

Learning finances

(Continued from Page D16)

Koontz gives his landlord much credit for working with them all the time. The landlord farms the land and Koontz buys the feed from him. The landlord also fills his silo and does the manure hauling.

With this advantage, Koontz has been able to work entirely with his

herd and develop one of the top herds in the state. The "Vantage" herd is milked in a double four herringbone parlor. When they started here, "the main objective was always that one person could milk", Angie says as she explains that they only used six stalls in the parlor until they purchased the

automatic take-offs currently in use. They also use the Boumatic milkers but prefer IBA inflations, the square, silicon inflations, with an added advantage of lasting much longer than rubber inflations.

Milking chores are split between Koontz and his wife. When Angie is milking, you can often find Don, switching cows, trimming feet,

tending heifers, or doing simple remodeling to make things a bit more efficient. Since their move, Koontz has enlarged and improved the maternity area of the 178; freestall barn, built individual tie stalls for calves, opened the peak in the freestall barn for improved ventilation, and grooved the floor to prevent excessive slipping of the cows. He also beds the freestalls with sand purchased very cheap by the ton from a local merchant. Koontz credits this practice for his low somatic cell count and little mastitis and it keeps the cows very clean.

His plans for the future include a mixer unit for a total mixed ration, and a remodeling of his heifer barn to include freestalls. Koontz plans to chop hay into the milking ration, and plans to feed on a dry matter basis over 50% hay with corn silage and grain, and possible cottonseed.

The Koontz children provide some of the "extras" at Vantage with Jackie taking over calf feeding chores before and after school and Brian doing most of the feeding of the heifers and milking herd. The Koontz' state that if their children would not be willing to help as much as they do, they would have to hire outside help.

In breeding his own cows, Koontz stresses good udders and feet and he and his wife pick two bulls to use out of every new sire summary. Both bulls must be udder improvers and one choice must definitely improve feet. They also use a few young bulls out of cows with high MCD's.

This year, this hard-working family will be buying this farm and will be financing it through FHA. Working with FHA in the past when they had purchased 4 additional herds to increase their cow numbers, they have had good relations with this loaning agency. In the past, Angie states, "They were always very receptive to the fact that we only wanted to put our investment in the dairy". She says that FHA told them "The closer to the milk tank, the sooner the returns. With the added equity of their larger herd, and the outstanding herd average that they have achieved on this number of cows, the Koontz' have demonstrated their ability at dairying to this agency and will be able to purchase their home years ahead of time when the interest rates are lower.

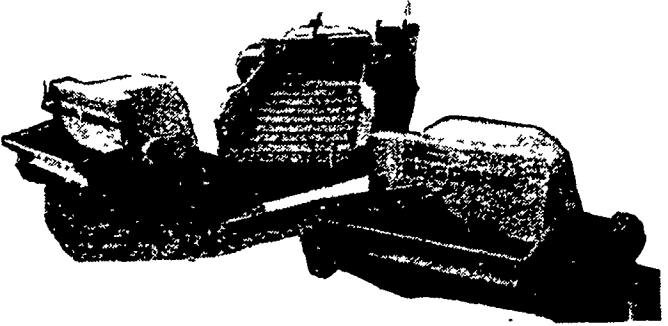
The Koontz family does not stay "on the farm" all the time, and has

been very successful showing their animals at the local fairs. The animals of the children have also qualified for the All-American Show in Louisville, Ky., in the past, and they look forward to showing this year. They also have two homebred cows who are appraised "Excellent" in addition to several other herdsmates of "90 or above". The family is also active in church and community affairs with Don serving on the 4-H Development Committee, and as a leader, in addition to being Vice President of the Extension Association in their county, and serving on the Mercer County Farmers Association board. Koontz always active in the state Jersey Association and currently Sale Chairman of the Pennsylvania Annual Bred Heifer Sale, is running for National Director of this district in the American Jersey Cattle Club.

Although they are very aware of the fact that they will need a high producing herd to stay solvent, the Koontz' main concern of living on a farm is to have a comfortable life. As one of his goals Koontz lists, "to have the highest producing, yet practically economical herd in the country", but adds that it is more important to him to work with and enjoy his family at the same time. For family outings or vacations, the Koontz' have been able to hire dependable help and do not want their family life to suffer even if they have to work very hard on their dairy operation.

Koontz also is concerned about the current milk situation and states that "advertising is essential but we need to do more than that...we need to up the quality of milk." He also favors some type of incentive plan for dairymen to increase their "on the farm" quality while decreasing the surplus.

The Koontz' enjoy visitors and extend a warm welcome to Jersey breeders or interested individuals to come and see their herd. With Angie taking her cows "to the schools" to educate urban children and Don serving on many community and state youth committees, the Koontz' are doing all they can to promote their breed and the "goodness of milk" in addition to providing their support to the farming community. When you meet this family, you will be greeted by a warm and gracious family, ambitious to promote their product in order to keep the lifestyle that they have grown to love.



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