

Golden Guernseys mark golden anniversary

BY DEBBIE KOONTZ

LANCASTER — The Golden Guernseys truly are golden this year as the Pennsylvania Guernsey Breeders' Association celebrates its fiftieth year of promoting and producing milk.

On March 20 and 21 the Association will be holding their fiftieth anniversary meeting at the Brunswick Motor Inn in Lancaster.

But what led to this celebration is a history full of ups and downs according to Ginger Secrist Myers, past secretary to current business manager, Lee Yost.

The Association was founded in the midst of the depression - 1931, when Emil Oleson of Wisconsin became first field representative. This made the Pennsylvania Association the second association ever to have started in the United States. It was located in the Harrisburg-Camp Hill area until 1978 when it moved to Lancaster off Route 30 east.

"The Association was started during this time because there was a demand for prime stock and quality milk," Myers explained. "It may seem odd but the government and the people began to recognize a need for quality products at the time of the depression."

The drive to solicit pledges to assure enough money for a working organization which took place in 1930, resulted in a total subscription in the underwriting fund of \$11,450. By 1935 when R.C. Wiggins of Butler became business manager, 25 percent of the money called in to support the fund was returned to the subscribers. The rest of the money was all paid back within ten years of the founding date. It was also in the '30's that the "Golden Guernsey" seal and promotion began.

William Juzi was employed as business manager in 1939 after Wiggins died. In a recent letter to the Golden Guernsey News (the Association's newsletter), Juzi writes, "We built up to 115 dealers of Golden Guernsey and were selling 52,000,000 quarts of Golden Guernsey milk in Pennsylvania, and led all the other territories in sales for years. We were an importing state of Guernseys for many years. We got cattle from all the surrounding states, even as far as Kansas and Georgia, to be sold in Lancaster."

The second decade of the Association was a time for growth in cow numbers and members. Milk sales showed a sizeable increase yearly and were promoted in national magazines such as *Ladie's Home Journal* and broadcasts throughout the country.

In 1941 the Pennsylvania Junior Guernsey Breeder's Association was established. It has grown to be the largest Guernsey youth organization in the country.

In 1947 membership of the

Association totaled 1007 members, making it the largest state breed association regardless of breed anywhere in the United States. Sales were 22.1 million quarts.

Also in 1947, the Guernsey sales pavilion in Lancaster County was constructed. Since then have come many changes according to Myers, including a paved driveway, a washroom for cattle and a cement floor.

"The barn is sort of a landmark around here," says Ruth Ann Benedict, current secretary to Lee Yost. "It was a very substantial investment for the Association."

During the fifties, the Pennsylvania Guernsey set a world champion Guernsey record. Haddon's M. Ida, owned by Robert E. Grace and Robert Y. Moffat of Dalton, produced 28,787 pounds of milk with 1235 pounds of fat.

The sixties will long be remembered as a bad time for the Guernseys. According to Myers the membership dropped at a steady rate until the '70's.

"But that's no blame on the cow, of course," she explained. "The '60's was the time of the great cholesterol scare, but we as an association didn't take it seriously. Therefore we dropped behind in the changes and the campaigning other associations for other breeds did. Now we're trying to catch up. Our Guernsey milk is quality, good rich milk but consumers are sold products on the cholesterol idea as well as on the taste and nutrients it contains."

In 1967 the sales pavilion held its 20th anniversary sale. According to the Guernsey newsletter, during those first 20 years the Association had 407 Guernsey sales in the pavilion, selling 22,250 head for a total of \$6,375,945.

In the seventies the Association changed its location to Lancaster and changed faces in the business office. William Juzi and John Blyholder retired and Lee Yost became business manager.

From 1979 to 1980 the membership increased 22 percent. Says Myers, "We are moving on our way up again. We fell short due to milk pricing which is by quantity. We haven't kept up with that but we have in the sense that our components are higher. By this I mean solids, not fats and we're not just counting butter. We have a long way to go yet, but we must get going or we must get out."

Today the Association has a membership of nearly 350 with 12 directors in designated areas. Joseph Fava of Scenery Hill now serves as president.

"Not enough Guernsey milkers are Association members," Myers smiles. "We'd like to see the membership increase greatly this year."

The Guernsey Breeder's Association currently has ten distributors carrying four different trademarks.



The Lancaster Guernsey sales pavilion has become a landmark in this county. It was constructed in 1947 and today is the site for

special events and shows besides being used to sell Guernseys.

"To carry a "Golden Guernsey" seal, 37 percent or more butterfat is required. A percent of 32 is Guernsey Royal, the largest seller for a single dairy. Most of our dairies' largest seller is Golden Guernsey milk, however," Myers explained.

But despite the brief decrease in membership during the 60's, Pennsylvania has sold and registered more Guernseys than any other state except Wisconsin. These two states are the only ones still with Association offices today.

And Wisconsin's office is in the director's home," Myers explained proudly. "We're the only state with its own designated office."

Other points to be made in favor of Pennsylvania's Association are:

- The National Guernsey Queen resides in Lancaster County. She is Millie Linde of Oxford, crowned queen at the American Guernsey Cattle Club meeting in Rochester, MN in 1980.

- Jeff Harding of Brookville has been named National Outstanding Guernsey Youth.

- Rodney Stuff of Mercersburg is nationally recognized as the Young Farmer for the Pennsylvania Field Area.

- Pennsylvania ties with California for the number of Gold Star Breeder awards by the national office.

- In October of 1980, the sales pavilion saw the highest average Guernsey sale (monetarily) in the country. The average was \$3,039 per head. This sale marked the 55th Renewal of the Guernsey Sale. Consignments were catalogued from 10 states and buyers were from 8 states and Canada.

In conjunction with the anniversary celebration in March will be the 21st Blue Halter Calf Sale. Members are asked to pre-register for the annual meeting and join in the sale.



Lee Yost is the business manager for the Pennsylvania Guernsey Breeders' Association. He works fulltime from his office above the Dairy Queen.



Ginger Myers (right) and Ruth Ann Benedict work with Yost in promoting and organizing the Association. Ruth Ann took over Ginger's job who is back now temporarily for the anniversary.

Berks Guernsey breeders hold meeting

BY LAUREL SCHAEFFER

Staff Correspondent

BERNVILLE — Pa Guernsey breeders from Berks and surrounding counties met last Saturday for their annual banquet and organizational meeting at the Grange Hall. Following a luncheon prepared by the Grangers, the dairymen held an election of officers and directors and heard from Pennsylvania Guernsey Field Representative Ruth Ann Benedict.

Benedict reported on the Guernsey sale held in January. She noted that even though there were only 25 head sold at the sale the organization was very pleased with the results. All animals sold were registered except for two, and the average price per animal was \$1,346.

Benedict urged the dairymen to attend the association's 50th anniversary meeting and briefly described the events planned.

Scheduled for the two-day event at the Brunswick Motor Inn, Lancaster, March 20-21 are a business meeting, awards banquet, MAGS meeting, sale luncheon, and three Guernsey sales.

The field representative explained that due to the large number of animals consigned a third sale was added. The Third Blue Halter Calf Sale will begin at 12:30 p.m. March 21. Youths will receive a 10 percent discount on animals they purchase. This sale will be immediately followed by the 50th Anniversary Sale.

The sales will be conducted at the Pa Guernsey Sales Pavilion. Presently there are 110 animals consigned.

Also addressing the dairymen

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Participating in the annual Berks Guernsey breeders meeting were, from the left, Robert Smith, Anville, Millie Linde, Lancaster,

queen, and Ruth Ann Benedict, field representative for the Pa. Guernsey Breeders Association.