

Hard-working Hostetters reap rewards with top herd

BY DONNA TOMMELLEO

PARKESBURG — When Donald Hostetter and Dorcas Smoker married 22 years ago and started with just \$200 between them, they decided two of their most important goals were to raise a family and breed a top herd of registered Holsteins.

The Chester County couple started from scratch in all respects and today their Maplebound Holsteins are some of the finest animals in the state. This year alone the Hostetters were named Premier Breeder and Exhibitor at the Eastern Championship Show in Kutztown and showed the Grand Champion female. They later doubled their banner count at the State Championship Show in Bloomsburg with Premier Breeder and Exhibitor awards.

They've got five children, ranging in age from 20 to 8, and one can't help but see and feel the pride and respect they have for Jay, Bev, Sue, Kim and Missy.

Obtaining their goals didn't come easy for Don and Dorcas. Like most worthwhile quests there have been a lot of hardships and trials.

During the first year they farmed as man and wife, Dorcas broke her leg after being kicked by a cow. That same year, one of the driest of their career, Don injured

his eye in a softball accident and later sustained a back injury. Meanwhile, they had to care for two small children.

At that time, while many universities and colleges turned out several dairy production graduates armed with the latest trends and research in the field, Don also furthered his education — at home.

Due to the death of his mother, Don, 15 and then the oldest of 9 children, quit school. But with the help of his father Jay, he continued to learn about dairying.

"I have to give my dad alot of credit," he says with a son's love. "He was a good manager."

Don read and studied from many agricultural magazines and publications and admits the education process is on-going.

"If you quit trying to learn, you'll fail," he affirms.

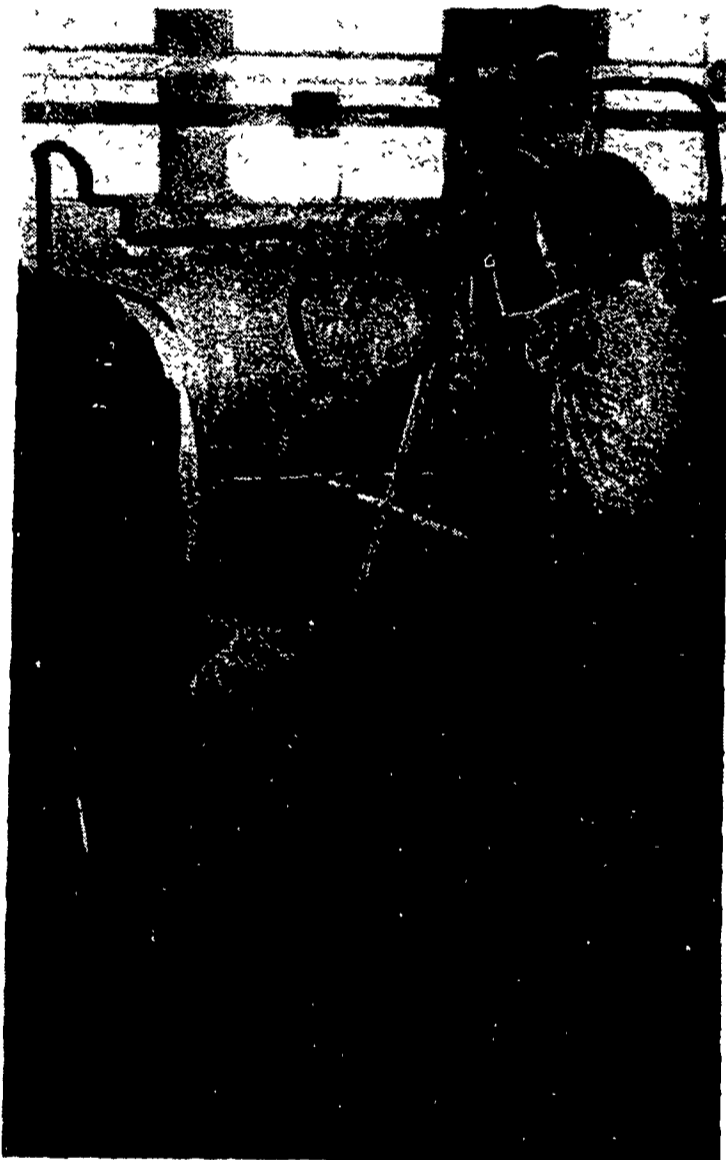
Slowly but surely the herd grew from all grades to a total registered herd. As the herd grew so did their reputation. Today, Maplebound Holsteins are marketed around the country as well as in several nations. Herd average is steady around 19,000 and every year the Hostetters lose a little more wall space to banners, plaques and ribbons.

