

As national Brown Swiss hosts

Trimbles kick off convention countdown

BY DONNA TOMMELLEO

PEACH BOTTOM — Amid the twinkling of yuletide decor and choruses of Auld Lang Syne, people all over will bid farewell to another year and look with hope and expectation to the next.

For a special group of Pennsylvanians, however, 1983 means mobilizing ideas into action, rather than wishful resolutions.

The Pennsylvania Brown Swiss Breeders Association, next year, will take on the task of hosting the National Brown Swiss Convention, scheduled for next November at Lancaster's Host Corral. Already members have been assigned to committees to examine possible programs and tours.

Helping to coordinate, in part, the joint effort put forth by the members, is the state association's president Lancaster County dairyman Don Trimble.

"This will be the first time that Pennsylvania has hosted the national convention," Trimble explains.

So in the months ahead, Trimble's association will move closer to their goal of a successful national convention. Meanwhile, Trimble and his wife Carol are striving toward their personal goal — a total registered Brown Swiss herd, only. The Trimbles currently milk about 3/8 Brown Swiss and about the same number of Holsteins. While all the Swiss are registered, only one third of the Holstein herd is registered.

The seeds of the Trimbles' goal were planted in New Jersey in the mid-'60s. Don, a southern Lancaster County native moved to the Garden State to work as a herdman for Lee's Hill Brown Swiss Farm.

Although he was born and raised on a Holstein dairy, it was at the nationally-known Lee's Hill that Trimble developed a fondness for the big, gentle Alpine breed.

"They have a large body capacity and they do a little better on forage," Trimble says. "They tolerate changes in hot and cold weather well."

Carol echoes her husband's reasons for choosing Swiss and adds one of her own.

"They're also very gentle," she says. And although gentleness is not a major economic factor or probably won't put any more milk in the tank, Carol nevertheless keeps the attribute high on her priority list.

For while in New Jersey, Don Trimble met and married Carol, whose parents weren't dairy farmers, but florists.

"I was afraid of cows," she remembers. But living at Lee's Hill, Carol never had to put her fears to the test because the dairy was well staffed with employees.

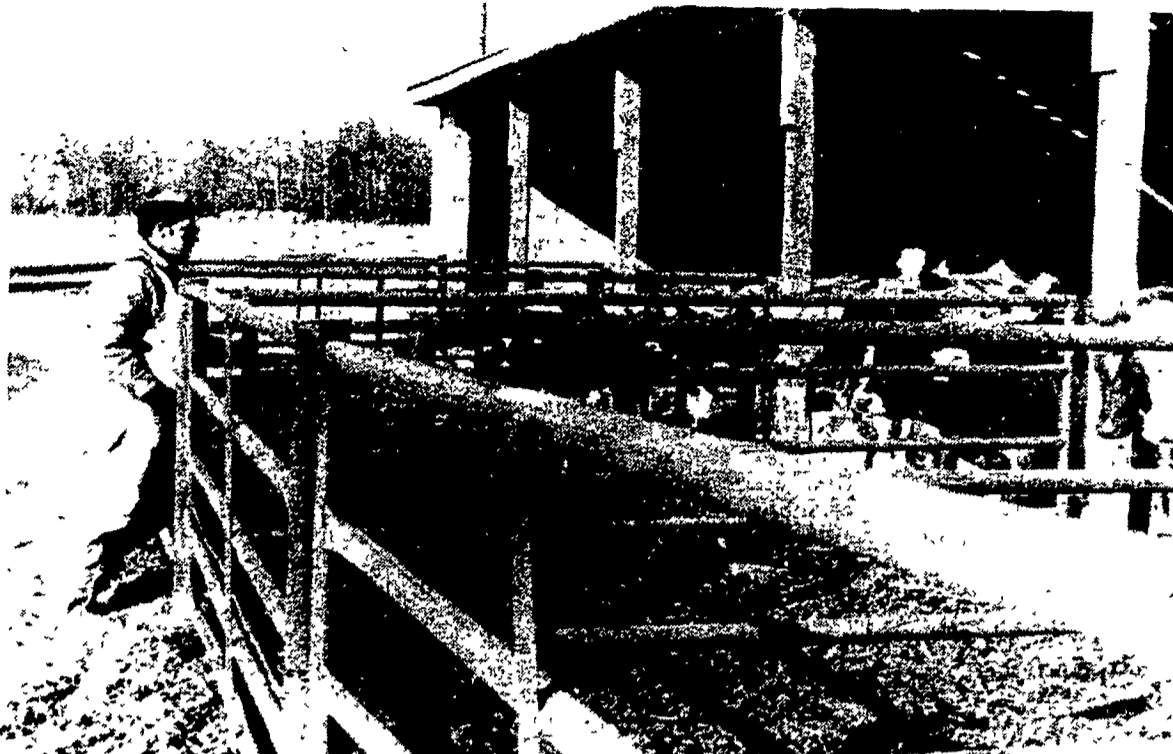
However, moving back to Peach Bottom was another matter. The Trimbles returned in 1969 with, "a car, a little bit of furniture and a baby girl," Don recalls. And eventually the florists' daughter had a taste of farm life from the other side of the fence.

