

Hog breeder

especially during cold weather.

Like many progressive hog producers, Parlett vaccinates for FGE, or Transmittable Gastroenteritis, a debilitating type of scours that can wipe out tiny baby pigs in epidemic proportions.

In the Midwest, they tell stories of FGE literally

traveling' down the road from one farm to another, he worries. An immunity can eventually be built up against the disease, if you can nurse them through it.

But winter, with the accompanying scours problems, is not the only weather-induced concern of hogmen. Extreme heat and humidity are equally worrisome, with heat stress

on sows the biggest summer problem.

To avoid added stress on the hogs over the hottest period, Parlett breeds most of the sows to farrow from December to early June. He also tries to schedule a few weeks between the heaviest time of deliveries when the farrowing house can be emptied, totally cleaned and disinfected as another vital part of disease prevention management.

Most of the hog rations are grown on the farm's 200 acres, cropped mainly in corn, with some barley, hay and double-cropped soybeans. Protein concentrate, are the only purchased feed components, with a 16 percent feed maintained for the fattening hogs and sow rations balanced at 14 to 15 percent. Conversion rate, on average, is a gain of one pound per each 2.7 pounds of feed.

Through Parlett's attendance at the various shows and sales, Melody has become a capable midwife, often taking turns with Jim overseeing deliveries in the farrowing house.

Of course they generally wait until the middle of the night to farrow," she admits. Attending the births includes dipping umbilical cords, making sure the newborns can nurse, and sometimes nipping teeth within the first few hours. At three days, the piglets get further attention with a series of shots and ear notchings for identification. An average seven to eight pigs are raised from each litter.

Along with the hogs, the Parletts keep about 30 steers on feed. There's even a brand new baby Holstein calf in the barn, a Christmas gift to Gus, who Melody says just wanted something he could bottle feed.

Branching out into yet another livestock venture, the Parletts recently acquired a small flock of Shropshire ewes and two

rams, and four crossed black sheep. While the sheep business isn't likely to replace purebred pigs at I'win-Maples, Parletts noted with interest a recent sale where a prize Suffolk ram reportedly sold for \$100,000.

And no story on the Parletts would be complete without at least a note in passing about the family's pet turkey. Donated originally to the farm's livestock retinue by a friend, the lone big white turkey has become something of a personality," and it's unlikely he'll ever show up on the dinner table. In fact, visitors are more apt to find the friendly gobbler roosting atop their car or truck.

With their eleven head of hogs on exhibit at the Farm Show, this week promises to be another typically busy one for these southern York County pork breeders. It's farm families, like Jim, Melody and Gus Parlett, that makes the Farm Show continue to be a top drawing card in Pennsylvania agriculture.



Jim Parlett's farm office is filled with trophies and show memorabilia from his Chester White

show winnings.

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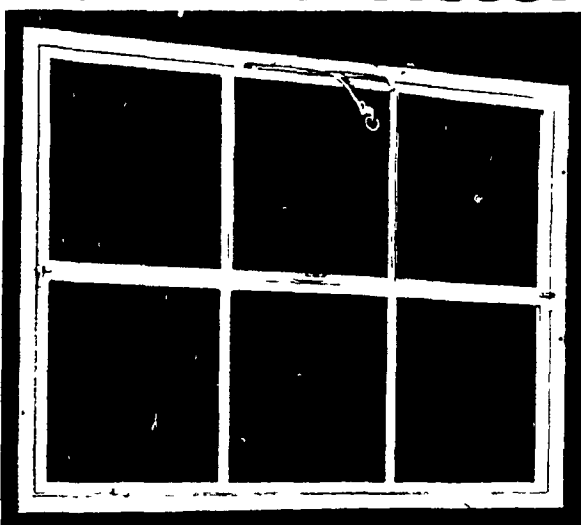
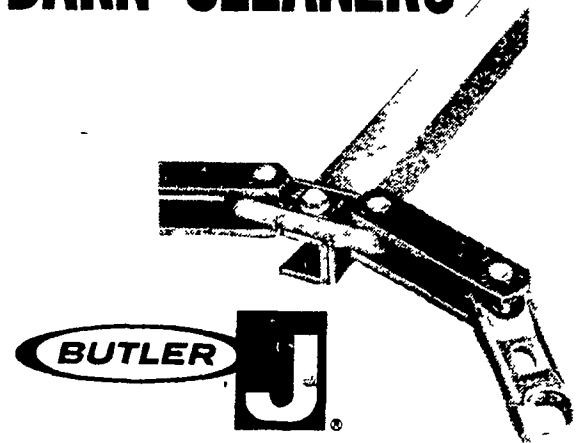
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