

Rothrock Golden Holsteins holds open house

What makes car dealer enter dairy breeding?

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

KEMPTON — What prompts a successful car dealer to enter the dairy industry in a big way with a brand new, multi-million-dollar breeding and merchandising center that will likely become an international showcase facility of the world of Holsteins?

In the first couple of minutes of conversation with Bruce Rothrock, whose energy and enthusiasm bubble forth like a colt first feeling its legs on pasture, a series of likely reasons emerge, which are as multi-faceted as the man himself.

—Is one of the reasons tied to the return of a farm boy to the land and a life that once included killing and dressing chickens for his father's door-to-door retail poultry route?

That's part of it.

—Does another reason involve a successful businessman and entrepreneur in a series of ventures searching for new challenges to conquer and goals to meet?

That's another part of it?

—And in seeking new challenges, does his desire to breed and sell top dairy cows show a need to work with warm, living and breathing products, as opposed to the cold, hard steel of cars and trucks.

That seems to be part of it, too.

But is this yen to return to his agricultural roots and climb new professional mountains coloring his business expertise and background that has brought him through more than two decades of success?

Not in the slightest.

"After 22 years in business, from autos to kitchen cabinets, I've learned one basic thing — business, no matter what field it is, primarily involves dealing with people," Rothrock explained amidst the hub-bub of an open house on Wednesday.

"I like to work with people and will apply this basic experience and knowledge I've gained in other fields to breeding and merchandising better cows.

"Whatever it takes in facilities, personnel, efficiency, management and stock selection, there will be no short-changing in our dedication toward developing top animals."

And the open house of the completed dairy barn and other facilities, which will be finished in a couple of months, showed the large throng of rainy-day visitors an eye-opening preview of what is to come.

The 52-animal dairy barn features the latest in cow-comfort technology. And going one step even farther it uses the cows to literally keep the staff more comfortable in a unique, energy-



Shown in brand new dairy barn of Rothrock Golden Holsteins Farms are, from the left, Jim Shrawder, farm manager; Bruce Rothrock, owner; and Jack Miller, herd manager.

saving measure that may be a first for Pennsylvania.

Four condensing units are scattered throughout the barn and literally harvest the body heat of the cows and use it to warm the offices and apartments located in the European farm dwelling complex.

In effect, the system is a cow heat pump that draws away the body heat, filters it, removes the moisture and pipes it as hot air for heating three offices, two apartments, reception area and conference room.

The two apartments, which are immediately adjacent and connected to the animal facilities, will be occupied by milking staff, who will be only a matter of a few feet from cows and younger stock even in the middle of the night.

Other features of the barn:

—A double ventilation system that not only brings fresh air in from the outside, down over the walls to keep them dry, but also includes a back wall that is a large evaporative cooling unit to provide additional comfort for the cows.

—A three-inch pipeline, stainless steel welded double loop, to provide plenty of capacity to accommodate the heavy milkers already in the herd and destined to join it within the next few months.



Large and spacious box stalls feature split construction — concrete front area for feeding and milking and rear area with gravel base and special drainage under bedding to maximize cow comfort and health.

—In addition to the 40 tie stalls, a dozen box stalls, also served by the pipeline. Each box stall also has its own drainage system, with drain and laterals in an eight-inch gravel base. Chopped straw and shaving bedding provides comfort over the rear two-thirds of the stall with the gravel, while the front third is concrete with just shavings for eating and milking sanitation.

—Just over 600 feet of barn cleaner in four gutters, including box stalls, tie area and calf facilities, that drops into second gutter cleaner for pumping 190 feet underground to a Slurrystore.

—Using the heat taken off the milk in the 1250-gallon bulk cooler to not only heat the barn water, but also that for the apartments and offices.

—And still to come in the dairy barn is a stereo system with a balanced speaker system.

And what is to come yet during the next couple of months of continued construction?

—A fitting room will also serve as an embryo transfer facility. The vet will be able to pull his vehicle right into the area and an adjacent

box stall will hold the recipient heifers.

—Calf facilities will have a capacity for 40.

—A loose-housing heifer wing will have space for about 160.

Next to the facilities still under construction already stand, in addition to the blue Slurrystore, a trio of 25 by 65-foot Harvestores — silage, alfalfa haylage and high moisture shelled corn — that figures into the total mixed ration.

And what is the future timetable?

—Completion of remaining facilities by the end of November.

—Acquisition of additional daughters of brood cow sires by the end of the year.

"We're concentrating on indexes from proven cow families," explains herd manager Jack Miller, who came over from Kill-Dee.

"And, they must be able to transmit. We want to see daughters and sisters."

Then, the super-ovulated breeding and embryo transfers—already started — and merchandising can move at an accelerating pace toward a goal of

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Arrow points to condenser units in Rothrock barn which harvest body heat off cows and use it to heat adjoining offices and staff apartments.