

Wins Progressive Breeders Award

# The last dairy farmer in Chateau County

CENTERVILLE, Del. — Here in the rolling hills of "Chateau Country," is a lovely place to live, but a hard place to be a dairy farmer. But that's where Levis Phipps, Jr. is raising an award-winning herd—on 160 hilly acres, totally surrounded by million-dollar estates, chic boutiques, and an exclusive country club.

Only the best beer and liquor bottles come sailing over the fence to booby trap the cows' pasture.

Phipps' herd is just the third in Delaware history to win the Progressive Breeders Award of the National Holstein-Friesian Association. The old Wintertur herd of the late Colonel Henry B. duPont—one of the top breeding herds in the United States during the 1920's and '30's—won the prestigious award eight times. The University of Delaware herd was honored twice, in 1964 and 1965.

How does a hard-working family farmer join this elite company?

Why is he doing his dairy farming in Chateau Country?

Let's start with the second question first: he was there before his neighbors were. Phipps' Quaker ancestors settled that land and put up the house and barn before the Civil War. (Actually, the barn went up first, in accordance with Quaker custom.) The last three generations of Phipps men died in that very barn.

Levis' father and grandfather went peacefully, working with the cows they loved. But uncle Horace Dillworth (a kinsman of former Philadelphia mayor Richardson Dillworth) wasn't so lucky. He met his end there in an encounter with an enraged bull.

There's only one young bull at Centerdel Farm today, along with 67 milking cows, assorted young stock, a gaggle of geese and a pair of donkeys.

Phyllis Phipps, Levis' wife, wants to get rid of the bull before he gets old enough to be really dangerous. Her own uncle, a herdsman from whom she learned her love of farm animals, spent two years in the hospital after a run-in with a bull.

But these days a dairy

farmer doesn't really need bulls on the premises to rate the Progressive Breeders Award. By working closely with Delaware extension dairy specialist George Haenlein, the veterinary researchers at the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center, the Dairy Herd Improvement Association supervisors and their personal veterinarian, the Phipps are able to make use of the most sophisticated record keeping and breeding techniques.

The Phipps keep type records on their animals in addition to the more commonly used milk production records. Not coincidentally, their cows are often blue ribbon winners and top sellers at the Delaware State Fair and Annual Holstein Sale at Harrington.

But it's a cow named Heli that really demonstrates the reason the Phipps won the Progressive Breeders Award. Because they thought the animal was too good to turn over to the impersonal care of a hired hand, they took her into their own basement when she was born and raised her with tender loving care.

Now Heli is something of a family pet, but she's also much more. She has been classified 86 (out of a perfect 100, which is very good). She has about a 4.3 percent test, and for the third year in a row, she has averaged more than 1000 pounds of milk fat per year. In the past year, she produced 28,565 pounds of milk—more than any other cow they've ever had.

Right now Heli is pregnant, artificially inseminated by the top bull in the country by way of the



Phyllis and Levis Phipps pose with Heli, the Holstein who played a major role in their receiving the Progressive Breeder Award.

U.S. Mail. And she's not only carrying a calf herself; another one of her embryos has been transplanted into the uterus of another less valuable cow.

Artificial insemination makes it possible for a proven bull to sire many more than his normally expected 150 or so calves, anywhere in the world. Likewise, hormone injections, ova collection and embryo transplants make it possible for a good cow like Heli to have more than her normally expected number of calves.

With the use of these breeding techniques in combination, a good dairy herd can soon become an excellent one. The Phipps' herd is a prime example.

Despite such success, the outside world is closing in on Centerdel Farm. It's starting to seem too hard to continue as the only dairy farmers in Chateau Country.

While the Phipps children are spending afternoons and weekends feeding cows and weaning calves for their 4-H projects, their schoolmates are taking extended vacations in

Hawaii and the South of France. These other children can't understand why the Phipps kids have to work so hard without even getting paid for it.

So Levis, Phyllis and the children are planning a move. They're looking for a more congenial place to farm with room for expansion and neighbors who share their lifestyle—neighbors whose children understand the need for all members of a family to pull together for a common goal. They'll have to sell part of the ancestral land to do it,

but they'll keep some of it in the family.

Grandmother Phipps plans to stay on at the old place. It's hard to turn one's back on such a long-standing family tradition.

Levis and Phyllis will take the herd with them, though, and they'll bring along their love of animals; the acceptance of hard work; their good business sense; and their willingness to take calculated risks with the latest scientific techniques that earned them the Progressive Breeders Award.



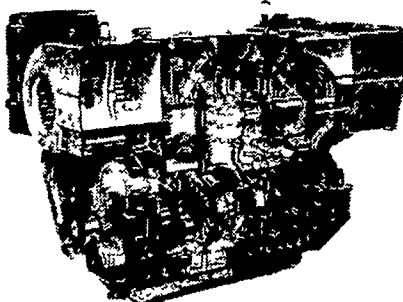
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