# Thomas family

(Continued from Page D23)

turn his father's old stanchion barn into calf pens and to create a totally modern, quarter-milliondollar milking parlor capable of handling 400 cows. Together they selected a well-drained site and worked out the arrangement of barns, shed, silos, and manure storage pit.

The gleaming new parlor is in operation now, though it's not yet being used to maximum capacity. Presently Thomas is milking about 200 cows. The remaining 400 animals he owns are calves, heifers, and bulls, which he saves for breeding and beef.

Though Thomas has inherited his father's desire to keep the farm growing, he doesn't spend money without a good reason.

For instance, Thomas spends extra money to have his milk

tested in Philadelphia instead of Dover. The Philadelphia lab can conduct certain quality tests that can't be performed in Dover because the equipment is not yet available. The tests are not required by law, but Thomas wants to keep an extra-close eye on the quality of his milk.

Thomas also is willing to spend a little extra to keep his cows comfortable. He installed water misters to keep the cows cool and production up in summer.

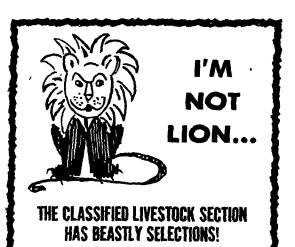
When it comes to storing feed and manure, though, Thomas looks for ways to save. He built a manure storage pit that is nothing more than a 130 by 50 foot rectangular wooden box, 10 feet deep, set into a raised mound of earth.

The building plans had called for a roof, but Thomas couldn't see the need for it so he didn't put it on. The manure is pushed in via Thomas' automatic scraper system, and twice a year he spreads it onto the fields.

The farm was thriving when John took it over from his father, Isaac, and it's even bigger now. Thomas believes in continuing to move forward. He's already using computer rations for his cows, and Delaware Extension dairy specialist Dr. George Haenlein predicts he'll be one of the first local farmers to buy his own computer to help manage his large operation.

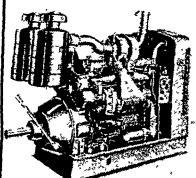
Thomas realizes it's only a matter of time before the next generation of Thomases takes the farm into the twenty-first century. And if all goes according to plan, it will be even more technologically

advanced, larger, and more profitable than it is today.





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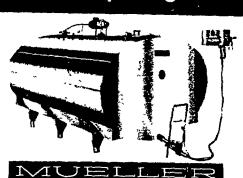
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