

# Century Farm families mix history

## Progress is a way of life on 160-year-old Frey dairy farm

**BY DONNA TOMMELLEO**  
**CONESTOGA** — Jacob Frey acquired the 180-acre farm in 1820 but the family still has deeds that date back to William Penn's son Charles. Today, five generations later, the small general farm has expanded and expanded and expanded.

In fact, if Jacob Frey was still alive, he'd be hard pressed to recognize the old homestead, which is home for Turkey Hill dairy products, complete with processing plant.

Today the Frey Dairy Farm,

Inc. includes more than 950 acres. Eleven upright silos stand like sentinels to hail farm visitors. And where once a few cows and hogs were housed, the Frey Farm now maintains more than 600 head of milking Holstein and 500 head of young stock.

The original barn has long since departed and a second barn built in 1827 was recently torn down to make way for free stalls. The only structure Jacob Frey might recognize is the farmhouse, itself.

But even that's changed. The original log house sports a new

bricked front and a brand new location in 1970, aided by a bulldozer, a winch and dolly wheels, the Frey homestead was moved a few hundred yards to make way for more processing room for the milk plant.

"We even got some of the crooked floors straightened out," said Frey Dairy Farm president Jay Frey, Jacob Frey's great-grandson.

A second house, attached to the original farmhouse was also moved a short distance in 1883. However, this move occurred too

early to take advantage of modern technology and horses and logs were enlisted for the process.

And subsequent innovative changes have helped shape the present Frey Farm.

Up until the depression, the farm continued to be a non-specific operation. However, Jay Frey's father Armor bought five milk cows in 1931, loaded 40 quarts of

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This three-story house was attached to the original farmhouse but in 1883 it was hoisted from its foundation and moved several yards via logs and a team of horses.



Jay Frey, the fifth generation Frey on the Conestoga farm, escorts his mother Mary into the 160-year-old farm house. The brick front covers the original log structure but the wooden door has remained since the early 1800s.

## Hershey farm — a proud past steps into future

**BY DICK ANGLESTEIN**  
**MOUNT JOY** — Surrounded by history, the Century Farm of the John H. Hershey family is stepping into the future with the same pride and foresight that has marked its past.

Located along Airport Road, southwest of Mount Joy, the 77-acre farm is now in its fifth generation of Hershey operation with John and his wife, Mabel.

And already, a representative of the sixth generation, son Brent, 20, is becoming involved in the operation of the combined beef and poultry agricultural enterprise.

In the involvement of the sixth generation lies one of the positive steps toward the future of the farm that has been in the family since 1861.

"We're about to start grinding and mixing our own poultry feed," John Hershey explains.

"We grow quite a bit of corn and we'll buy the concentrates and a formulation service."

"This is the only way farming can go in the future to survive. Farmers must be able to directly control as many phases of their operation as they can, especially the costs."

John and his brother, Harry, are partners in a 110,000 layer operation. Brent and Harry's son will be handling the grinding and mixing of the feed in the facilities erected on John's farm.

But the on-farm grinding and mixing of the feed is only one example of how the Hershey family has looked to the future.

Back in 1968, John's late father, Harry, was concerned about saving the land for future generations long before farmland preservation became fashionable.

"The adjacent airport (the Marietta-Elizabethtown facility) needed some extra ground to

lengthen the runway in order to reopen," John explains.

"But my father had it written into the agreement of sale for two and one-half acres that if the land was ever used for anything but an airport, the owners of the farm had first chance to buy back the land."

This unique combination of an historic past moving into a modern future is most evident in the stately stone farmhouse, which dates to the 1700's. The interior is comfortably and tastefully refurbished, but the renovations have been done to retain as much as possible of the original authentic decor.

"We've kept such things as the ornate woodwork, deep windowsills, and corner cupboard intact," Mrs. Hershey said.

"Along with original fireplaces, we even still have two humble doorways."

Humble doorways are those original low passageways in which persons must stoop to walk through.

Other historical features include such things as a small window next to the door facing the barn. Supposedly, the window was designed small so that the owners originally could look out to watch the farm workers, but they couldn't look back in as easily.

The original sheepskin deed dated 1736 shows the land was parceled out of the grant to the Penn brothers. John's great, great grandfather, Isaac, acquired it in 1861 out of the Abram Engle tract.

And there are uniquely family traditions associated with the farmhouse. One of the upper rooms had been used by ancestors when children were born for their dedication to The Lord. Occasionally, the Hersheys get visits

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John and Mable Hershey stand in front of the family for 120 years. beautiful stone farmhouse which has been in



Panoramic view shows stately stone farmhouse, barn and beef feedlot area and poultry house on farm of John Hershey family, southwest of Mount Joy.