And the family works hard to stay on top. Don describes his family's teamwork as pieces of a



The entire Hostetter family, complete with pets, stop long enough from their busy schedule for a family photo. The group includes, kneeling, Kim, 12, flanked by Prince

and Pixie and Missy, 8, with kitten. Standing from left to right is Jay, 20, Bev, 19, Donald, Sue, 15, and Dorcas.



After a long school day, Sue, who also feeds the calves, finds time to adjust a milker.



The youngest Hostetter, Missy, adds her piece to the puzzle by gathering the

Maplebound Holsteins for evening milking.

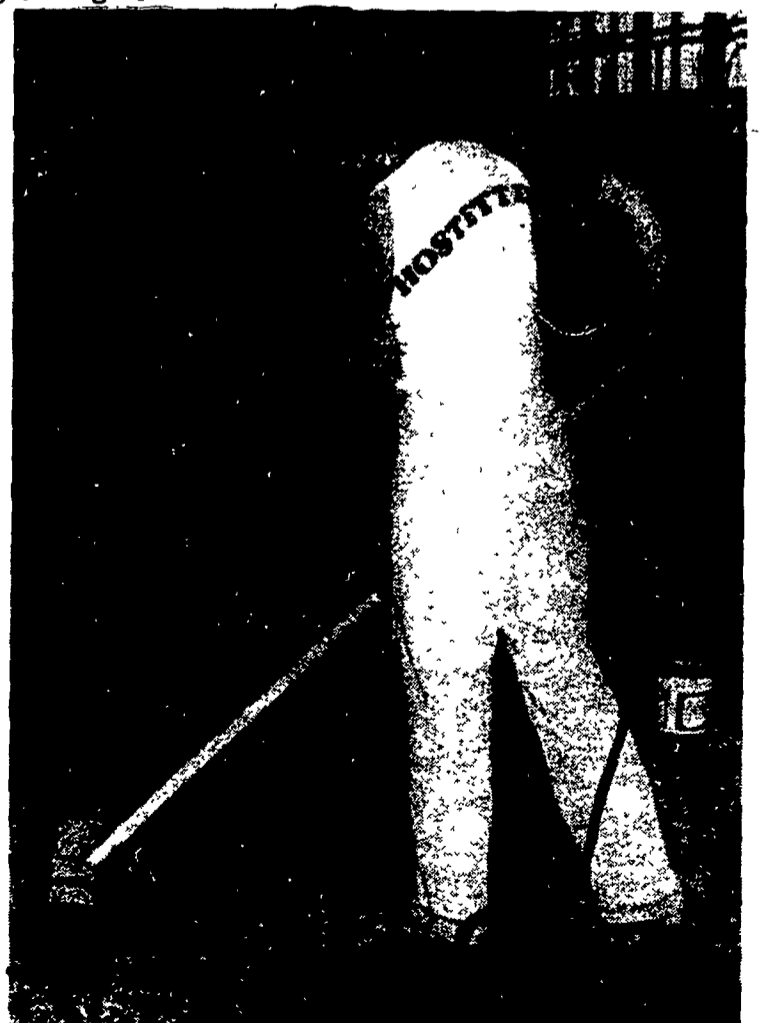
puzzle that come together when there's work to be done. And like a well-oiled machine the Hostetter brood gets the job done.

Jay, 20, is a full-time employee and does all the breeding and milking. Bev, 19, for the most part is full-time but does have a part-time job off the farm. Sue, 15, is in charge of raising calves and her proud parents add that the calf mortality on the farm is quite low. Like the rest of her sisters, Kim, 12, helps out by keeping the lawn, flowers and shrubbery meticulously manicured as well as being in charge of washing udders before milking. And last but by no

(Turn to Page D9)



Some of the most worn pieces of equipment aren't found in the machine shed. This weary-looking platoon of Hostetter shoes lies idle before chores.



While waiting to remove milkers, Bev passes time by keeping a clean alley.