

From Umble beginnings came renowned Swamp Hollow herd

BY TRISH WILLIAMS
COCHRANVILLE — In 1943 when John and Susanna Umble started milking a small herd of grade Holsteins, they never dreamt how genetic progress would transform the dairy cattle industry and the evolution of their herd.

But soon after he started, Umble witnessed the introduction of artificial insemination and participated in the on farm adoption of the genetic tool that would revolutionize the dairy industry.

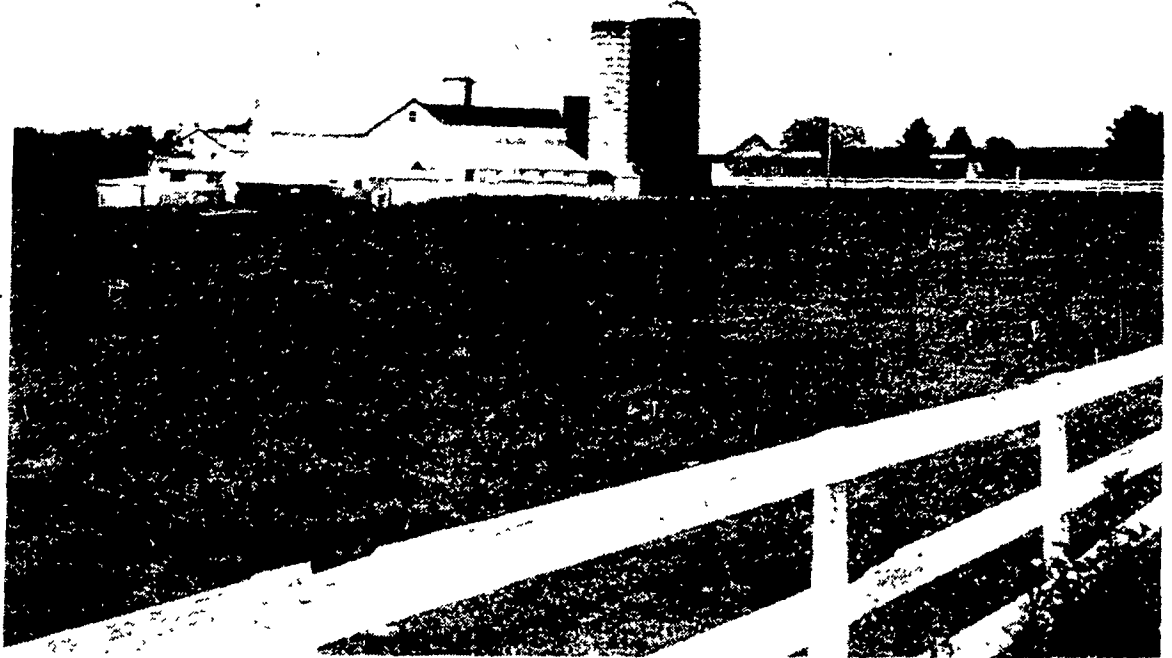
Now, after 40 years in the dairy business, Umble is preparing to disperse his Swampy Hollow herd and reflects back on the years he spent building the herd.

On a rented farm near Atglen, John and Susann began their first year as dairy farmers, building a

small herd of grade Holsteins. After one year on that farm they moved their herd of 14 grade cattle to another rented farm just north of Cochransville, and only a mile and a half from the farm Umble grew up on. The 154 acre farm, nestled in a small spring-filled valley, was christened Swampy Hollow.

In 1947 the Umbles made Swampy Hollow their home for life when they purchased the farm. The next year they took a major step toward shaping the future of their dairy operation, when they had a complete dispersal of the grade herd, remodeled the barn, and started a herd of registered Holsteins.

A reserved man of strong faith and determination, he began in this fashion to plan his herd's



Swampy Hollow Farm



John and Susanna Umble came to Swampy Hollow Farm 40 years ago and started building their purebred Holstein herd. They plan to retire on the farm, and help farm at their leisure.



Most of the offspring in the Swampy Hollow herd are direct descendants of two brood cows. Above, Valeria Cherrydale Lucifer ('Cherry') was the foundation cow that Umble built his Swampy Hollow herd on. She is pictured here at 13 years. Below, Swampy Hollow Sugar-Twin is a fifth generation of the Cherry cow. Classified EX-91-3E, Sugar has been flushed several times for embryos, with as many as five sons in AI service from one flush.



evolution.

