

Daubert's Wind Mill Farm tops in Brown Swiss

BY SHEILA MILLER

PINE GROVE - William R. Daubert, a dairy farmer from R2 Pine Grove, Schuylkill County, has come a long way from a farm boy who at age 13 was still milking his parents' solitary grade milk cow to the dairyman with the top Brown Swiss herd in the entire state.

Of course, Daubert doesn't claim to be the sole catalyst for his 85 milking herd's successful record of 15,341M, 3.9%, 605f. He gives a lot of credit to his sons and wife Rhoda (Spangler) who put in long hours getting the dairy operation where it is today.

Daubert, who was born and raised on the same 98 acre farm where his operation is run now, recalled how he and his folks started up in the dairying business in 1950 with five Brown Swiss cows. Then, when he and Rhoda were married in 1953, they bought sixteen Brown Swiss cows from his parents.

Over the years, Daubert and his family have built the top Brown Swiss herd in the state, through the use of superior A I sires and strict culling.

Helping out on the farm are four sons. From oldest to youngest, Dean, 24, is a recent dairy science graduate of Virginia Polytechnical Institute, married with a 2-year-old son, Dennis, 23, Schuylkill County's DHIA president, married two weeks ago; Ronald, 21, works part-time on the farm; and Allen, 14, a student at Pine Grove Area School.

What has paved the way for Daubert's road to success? According to Daubert, genetic improvement of his herd over the years is one of the important factors.

We breed 95 percent of our cows and heifers artificially," he said, "using the top ten sires available. And, 75 percent of our cows are home bred - we keep all our heifers and raise out about six of our better bull calves."

One of the Wind Mill Farm's bulls, Marty L Toro, is on lease to NOVA.

Another factor in the top Brown Swiss herd's success story is the feeding program.

"We feed a hotter ration than most farmers who don't believe in pushing their cows," commented Dean. "We don't feel pushing shortens up the productive life of a cow — the good ones will last until they're 10 or 12 years old even if they're pushed as young cows."

As evidence that feeding a hotter ration works, Dean pointed out, four of their 2-year-olds milked over 20,000 pounds last year. And 20 cows in the herd had records over the 20,000 pound mark.

"Four of our cows tested over 1000 pounds fat," he added. "Two

of the four were 2-year-olds. These were our first young cows to make that kind of mark since the farm's been in business."

The complete ration fed to the Daubert cows is a home-mix consisting of 15 pounds of alfalfa haylage, 10 pounds of shelled corn, 35 pounds of corn silage, 30 pounds of wet brewer's grains, plus 7 pounds of soybean meal, minerals, and sodium bicarbonate free choice.

The milking string, which Daubert pointed out has not been split into two groups yet, is fed as a group in the freestall barn, built in 1974. When the cows come into the stanchion barn for milking, they're fed free choice alfalfa, and additional grain is given to the high producers.

The original bank barn at Wind Mill Farm was outfitted with its first stainless steel pipeline last July. Prior to its installation all the milking was done with bucket milkers and a dumping station.

"It was a lot of milk to handle," chuckled Daubert, "but then we knew we had the right weights."

Another milestone for the Daubert operation came with the erection of their first upright silo for haylage in 1974.

"We doubled our herd size that year," Daubert recalled. The boys kept asking 'Why sell the corn and turn around and pay more for ready-made feed' — if you're going to grow the grain, you should feed it, too."

As a result, a second silo was put up in 1978 to store the farm's high moisture corn. And, just last summer, a third silo went up to hold the corn silage.

"Until last year, we used to put all our corn silage in a trench," explained Dean. "But we have dogs running around, and they'd punch holes in the cover as they'd race across it. Then we'd get spoilage."

