

# Lancaster Farming

VOL. 27 No. 25

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, April 17, 1982

\$7.50 per year

## Md. couple earns nat'l Farm Bureau award

BY SALLY BAIR  
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WALKERSVILLE, Md. — Gary and Cindy Grossnickle, Devilbiss Bridge Road, one of three outstanding Young Farmer and Rancher couples named by the American Farm Bureau Federation in their awards program, are the first Maryland couple to attain this honor. The Grossnickles traveled to San Diego, California in January to represent that state and participate with 35 other couples.

The award is sponsored by Allis-Chalmers which donates the use of a tractor for one year to each of the winning couples. The Grossnickles selected an 8039 model, ordered through the Vernon E. Stup dealership in Frederick. The tractor is equipped to their specifications, including 132 PTO hp, air conditioned and heated cab, luxury seating and 12-speed power shift transmission.

The tractor arrived at the Grossnickle farm earlier this month, and they have been enjoying its use in their dairy operation. After one year, they will have the option to purchase the tractor.

The Grossnickles both acknowledge that they were astonished, but pleased, to be named one of the three top couples in the country. The other two were from Colorado and Iowa.

Gary recalls, "We were the last couple announced - it was wonderful!"

Cindy adds, "We were excited and nervous - and had a lot of mixed emotions."

The Grossnickles farm 450 acres and own about 175 milk cows and 125 replacement heifers on their dairy operation in Frederick County, Maryland. Field crops

include 170 acres of corn, plus alfalfa, mixed hay and barley.

They have two full-time employees, and Gary's dad, from whom they rent the farm, helps out as needed. In addition to the home farm, they rent two additional farms and own 52 acres.

Part of the competition included how the operation has changed over the years and Grossnickle has had several changes in his thirteen years of farming. He began a fifty-fifty partnership with his father in 1969, with Gary owning 20 cows. In 1979 they formed a family corporation, but one year later started buying his father's shares when the elder Grossnickle decided it was time for semi-retirement.

Grossnickle didn't always want to be a farmer, but says a teacher who urged him to join FFA made the difference. "From tenth or eleventh grade I wanted to be a farmer," he says. He served as chapter president and state vice-president in his FFA career, and in 1972 won the Farm Bureau Discussion Meet.

The cows are now producing about 16,000 pounds of milk, and are milked in a 41-cow stanchion barn where they are fed a grain ration with 19 percent protein. Hay and silage are fed outside, offering all the silage they can eat.

The Grossnickles produce all their own forage, but purchase a ready mixed grain ration concentrate. They have capacity for 2,000 ton of silage in upright silos, and feed it year round.

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Gary and Cindy Grossnickle of Walkersville, Maryland, hold the plaque they received for being one of three farm and ranch couples in the United States to win the national Farm

Bureau Federation competition. In addition to the honor, the Grossnickles receive the use of a new Allis Chalmers tractor for one year. For a picture of the tractor, turn to Page A34.

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## New market feature stresses Va. feeder cattle, pig report

LANCASTER — A current, up-to-date consolidated report on feeder cattle and feeder pig sales in Virginia is the latest market and auction feature to be found in this week's Lancaster Farming.

The first Virginia auction report is on Page A9.

This week's report features a summary of 19 feeder cattle auctions held from Thursday, April 8, through Wednesday, April 14, in the southern, northern and southwestern sections of Virginia and a number of special individual graded feeder cattle and feeder pig sales.

The feeder cattle sales include the Marshall exotic auction, Thursday, April 8; Narrows cattle, Tuesday, April 13; Harrisonburg yearling and calf, Wednesday,

April 14; Dublin yearling, Wednesday, April 14; and Staunton Union calf and yearling, Wednesday, April 14.

The feeder pig sales include Courtland, Thursday, April 8; Blackstone, Monday, April 12; and Harrisonburg, Tuesday, April 13.

This weekly market feature is being provided directly through the cooperation of the USDA Livestock and Grain Market News and Grading Service in Virginia.

It is being included in Lancaster Farming's extensive market and auction coverage as an added service to the numerous readers who utilize the Virginia auctions, particularly during the special graded sale schedule in the spring and fall.

BY SHEILA MILLER

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association general manager William F. Matson called it "one of the world's great mysteries — the classic 'Who done it?' story."

Penn State's Joseph McCurdy,

Extension agricultural engineer couldn't make up his mind what to call it.

But, finding a definition for a problem that has been confronting Pennsylvania farmers for many years was the purpose of a meeting which involved electric company representatives, milk producers' cooperative staff, Penn State and University of Pennsylvania professors, farmers and even legislative staff on Tuesday.

Gathering here at the Hanover Restaurant, the group shared facts and fallacies of a phenomenon called by many names — stray voltage, transient voltage, tingle voltage, stray current, or neutral-to-earth voltage. The educational seminar was sponsored by the Pennsylvania State Grange.

According to State Grange Master Charles Wismer, the purpose of the session was to "bring out the importance of the need to continue stray voltage research because the problem's not solved."

Funds to carry out this research, he said, will be running out in July 1982. He shared his concern about reduced allocations for agricultural research since Harness Racing revenues dropped from about \$400,000 last year to to less than \$100,000 this year. A percentage of these "after-

expenses" funds provide the financial resources for ag research.

The solution to the problem of stray voltage is just as elusive as the necessary research funds. And Penn State agricultural engineer Joe McCurdy admitted he wishes he'd never heard of the term.

Explaining that he preferred to call the problem neutral-to-earth voltage, McCurdy said the phenomenon varies with the level of the ground water table and a farm's electrical use.

Focusing on the dairy situation, McCurdy pointed out that modern dairy farmers are exposing cows more than ever before to "almost everything electrical on the farm" when they are hooked up to the pipeline and milk is flowing. Modern milking parlors with their inherently wet floors set the bare-foot cow up for an unforgettable shock.

A cow's reaction to this shocking experience was explained by Dr. John Fetrow of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. Although it came as no surprise, Fetrow said "Cows quickly learn what not to do if it hurts. When something hurts them, they get excited and adrenalin is produced. This hormone interferes with the milk letdown hormone called oxytocin

As a result, the cow holds her milk up and either has to be milked longer or doesn't milk out. Subsequently, the cow produces less and has a higher incidence of mastitis with increased leucocyte counts winding up in the bulk tank.

McCurdy conceded there never will be a way to eliminate all stray voltage on a farm. However, he said, farmers have to be able to deal with it when voltage levels become high enough to be felt by the cows. He emphasized that a cow might be able to feel the tingle and discomfort of stray voltage even though the person milking her doesn't detect it.

"Cows are 10 times more sensitive to stray voltage than humans," said McCurdy. He explained that a cow will show a definite response to a level of 1 volt or more. Less than 0.5V usually causes no problem, he said. And the levels between 0.5V and 1V need to be watched and monitored, McCurdy said, calling this the "gray area."

If a human can't feel the stray voltage a cow does, how then can a farmer determine if stray voltage is affecting the milking string?

McCurdy listed several symptoms cows might exhibit which

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