

Wollaston continues 100-year family tradition of Jerseys

By M. Joan McIntire
TOUGHKENAMON — Charlie Wollaston is a dairy farmer who operates a 70-acre farm in southern Chester County. Maple Lawn Dairy Farm has been in the Wollaston family for 81 years. Recently, this veteran dairy farmer was honored by the Unionville Community Fair directors for his voluntary efforts

in coordinating both the Open and Youth Dairy competition. "Because he has given unselfishly of his time to our fair, has motivated our youth's interest in dairy farming and has served his school and community generously, we dedicate the 1981 Unionville Community Fair to Charles Thomas Wollaston," the directors proclaimed. "Thank you,

Charlie."
Back home on the farm, Wollaston spends his time building a herd of Jersey cattle. Presently he has 100 head with 60 cows on the milk string that have a rolling herd average of 8,500 pounds milk and 450 pounds fat.

Raising Jerseys has been a family tradition. Wollaston recalls his grandfather bought his first Jersey in 1876.

"I think more people would raise Jerseys if they analysed all the facts. They are putting a lot more feed into other breeds and taking out more manure than with Jerseys.

"It is similar to a compact car. The Jersey's milk is richer, it will make more cheese per gallon than lower protein milk. We now get 16 cents more a point for milk over 3.5 percent butterfat. Jersey produce smaller quantities of milk, but net more per hundredweight. It's better quality milk."

Wollaston explains he invests less in feed because of the Jersey's smaller size. A 900-pound animal produces about 9,000 pounds of milk a year, he says.

Daily, from the middle of May until November, Wollaston feeds the herd greenshop, a grass-clover mixture fed on wagons, which he raises on the home farm or on neighboring land. He raises corn and barley for feed, also. And, from November until May, he feeds corn silage and haylage from a concrete-bottom, plastic-covered trench. The cattle also receive a protein supplement throughout the year.

"I love farmland, and I couldn't stand it when the land next to me had the topsoil taken off to be sold to mushroom producers. Later spent manure was put back on the land. Now, I grow barley there for feed and straw."

Wollaston has some help keeping his dairy operation prospering: His sister and brother-in-law who live on the farm help with the milking and feeding, along with two of his daughters, Cathy and Betsy.

The cows are milked and fed in the barn equipped with both stanchions and comfort stalls. About 40 years ago, a Penn State Extension agent designed the comfort stalls so that the cows' heads were not held between the bars of the stanchions.

"He (the agent) loved cows so much, he couldn't stand to see that," Wollaston recalls. "In 1950, the Gertun Company manufactured them. They are designed so that you can put hay in the racks above and grain in the bins below. They are adjustable and wider than stanchions."

Wollaston also uses wooden calf hutches designed by the same man. They are designed to keep the calf up off the floor, and have a unique feeding box which is easily removed for cleaning or filling but cannot be knocked off by the calf.

In his breeding program, Wollaston makes use of top studs through artificial insemination. When an animal is pregnancy checked and determined safe in calf, Wollaston gives her a special look. He uses a large red wax livestock crayon to mark pregnant cows with a highly visible 'D', for dry. This signals the milking hands that these cows should not be hooked up by mistake.

One of Wollaston's top cows, Top Cat Maple Lawn Nellie, consistently milks 9,000-pound records. This 4-year-old daughter of Topcat captured senior and grand champion honors in the All-American Junior Dairy Show this past September in Harrisburg.

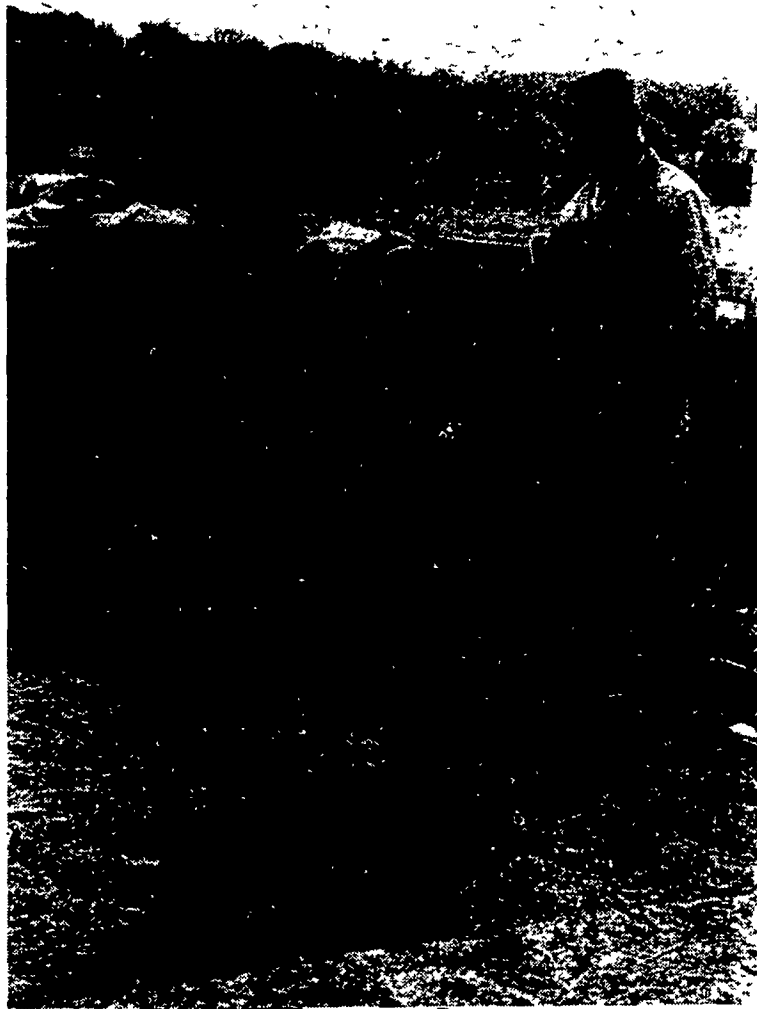
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Pouring the milk into dumping station, Wollaston proceeds with the twice-a-day ritual. Helping out with the workload on the Chester County farm are daughters Cathy and Elizabeth and Wollaston's sister and brother-in-law.



Wollaston compares his sixty cow milking string to a compact car. "The Jersey's milk is richer, it will make more cheese per gallon than lower protein milk."



Chester County dairyman Charlie Wollaston continues the 100-year family tradition of raising and milking Jerseys on his 70-acre farm near Toughkenamon. Wollaston's grandfather purchased the first Jersey cow back in 1876.



Maple Lawn's barn is equipped with both stanchions and comfort stalls. Wollaston explains these comfort stalls were designed by a Penn State engineer and feature an overhead hay rack and grain bins below.