

Gem-Rock is Holstein operation in transition

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

ANNVILLE — The Gem-Rock Holstein operation, now under the direction of the third generation Kenneth Sellers family, could be described as a herd in transition.

The operation, founded by Elmer H. Dutweiler in the early-40's and recently honored by the Lebanon County Holstein Breeders, led the county in 1980 and 1981 in butterfat production with averages of 762 and 741 lbs.

Milk production averaged 19,400 and 18,900 lbs.

But this year, production has slipped to 16,600 milk and 632 fat.

The reason for the slip is a good one. The operation is undergoing a completely internal expansion in cow numbers that has very nearly doubled herd size.

And brand new facilities— barn, milk house, feed room, silos and manure storage — to accommodate the larger herd will be on display at an open house on Wednesday at the farm located along Rt. 934 about halfway between Rt. 322 and Anville.

"We had 43 stalls in the old barn," Ken Sellers explains.

"Now, we have 60 tie stalls and three box pens in this new barn. Only four stalls are empty and we've been busy building up the herd completely from within.

"In full rotation, we'll have about 60 to 70 cows, with the dry cows kept in the old barn with the heifers.

"We hope to get back into merchandising again, too. We've had to cut back on that the past year or so due to the expansion.

"But in another year or two we should be getting back to where we were before all the expansion began."

The old barn, which sets closer to the road, was beginning to show its age. There was pipeline trouble and the gutter cleaner was shot.

"So, we had to decide whether to overhaul or build new," Sellers said.

"We decided to get something we wanted and I haven't been sorry. Sure, it's going to be tight for



Five-year-old Kevin Sellers gives mom and dad, Karen and Kenneth, an extra big hug in new dairy barn. The fact that

Christmas was just around the corner had nothing at all to do with his impromptu show of affection.

awhile with the cutback in milk support, but it's been a pleasure working in the new barn and feeding from a completely enclosed area.

In addition to the 38 by 170-foot barn, there's a milk house and office wing. The feed room extends some 60 feet off the barn past the two brand new Madison silos — a 20 by 65 Nutrimatic and a 20 by 40 Grammatic.

The concreted and roofed manure storage structure is capable of holding about a six-month supply. A Patz rain is located right in a corner of the barn.

There'll be no freezing problem and working on it is much easier," Sellers said.

"There's some odor when it's working but the fans quickly remove it. And there's been no splashing problem.

Another unique device is located

just across the entrance from the ram.

When people come in, they ask what this little trough is," Sellers said.

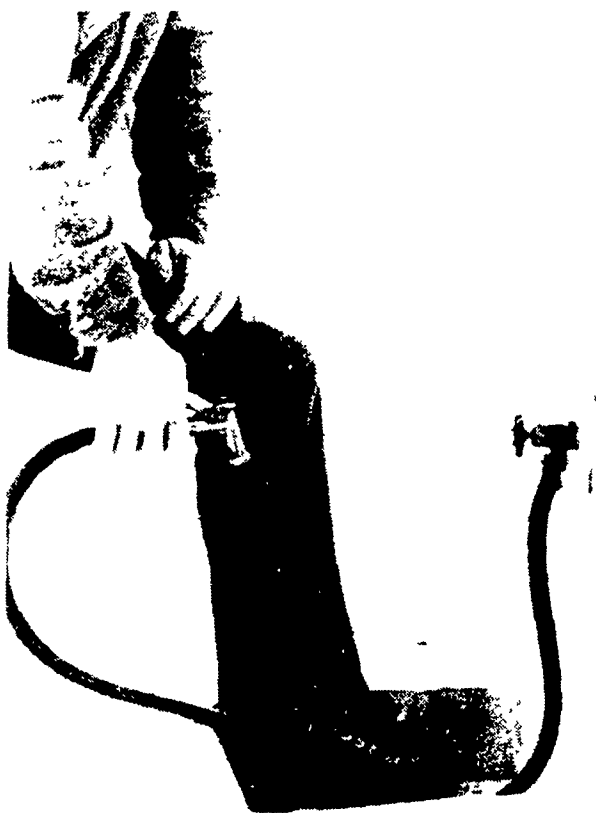
It's a boot wash and our veterinarian recommended it.

The Anville-Cleona FFA graduate took over the operation in

1970 from his father, Harold. A year later, Ken received his American Degree. Now, he's a member of the Young Farmers.

But the operation could be called the Five-K. There's Ken and Karen, the daughter of a Lebanon

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New Gem-Rock dairy barn contains small trough used as boot bath. Although he's not wearing boots, Ken Sellers demonstrates bath.



Spreader stands idle and will not be used as much on Kenneth Sellers farm as new manure storage facility goes into operation.