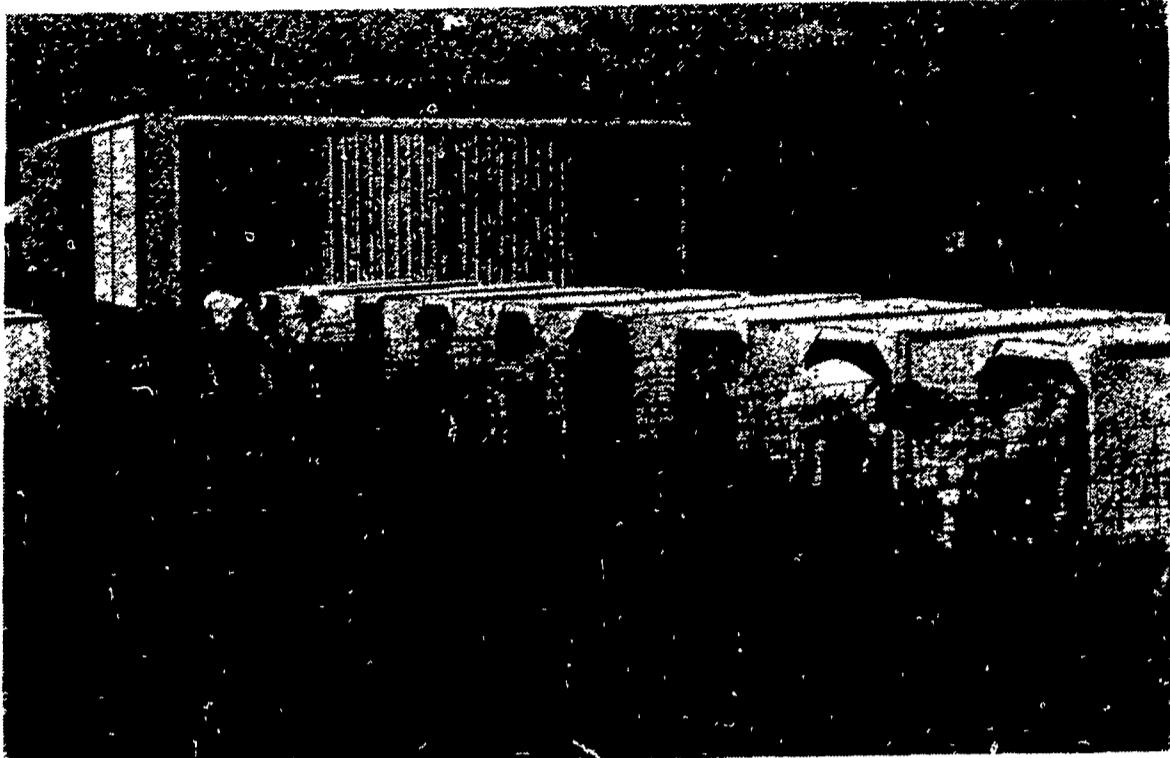
"When you have 20 tons of silage spoil out of the 50 tons you put in the trench, that's just too much waste," remarked Daubert.

The Dauberts are firm believers in the benefits of calf hutches, too. Since they began raising their calves outside a little over two years ago, Daubert claims he's cut the mortality rate of calves by 80 percent.

"The hutches definitely helped," he said. "We used to keep the calves in a concrete stable until we had so much trouble with scours our vet told us to make the switch to hutches immediately. Now the calves are out as soon as they're dry."

"We try not to let the calves nurse their dams — it makes training them to nipple buckets much easier."

The Dauberts start their calves



William and Rhoda look over their new crop of calves. Daubert says he feels making the change to raising his Brown Swiss babies in

calf hutches has made a difference, cutting the mortality rate by 80 percent.



Posing with their high-producing Brown Swiss cow in the state, Wind Mill Joann, are William and Rhoda Daubert, R2 Pine Grove left, and oldest son Dean. Classified VG 86,

Joann's record as a six-year-old earned her top billing on the state's DHR listing. She is the dam of the top 2-year-old in the nation for fat production.



Wind Mill Joan T has attained national recognition in the Brown Swiss breed for her 2-year-old production record. She was the class leader in the 305 day fat honor roll, and was featured on the cover of the December, 1980 Brown Swiss Bulletin. Joan T is classified VG 89.

on whole milk for a week, and then feed them milk replacer. Daubert explained any 'bad' milk is fed to the calves — it's never thrown out.

Once the heifers are a year old, they are turned out on pasture and fed as much hay and grain as they'll eat. The heifers are bred to calve at 24 months or less, with 25 percent being bred artificially.

"There's a great market for Brown Swiss, especially in the past five years," observed Daubert. "We could have sold 50 head in the past year, but we just didn't have that many to sell."

The colored breed's popularity, said Dean, stems from their docility, high milk production coupled with high protein and butterfat content.

Next week, the Dauberts are consigning a 3-year-old, Wind Mill Del Muff, to a sale in Ohio. Although not their top cow, Muff's record has put her on the honor roll — 365d 1-11 19,306m 3.5+ 671f. They also consign at the Pa State Sale and the Maryland Calf Sale.

With a track record like the one established over the years by Wind Mill Farm, it's easy to see why collegiate dairy judging teams from Penn State, Delaware Valley College, and VPI stop over for a practice run on their way to Eastern States competition in the fall.

The farm has the high producing Brown Swiss cow in the state for 1980, Wind Mill Elegant Roz, classified VG 85, with a 2-year-old record: 305d, 18,930m 4.7% 898f.



Ranking second in the national fat production record is Wind Mill Elegant Roz, classified VG 85, with a 2-year-old record: 305d, 18,930m 4.7% 898f.

Joan T. sired by Marty L Toro. She was the national class leader as a senior 2-year-old for her 305 day fat record. She produced 21,412 pounds milk and 903 pounds fat, a 4.2 percent test. Her 359 day record boasted 24,148 pounds milk and 1040 fat.

Making Wind Mill Farm the first Brown Swiss breeder to have both the first and second placings for fat production nationwide was the record turned in by another senior

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Maggie Muff