough time to eat their grain. For this reason, they find the 4 doe system works well for them.

Does are fed 4 to 10 lbs. of grain per day depending on production. The grain they feed is a 15 per cent calf ration purchased at a local feed store. To this mix, Harry adds crumpled oats because, "Oats put the body on goats."

When asked about any special tricks to raising his goats, he also mentions that he mixes edible lime at the rate of a scant half pound to each 400 pound batch of grain. This he mentions hesitantly, though, like a prize-winning cook giving away his secret recipe. Alda and Harry are retired, although Alda still works in a nursing home part-time. Larry is a long-distance trucker. Their common dream is to build a raw milk trade capable of turning a



Mixed Alfalfa hay is fed free choice to the kids from the age of ten days.



The converted Surge milker system features a 3 quart stainless steel pail the Davidhizar's custom designed. The extra nipples are capped with medicine dropper tops which they say are easy to clean.

profit. They admit the going will be rough for awhile.

"Right now," Larry says, "I'm trucking to support us and the goats. We worked out an agreement where Dad tends the goats when I'm on the road and helps to build the business. I've been self-employed before, and once you've been self-employed

you think there's no other way. I'm anxious for the day when I can make a living from the herd." Meanwhile, Larry takes goat milk with him to drink on his long hauls.

The Davidhizar's are facing the challenge before them. The lack of milk marketing structures in the state, and the costs of advertising they counter with a modestly priced product. Harry says, "Lots of people buy goat milk to drink or use for someone in the family with medical problems. What we are trying to do is price it as competitively with cow's milk as we can so they will use it in all their cooking. We feel that this is the way to sell more milk and keep the customers coming back."

To keep their prices low, the family has adopted an aggressive culling policy. Any animal which cannot adapt to the freestall living arrangement and herd routine is sold.

One of the things that troubles them with the herd is their output. They are quick to point out that while they paid good prices for their stock, they found too late that some were other people's culls. One of the problems they see to someone starting out is the lack of quality breeding stock in the area.

Presently, their average production per goat is 5 pounds per day. And while some animals are at the end of long lactations, Harry feels this should be higher. Their present goal is 2000 pounds of milk per year averaged per goat. Their butterfat test on herd samples is a respectable 3.5.

The Davidhizar's emphasize that while they received their raw milk permit only eight months ago, they owned goats in the early 1950's and had a raw milk permit then. Perhaps

(Turn to Page A17)

"SALE-A-THON" OPEN HOUSE!

THURS. & FRI., MARCH 6 & 7 8 AM to 4 PM BOTH DAYS

Join us for Fun, Excitement &
Special Values on MF equipment!

Look For Our Open House Red Tag
Specials . . . Equipment May Be
Purchased At Invoice Cost!

Special Prices On Baler Twine & Seeds!



**N. H. FLICKER
AND SONS, INC.**

Route 222, Maxatawny, PA
Phone 215-683-7252

USED EQUIPMENT

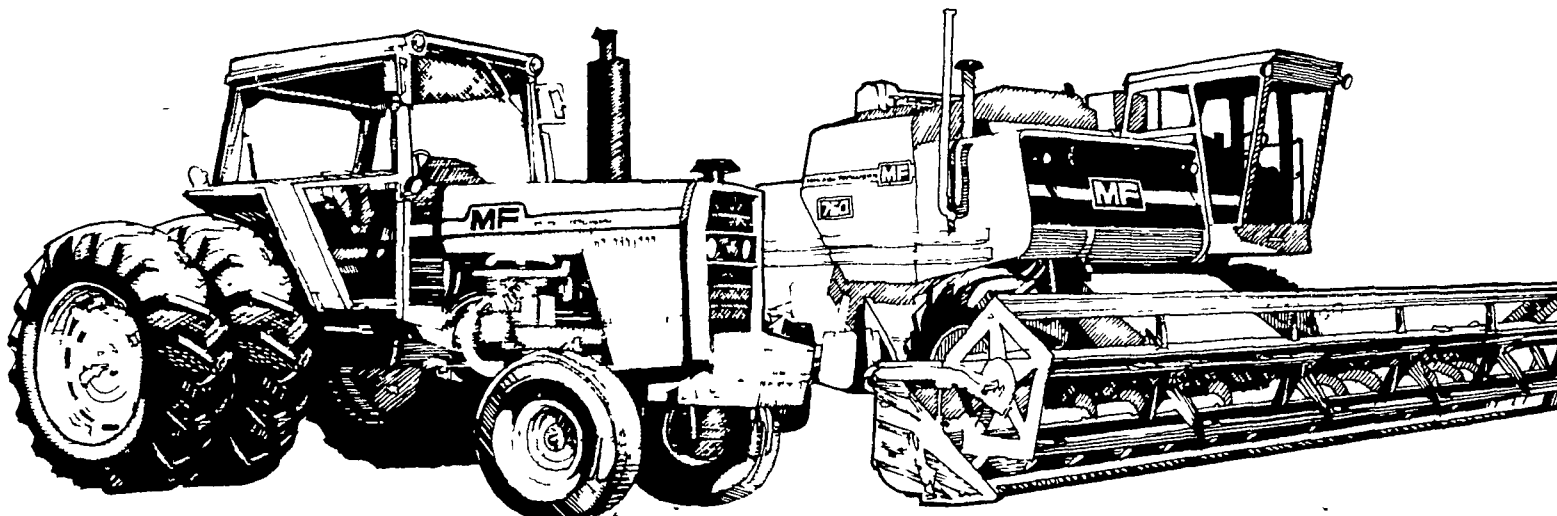
Ask about special financing on
selected used equipment.

MF PARTS SPECIAL - 12% CASH DISCOUNT

Stock up now on the parts you need.

PLUS Free Coffee & Doughnuts,
Movies, door prize drawings (no
purchase necessary), and more!

Make plans now to attend our Open
House. It's FREE.




Let Us Know
Your Service Problems
**HOOVER
DIESEL SERVICE**
PH: 717-656-6133
2998 West Newport Rd
Ronks, PA 17572