

# Learning finances early helped this dairy family

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FREDONIA — Currently rolling at 13,554 pounds milk and 627 pounds of fat, the 100 plus registered Jerseys at Vantage Jersey Farm, RD Fredonia, have been among the top ten Jersey herds in the state for the past several years. Owned by Don and Angie Koontz, the herd is currently ranked as number 4 for milk and fat in the state, and is the second highest Jersey herd in Mercer County.

Strict attention to detail and careful monitoring of finances have become the successful formula for this Mercer County dairyman, with the help of his wife, Angie, and their two children, Brian, 17, and Jackie, 14.

Prior to "going on his own", Koontz who is a graduate of Delaware Valley College, majoring in Animal Husbandry, worked as herdsman at Walebe Farms, Collegeville. It was at Walebe Farms that Koontz says he began to appreciate working with large numbers of cows since it

enables a dairyman to develop a clearer picture of the genetics of the various bulls used in the herd through the wider spread of daughters within a herd.

With his father and brother in partnership back on the home Jersey farm, and after serving at Walebe Farms, Koontz and his wife, Angie, felt a need to get out on their own and gain some equity. At Walebe Farm for seven years, Koontz was able to develop his management skills to include many of "the little things that count", and enjoyed working with the cows as did Angie.

Angie, who as a small child, fled with her parents from their East German homeland and settled in Philadelphia, states, "I never in my wildest dreams thought that I would ever be a farmer's wife". Angie credits a Jersey breeder and good friend in the same district as Walebe Farms, for giving her the enthusiasm for the Jersey cow that she has and states that she enjoys milking and working with the cows.

After leaving Walebe, the



Koontz' cows are kept in a 178-foot freestall barn and fed at a bunk. This overall view shows farm layout.



Brian Koontz loads hay for bunk feeding to the 90-lb. plus milkers.



Don Koontz trims the feet of each cow as she is dried off. To dry off the cows, each is tied for the whole day and in evening after feet are trimmed, she is dry treated and placed with other dry cows in loose housing barn with pasture.

Koontz' moved to Saxton and worked in partnership with an absentee owner.

"He brought the farm and we ran it for him", they state.

With "running it for him" meaning from "books to crops", the Koontz' milked 38 Jerseys at

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Angie Koontz shares in the milking duties and likes the automatic takeoff units installed just last year.



Jackie Koontz feeds calves before and after school.