

Farm Show judge is York dairy farmer

BY JOYCE BUFP
Staff Correspondent

DELTA — When Ayrshire and Brown Swiss exhibitors circle the large arena on Tuesday, they'll give their undivided attention to a judge with his dairy science doctoral degree and several years of college teaching and judging experience.

But when the last group class is placed, Jim McCaffree will exit the show ring to return to his southern York County farm, in plenty of time to handle the 9 p.m., third-time-per-day milking of his high-producing registered Holstein herd.

McCaffree, former dairy professor and judging team coach at Delaware Valley College, is now fulfilling a dream that first took root as a youngster growing up in Seattle, Washington. He's a dairy farmer.

A love of dairy cows was planted in one of York County's newest dairymen during the childhood and teenage summers he spent with his grandparents on their purebred Ayrshire farm near El Dorado, Kansas.

"I was 'into' cows, but didn't quite know what to do about it," says the lanky dairyman whose father was a labor economics professor at the University of Washington in Seattle. "When I left my grandparents' farm in Kansas at the end of the summer after I graduated, I went right to Madison, to the University of Wisconsin, to enroll in dairy science studies."

It was the first of many years spent on campuses, adding degrees to his resume. With a bachelor's degree certificate in his

pocket, McCaffree then enrolled at Cornell in 1960 for graduate studies.

As part of his thesis for a master's degree, McCaffree delved into dairy nutrition, working on some of the first research detailing the use of high moisture corn in dairy feeding programs.

A decade after entering New York's state university, his studies interrupted periodically for jobs and travel, McCaffree earned the right to add PhD initials behind his name.

Again, his research work would add a contribution to the demand for improved records in the dairy industry. With many hours spent at a computer terminal, McCaffree charted the economics of DHIA records and their overall benefits to farm management.

When the job of herdsman for Delaware Valley's 60-head "teaching herd" opened, along with the opportunity to instruct classes, McCaffree won the position and the chance to combine his ambitions with his degrees.

"But I'm sure I learned more about cows at DVC than I ever taught any student," he is quick to insist. "I especially liked being able to teach in the atmosphere of the barn, with each student given a cow as his (or her) responsibility for that entire year. You can demonstrate things right there in the barn that could never be taught as effectively in a classroom."

At the time McCaffree took the herdsman-professor position, DVC had just started an Ayrshire herd. The school's Brown Swiss herd was already an outstanding one, one of



After teaching and managing herds for several years, Jim and Holly McCaffree's owning their own herd and farms near Delta, York County is a realization of a dream come true. They take special pride in the chance to work at home where they can be with their two small children. Both two-year-old Jared, and baby Jessica who was napping, already show interest in the cows.

the top in the nation in the 10-or-less-head size.

Coaching the dairy judging team was a third part of the job classification. At the University of Wisconsin, McCaffree had studied judging evaluation and techniques, and had served as an alternate on one of the nation's top collegiate teams. But he'll readily admit that judging is best learned by participation, and having to defend a set of placings against a team of students ready and eager to dispute their coach's decision.

"If I miss anything, it's working with the judging team," he says. In 1975, DVC's dairy judging team placed third at national collegiate competition.

After six years at DVC, McCaffree left the college to take a herd manager's position at Fair Hill farm on Maryland's Eastern Shore, and later became herdsman for Jay and Sue Howes' Legacy Holsteins at Warriors Mark. While at the Howes' Centre County farm, he acquired a few of his own animals and, about two years ago,

had the opportunity to rent a milking operation in Washington County from a former student.

After about two years of renting there, McCaffree and wife Holly decided that they'd like to relocate back in the southeastern part of the state, and purchased their present farm in late 1981. Last April, 45 cows and 30 heifers made the long truck trip east to their new home just west of Route 74 near Delta. A new pipeline, 30-foot barn extension with boxstalls, and manure

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• • Sycam

BY DONNA TOMMEL
MILLERSBURG — walking to his barn, Tuesday noon, Earl Keefer stop moment to pick a dandelion. A dandelion? Wait a minute is January, Farm Show doesn't that mean anymore?

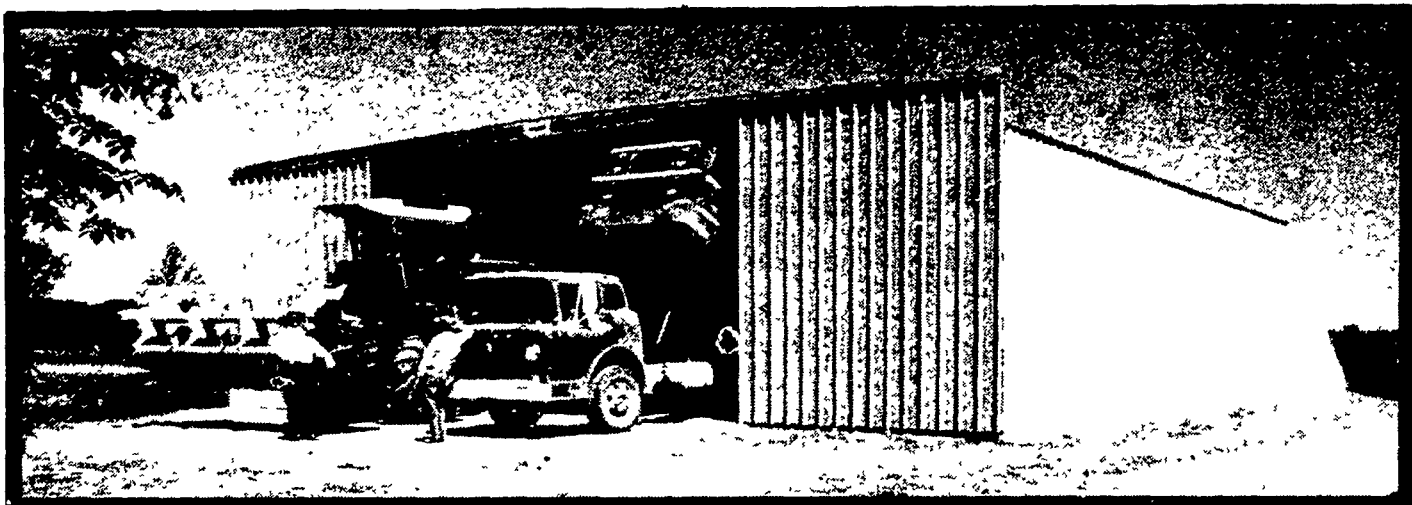
There's an old Penn proverb that says Far Week means bad weather



Earl Keefer, a farm clipping away at this Farm Show 1983.

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