

## Goat farmers realize 'possible dream'

BY DONNA TOMMELLEO  
MANHEIM — This is the room that Jake built.

This is the milk that paid for the room that Jake built.

These are the goats that gave the milk that paid for the room that Jake built.

The variation of that children's nursery rhyme originated about 20 years ago when Jacob and Jane Fisher, owners of Windy Hill Goat Dairy, began saving for their dream room.

Walking into the modest-sized Manheim home, one would never expect to be surrounded by the inherent spaciousness of the room, totally built and furnished with proceeds from goat milk sales.

A cathedral ceiling settles high above the living space and stretches across a loft that contains an antique bedroom suit. Residents of the loft, several antique baby dolls rest in their timeworn cribs, a part of Jane's childhood memorabilia.

Although many different types of lamps adorn the main room, a large five-framed picture window provides a flood of natural light that sparkles against the grain of the tall stone fireplace.

For 20 years Jane envisioned the room exactly as it is today. And while she dreamed, she worked hard.

Even today while husband Jake

works in a nearby stone quarry, Jane still gathers her milking herd of 40 does and twice daily milks each one by hand. In this day and age where everything is either mechanized or computerized, the Fishers are pleased with the old tried and true method.

"Until you know how to use milking machines you can ruin a lot of goats," Jane emphasizes.

To describe the friendly couple as goat fanciers, would certainly be an understatement. Devout enthusiasts would be a better choice. In a separate room in the house, aptly named the "Goat Room," rows of glass encased bookshelves are literally loaded with goat figurines from as far away as Budapest, Hungary. Goat statues of cast-iron, porcelain, wood and even corn husks are just a few of the items in the Fishers' vast collection.

Jake, vice president of Dutch Country Goat Club, has amassed several children's books that includes tales of Three Billy Goats Gruff and Billy Whiskers as well as lesser-known goat stories that have delighted children world wide.

Through their love of goats, the Fishers' collections extend beyond the tangible. They store memories of children's visits and speak of them with pleasant recollection.



The idea for the Fishers' spacious living room which they now enjoy was conceived about 20 years ago.

Jane fondly remembers a visit from a class that included a young blind boy who later sent the Fishers a goat drawn in braille.

"That will always mean a lot to me," she says.

Jake grins as he recalls a thank-you note from a lad pleased with his trip to the goat "hatchery."

In fact, the Fisher "hatchery" houses about 100 goats of all ages. The couple originally started milking goats about 26 years ago for milk for themselves and their three children.

Jake recalls the strange looks they received after telling people they had 30 kids.

"We'd have to say we have three children and 30 kids," he chuckles.

Eventually, they expanded their herd and now operate a customer-owned container service at the farm as well as market through Pure Goat Products in Boyertown, Berks County.

The couple worked and saved throughout the years but most importantly they believed. They believed in their product — goat milk — and continually speak of it with much enthusiasm.

"It's amazing what goat milk can do," says Jake, although he admits he's disappointed in the lack of research on the subject.

Jane recounts more than one occasion when she sold milk to families with small children that

tended to fuss and cry during the night, much to the confusion of attending pediatricians. She recalls how the goat milk quieted the infants, resulting in one silent baby, one new believer in goat milk and one step closer to their dream.

There may be thousands of rooms in this nation similar to the Fishers'. In fact, there even may be several in Lancaster County with higher ceilings, richer, deeper wood and other charming features.

But the beauty of Jacob and Jane's room does not lie in the furnishings or the design but rather in the belief and love of their work responsible for making dreams come true.



Jake Fisher (right) displays one of the many hundreds of goat figurines that he and wife Jane (left) have collected over the years.



Twice daily the Fishers' 40 milking does are milked by hand and produce almost 500 quarts a week.

## Lamb, wool marketing to highlight fall conference

UNIVERSITY PARK — How well sheep producers master efficient production techniques and market their lamb and wool will be the key to profitability, according to Clair Engle, Penn State Extension animal scientist and co-chairman of the upcoming Lamb and Wool Marketing Conference to be held November 22-24, 1981 at the Sheraton Penn State Inn in State College.

Sponsored by the American Sheep Producers Council and the Eastern Seaboard Producers Council in cooperation with Penn State's College of Agriculture, this conference is a first for the eastern U.S. where interested sheep producers, allied industry groups, land-grant universities and State Departments of Agriculture from twelve states have joined to present topics on how to better merchandise both lamb and wool.

The conference will open with a wool processor from Burlington Industries discussing factors that determines wool value. The pros and cons of marketing wool through cooperatives, pools or direct sales will complete the first evenings program.

A major portion of the conference will focus on lamb marketing. A brief overview will be presented on the regional lamb production levels, merchandising systems and the present status of lamb imports.

Industry representatives of leading packing companies such as Stan Gustas, Wilson and Company will speak on trends in lamb fabrication. O.C. Cook, marketing manager of Kroger Corporation, will discuss some innovative

methods for merchandising lamb at the retail level.

Like most all livestock production, the sheep producer has not always realized a fair return in the market place. How to improve this situation will be shared by demonstrating some of the more successful electronic marketing programs being producer organized and implemented by

some mid-western states and Virginia.

For more information and to enroll for this conference, all requests contact: The Pennsylvania State University, Short Course Office, 306 Agricultural Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802, 814/865-8301.

## U. of Del. to hold Ag Progress Day

NEWARK, Del. - Find out what's going on at the University of Delaware Experimental Farm in Newark at Ag Progress Day, Wednesday, August 5, 1981. From 4 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Agricultural Hall will be open to all, farmers and nonfarmers, for tours, exhibits, and a barbeque dinner.

Find out how the computer is being used in modern farm management. Learn how to rear giant silkworm moths, and see how the old-fashioned rain barrel is making a comeback. Get a close-up look at live termites and carpenter ants so you'll know how to recognize them later.

Both farmers and nonfarmers will have the opportunity to tour the Experimental Farm, which features a solar collector, cattle, sheep, hogs, broilers, and various crops. Intensive plot tours are designed for the farmers' needs, and general tours are meant to provide an overview for curious nonfarmers.

The University's turf plots will be on view for those who wish to learn more about lawn care, while those with gardening questions and problem plants can bring them along to the plant clinic.

High school students and their parents can obtain information about the College of Agricultural Sciences and agricultural careers. There will also be guided tours of the laboratories in the College of Agricultural Science's new Worrlow Hall.

At 6 p.m. there will be a demonstration of the pork carcass and its cuts, and tips on how to cook pork on the backyard grill. This will be followed at 7 p.m. with a pork barbeque dinner. For ticket information call the Delaware Cooperative Extension Service at 302/738-8965.

The gardens and other exhibits of interest to farmers and consumers will be open for visits until dark.