

Records keep Melwood cows at peak

By Joan McIntire
COCHRANVILLE — Chester County dairyman Melvin Stoltzfus was recently honored by his fellow dairy peers at the County's Dairy Herd Improvement Association banquet. Stoltzfus' herd of Holsteins turned in both the top milk and fat production records for the year, pumping out 21,527 pounds of milk with 840 pounds of fat.

According to Stoltzfus, one of his management tools that helps him to achieve this top production is a record-keeping system called a Cow Calculator. This chart helps him to keep individual information, on each of his 35 head of milk cows, available at a glance.

"The credit belongs to the breeders of the cows," explained Stoltzfus. "We've been privileged to work with good cows that were bred by a few people in whom I have faith as breeders. Also, the Lord blessed us with a good crop year."

One of the breeders Stoltzfus puts his trust in is his father Jacob Stoltzfus. Twelve of his present milking string were purchased from his father. These cattle are joined by six top milkers bred by Earl and Betty Weir. The Weirs sold Stoltzfus his 75-acre farm, called Melwood, along with the cattle five years ago. These 18 milkers make up Stoltzfus' 'first

string' — the highest producers in his herd.

Even the best bred cattle won't produce well if they're not fed correctly, points out Stoltzfus. Helping out in the nutrition department is a fellow Stoltzfus with the first name of Gideon — the feed consultant for Brown and Rea Feed Mill, Atglen.

"He takes these resources and gives me knowledge," remarks the dairyman.

Stoltzfus' feeding program incorporates baled hay, corn silage, ground corn and oats, and a top-dressing of vitamins and minerals. Much of the feed is homegrown, with alfalfa, corn and wheat being raised at Melwood Farm. Only in

poorer crop years has feed been purchased, noted Stoltzfus.

Backing up his 'first string', Stoltzfus has 50 head of replacement heifers waiting on the sidelines. Some of these potential milkers were homebred at Melwood. Stoltzfus explained that he strives for and achieves a 13-month calving interval with cows milking for 11 months and being dried off for 2 months. The Chester

dairyman milks twice a day in the barn which is outfitted with comfort stalls and a pipeline.

"My cows are at the peak of age now. They are in the prime of their life and are averaging about 76 pounds of milk a day with 3.7 percent test," stated Stoltzfus.

Sharing the dairying life with Stoltzfus are his wife, Mary Ellen, and children Merlin, 3, and Melanie, 1.



One of Melvin Stoltzfus' most valuable cows is Dunwood Golden Sunlight who represents six generations of Dunwood breeding. This 5-year-old EX cow lets down 100 pounds of milk

per day, something she's been doing since her lactation began on February 14. She is projected at 33,000 pounds milk with 1,200 pounds fat.

NFO convention begins Monday

CORNING, Iowa — Thousands of farmers, faced by their worst economic crisis since the 1930s, are flocking to Indianapolis, Ind., this weekend for the annual convention of the National Farmers Organization, scheduled for Nov. 30 through Dec. 3 at the Indianapolis Convention Center.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture John Block and a number of other public officials and national leaders will address the convention.

The NFO is the only major farm organization that does not have a product to sell. Its single aim is blocking farm products in significant volume and then bargaining for a price from buyers.

"Collective Bargaining — more than marketing" is the slogan of the 1981 convention. The announced goal of NFO is using Collective Bargaining to achieve the cost of production plus a reasonable profit.

This will be the first National Farmers Organization national convention to be held in Indianapolis, and if experience is any indication attendance will be swelled by NFO members living in Indiana and surrounding states.

The organization is nationwide in membership.

Attendance is expected to be particularly heavy on Dec. 2, when meetings will be held for various commodity groups such as dairy, grain, livestock and specialties.

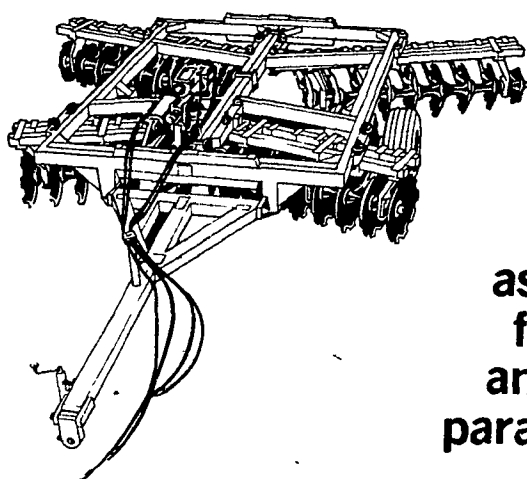
At these commodity meetings, bargaining programs of the past will be reviewed and plans made to deal with the coming year. Secretary Block will speak at the Wednesday night session.

National Farmers Organization President DeVon Woodland of Blackfoot, Idaho, will open the convention with a news conference at 2 p.m., Nov. 30 and will speak at a general session at 8 p.m., Dec. 1.

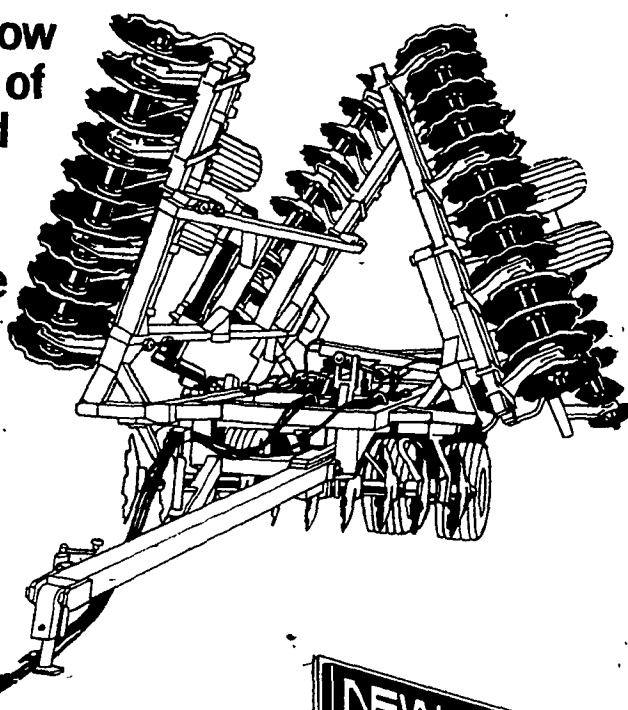
Plans also call for a news conference with Secretary Block and the time and place will be announced when his travel arrangements are completed.

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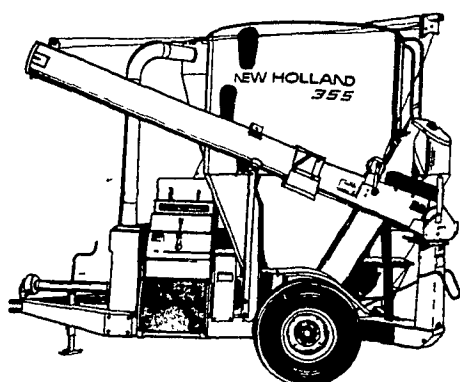


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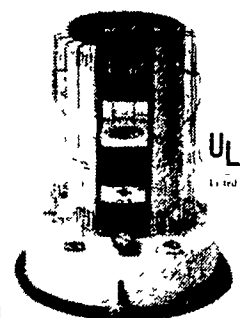
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