"John J. Stoltzfus, another dairyman, who knew I was just starting in the purebred cattle business, called me," recalls Umble. "He was having a consignment sale, and wanted me to buy a brood cow he was selling. After looking at the cow and deciding she might give me some good offspring, I went to the bank to borrow money. At that time \$500 dollars was about what you could figure to pay for a real good brood cow. So with \$500 dollars in my pocket, I went to the sale hoping to buy the cow. But the bidding didn't stop at \$500, she went to \$635, which was considerably more than I had brought with me. Nonetheless, I bought her. When I got home, I told Susann that I had spent \$635 on the cow, she was a little upset then, but now when we look back, it was probably some of the best money we ever spent.

The cow he purchased, Valeria Cherrydale Lucifer, more affectionately called Cherry, became the foundation cow that he built his registered herd of Holsteins on.

When Umble disperses the Swampy Hollow herd on October 27, there will be 45 direct descendants of Cherry in the sale.

Cherry was a daughter of Lauxmont Admiral Lucifer, explains Umble. The Lucifer bull was very popular at that time.

"Cherry and her descendents have paid the mortgage on the farm, many times over," Umble proudly explains. "Her top-selling son went to Japan, I received double for him what I paid for this farm. And two years ago I sold another of Cherry's descendents, a heifer, for about what I paid for the farm."

Cherry eventually made a lifetime production record of 172,000 milk, with a lifetime average milk fat test of 4.2 percent. She completed one lactation with a 4.4 percent milk fat test.

At a Garden Spot in Willow Street, Umble purchased a heifer calf that he later bred to the Lucifer bull. The mating produced two twins heifers, Polly and Molly. These twins both classified Very Good. Polly at 85 and Molly at 87. Molly also became a strong link in the Swampy Hollow breeding program. When her production reached 200,000 she was named the 300th 'Iron Grandma' by the Holstein-Friesian Association of America.

A progressive breeder, Umble is



Partners - Joe Lusby and John Umble, are each embarking on a new venture. John will have time to reflect on the lifetime he spent building a herd, while Joe builds his herd.

a long standing member of the Pennsylvania Holstein Association. He has served Chester County as a state director of PHA for a total of seven years, and has represented the organization numerous times as a delegate to the national convention.

He is also a member of the local breeders group, the Brandywine Valley syndicate.

Four years ago Umble went into partnership with his son, Allen, and his son-in-law, Joseph Lusby. The three partners have taken on the new challenges of the dairy cattle industry. The strong foundation that Umble has built the herd on has created a herd with deep pedigrees and a demand for the bloodlines.

Since the formation of the partnership, they have introduced embryo transfer into their breeding program and are taking a very serious approach to merchandizing their cattle.

Swampy Hollow Sugar-Twin, is an Ivanhoe Star daughter and a 5th generation descendent of the Cherry cow. Rated 3E-91, she has records to 23,500 pounds of milk, and 1275 pounds of fat, with a 5.4 percent fat test. Records like that are in demand all over the world. Sugar's daughter, Sweet, is also a high tester and has just completed her 4th year record at 26,000 milk and 1273 pounds of fat, with a fat test of 4.9 percent.

"We have flushed embryos from Sugar several times," said Umble. "We have gotten as many as 15 embryos from a single flush from Sugar. This flush resulted in 14 pregnancies, and six live bulls and six live heifer calves. All six of the

bulls were sold for export."

Like many Holstein breeders in Pennsylvania, the partnership has done their export marketing of cattle through the PHA and American Market Service of Virginia. Umble who has sold 20 bulls in the last 10 years, credits Bob Heilman of AMS, and William Nichol and Doug Hershey of PHA with much of the success of their export marketing program. But without years of top-notch breeding on the farm, their cattle would have never seen new international surroundings.

When the partnership is dissolved after the dispersal in October, Umble plans to follow his doctors advice and take it easier. He still plans to work on the farm, but only at his convenience. He says, when I want to go fishing or hunting, that is what I'm going to do.

Umble is also an auctioneer, and may be familiar to some from the World Relief Sale, sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee. He has helped with the sale for many years now, as an auctioneer. He plans to continue his work in the Relief Sale, and in his church, Maple Grove Mennonite Church where he is a teacher and treasurer of the Sunday school.

Allen is planning to go into church work full time, and will begin his training soon after the dispersal.

Joe Lusby and his wife Cindy live in the old farmhouse with their two children Joey, 4, and Jessica, 1. They plan to continue to farm at Swampy Hollow. And like their parents will start the herd bulking process.