

After years of tears, Campbell bids beloved herd farewell

BY DONNA TOMMELLEO NARVON — He could take no more. And finally, one day this past September, Bob Campbell stood in his barn and cried.

He cried because of pain. He cried because of frustration.

But most of all, he cried because good-byes hurt.

For almost half his life, the 30-year-old Narvon man battled pain in both feet. The muscles in his arches constantly pulled at their joint attachments, causing a severe arch and persistent pain.

Last winter, Campbell underwent surgery and spent the early part of 1982 in convalescence. But when he resumed working again on his registered Ayrshire farm, the pain, like chickweed, was back.

And so on that September day,

dream into one of the top Ayrshire herds in the state.

Bob grew up in Blue Ball, Lancaster County. Not a sprawling metropolis by any means, yet Bob and his mother Jean felt just enough urban pressure to move their menagerie of sheep, horses, dogs, cats and fowl to the neighboring Narvon countryside.

Campbell's mother was an active horsewoman and for years traveled the show circuit with her prize Palominos. With the exception of the Campbells' two draft horses that Bob occasionally rode, the youngster did not share his mother's equine interest.

"I was always getting dragged to horse shows," Bob recalls. "Mom would tell me, 'We'll soon go after the next class.'"

When he wasn't spending his



"Happy is the man who has a small, high testing and low feed cost cow. He either has Jerseys or has bred his Ayrshire right."

two months ago, Campbell decided that fighting the pain had robbed enough precious time from his herd. He had to get out.

"I believe that a job is worth doing well or not at all," he says.

On Dec. 6, at noon, Campbell will disperse his Penn-Bell herd, a herd that grew from a young boy's

Sundays at horse show ringsides, Bob looked forward to afternoons on his grandfather's dairy farm.

"Grandfather always had a dairy farm somewhere," Campbell says. In addition, Bob's grandfather John S. Ewell owned a trucking company.

Woodside Stock Farm, near

Landisville, was one such dairy farm on which Bob spent a great deal of time with Ewell's Guernsey herd.

In his junior year of high school, the Garden Spot FFA member kept a pair of Charolais steers and a few sheep for projects. A neighbor asked Bob to tend some dairy heifers and repaid him with a Jersey heifer.

A few purchases later, Bob increased his herd to six. The stable



The last Ayrshire will leave Penn-Bell Farm in Narvon on Dec. 6 at Bob Campbell's dispersal sale. Although Campbell and his mother Jean will remain on the farm with their menagerie of cats, dogs, geese, turkeys, a horse, a raccoon, and other barnyard fowl, they have leased the dairy facilities to a young couple who will phase the farm from red and white to black and white.

included no stanchions and Bob tied the animals along the feeding trough.

"I pulled a vacuum pump behind me in an express wagon to milk," Campbell remembers.

He also remembers a hot July day when he decided to take a break and travel to the mountains for a short vacation. Fortunately before he left, Campbell instructed the hired milker to pasture the cows at night.

Driving northward, Bob traveled through a spectacular thunderstorm, the kind that illuminates the summer sky with its oh so dangerous lightening.

That night, lightening struck the cow stable and Bob returned to a smoldering foundation. The animals were spared, but the young man's tears that fell could not replace the hard work he had put into his growing operation.

Yet his desire to dairy could not be snuffed. He shook it off when a supporting relative advised, "If you have enough money to dairy, you're better off putting it in a bank and live off the interest."

His grandad stepped in and offered to build Bob another barn but predicted dairying was just a phase and that eventually Bob would tire of it and quit.

He was wrong.

Bob rattles off the herd's expansion with the tempo of well-studied multiplication table.

"Six cows led to 12 which led to 20 which led to 32 which led to 37. We're selling 70 head on December 6," he reports.

"But how do you sell a herd of Ayrshires you have lived and breathed for and is your dream come true? It's not easy, many tears," he explains.

How do you sell cows like Penn-Bell Caesars Rose. The red, milky Ayrshire turned out a 10,000-plus milk record as a first calf heifer

and repeated it as a 3-year-old.

"She has to milk. She does it every time," Bob says.

And how do you sell other hallmarks of the Penn-Bell herd, such as Delchester Count's Rosina who has put more than 18,000 pounds of milk through the pipelines.