"I was feeding one day and saw hoof prints in the feeder," she explains. Carol's imagination began to run away with her, she recalls, and she thought that somehow the bull had run through the feeder and gotten in with the herd. Meanwhile a cow walked up behind her and began breathing on the back of her neck.

Carol probably broke every Olympic track record that day as she dashed from the lot, leaving one perplexed cow who probably never knew humans could move so fast.

Things certainly have changed at Donsdell Farm, since Carol's fearful feeding experience. And although Don carries out the bulk of the work for the 74-cow milking

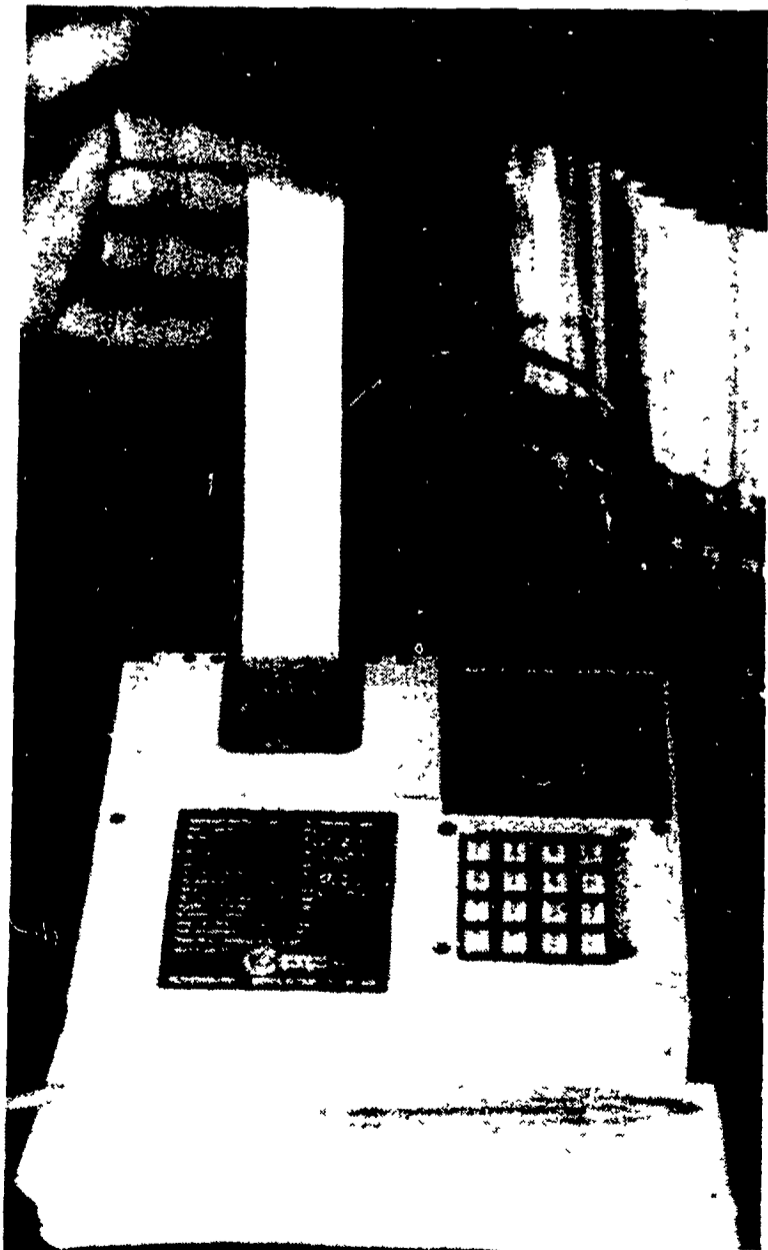
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Don surveys the Donsdell future replacements in this multi-stall heifer barn. The facility was an old chicken house but poor ventilation hampered conditions for humans and animals. Consequently, the hen house gave-way to a more efficient, better ventilated facility.



This 2-year-old exhibits some of the classic gentleness that Don and Carol enjoy in their Brown Swiss. The Swiss herd also exhibited their dairyness this year, as the Donsdell herd captured the top DHIA award for milk and fat for their breed.



This "mini-terminal" has meant larger profit over feed costs of the Trimbles. Their computer feeder reacts to the individual needs of herd members and Don and Carol were able to switch from purchased pellets, which they fed in their extinct magnetic feeders to a less expensive home mix.



Two herdmates, members of Don Trimble's high-producing group size up this picture-taking session. Eventually, the Peach Bottom farm hopes to phase out the Holstein participation and milk strictly the big, brown Alpine cattle.