

PA Ayrshire breeders visit Ardrossan Farms

BY PAT KAUFFMAN VILLANOVA — Here at picturesque Ardrossan Farms, Ayrshire breeders from across the state and some from surrounding states assembled for a field day, Saturday.

The farm was a fitting place for Ayrshire enthusiasts to assemble, it's the top producing herd in the U.S.

The day's activities began with 2 classes of cows to be judged in the morning,

followed by a business meeting.

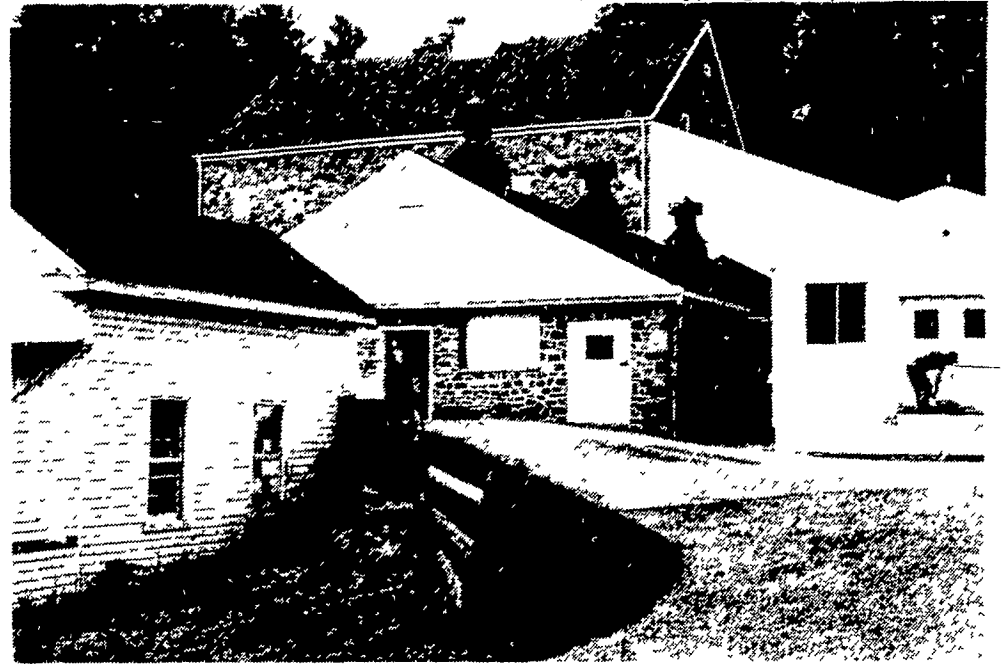
Richard Lyons, Cockranton won the men's judging division. Women's division winner was Margaret Munnagh, Hershey. And youth winner was Johnathan Stine, Danville.

After a dinner of Kentucky Fried Chicken, the group heard Dr. Phillip Garret from Flemington, New Jersey, a specialist in the field of infertility.

But perhaps the part people were most interested in was the chance to visit with fellow breeders and tour the facilities on the main farm.

Ardrossan is presently milking approximately 97 head with 285 head total. Five people are required to handle the milkers. Presently, the herd maintains a rolling average of 16,865 pounds of milk and 696 pounds of butterfat with a 4.1 test.

According to Doug Dodds, the National Ayrshire Association's executive secretary, "If a man is looking for return on his investment, there's no doubt about it, the Ayrshire breed warrants higher prices than are being paid today for the best cows sold. And ninety-nine percent of the time, when cattle go through the auctions, there's a true seller and a true buyer."



Visitors to the farm roamed at their leisure during the afternoon. Modern facilities such as a large milk house to the far right, and milking barn, center front, adjoin centuries old stone buildings here at the home of the United States' highest producing Ayrshire herd.

Earl E. Keefer, the National president was on hand for the day. Keefer, a native of Millersburg, also owns a herd of about 85 milkers. Keefer said the population of Ayrshire cattle has declined over the years pretty much in proportion to the decline in overall dairy cattle numbers. He noted that there seems to be an interest in the breed from young dairymen who are harder pressed financially.

Ayrshire enthusiasts from Wisconsin, Connecticut, Vermont, and Maryland mixed with the Pennsylvania breeders in a day of renewing old friendships and creating new ones.



Doug Dodds, Brandon, Vermont, secretary of the National Ayrshire Association and Earl E. Keefer, national president took some time to chat at the PA Ayrshire field day last Saturday.

Ardrossan Farms is a pleasant combination of the new and the old. Beautiful old stone buildings blend with modern techniques such as heifer calves in rows of calf hutches.

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