In all, the Penn-Bell sale catalog will feature a herd that has been among Pennsylvania's top 10 for the breed since 1977 and currently maintains a rolling herd average of 14,200 pounds of milk and 570 pounds of fat. A celebrity line-up of breed sires is represented in the wet herd, such as Hi Kick, Gallant Man, King Vue and Meredith Henry to name a few.

Bob's fondness for the Scottish breed of dairy cattle is evident, in fact, it borders on passion.

"The day of the wild Ayrshire is gone," he says. "The colored breeds, as a whole, have progressed genetically."

The young man keeps a chalkboard in his barn with a message that probably best describes his zealous philosophy.

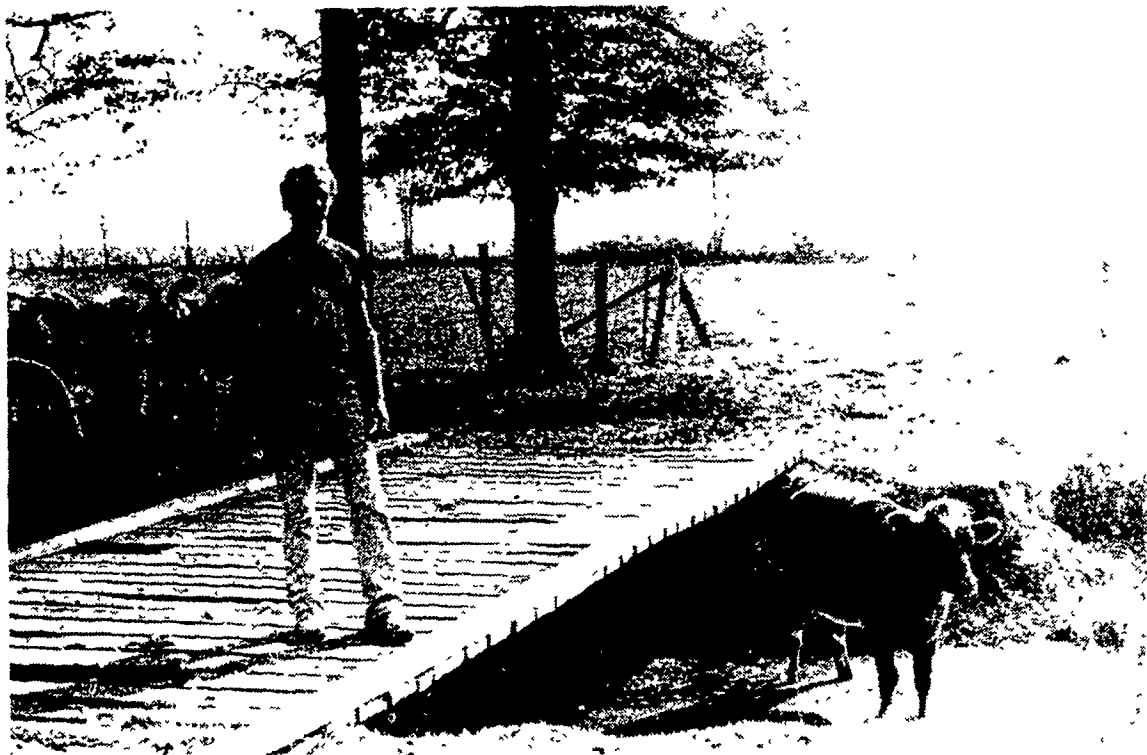
It reads: "Happy is the man who has a small, high testing and low feed cost cow. He either has Jerseys or has bred his Ayrshire right."

But production records aside, how do you say good-bye to friends like "Dot." The big bovine took a personal liking to Bob and is usually at his side when he walks through the pastures or lot, constantly nudging for more affection.

A true friend, however, can stand by and watch another get less than they deserve, hence Bob's decision. His hospital stays and recovery period saw a dip in the herd average.

When he was working actively on the farm, Bob fed the herd three times daily. The ration included

(Turn to Page A23)



Because of health problems, Bob Campbell must say goodbye to the life which has been good to him for almost half of his 30 years. However, the young man admits he won't burn his bridges behind him and may someday return to dairy life.



Clowning with "Dot," one of Bob's favorite four-legged friends, is an everyday occurrence for the animal-loving Ayrshire breeder. The 6-year-old Ayrshire has contributed to the Penn-Bell herd's wet average of 14,200 pounds of milk and 570 pounds of fat. The herd has remained one of the top 10 of the breed in Pennsylvania since 1977.