

# Life champ pays strict attention to details

Over the years Don and Sherry have worked out a division of labor between them that follows their own areas of special interest. Don enjoys working with field crops and machinery, and so concentrates his time and efforts along those lines. Conversely, Sherry prefers assuming the responsibility for herd management, and oversees the feeding and breeding programs. Even their children, Kent, 13, and Kristen, 10, have specific duties. Kent and Kristen's charge is raising the calves.

A certain synergism arises out of

this specialization, making the overall farming operation stronger and more efficient.

Pride and sense of accomplishment spurs each family member to be aggressive and innovative in order to achieve better results from their work. Still this family of strong faith does not claim to be totally responsible for the outcome of their endeavors.

"We started with nothing," said Hoffer, "and we have never had a crop failure. God gives the increase."

Even in this year of drought Hoffer reaped a bountiful crop.

Hoffer's prize winning field yielded a total of 9.2 tons of hay equivalent per acre, with 3328 pounds per acre of crude protein and more than 9500 pounds of total digestible nutrients.

The stand of Dekalb 130 alfalfa was established in 1982 on Hagerstown-Duffield soil. He took off four cuttings, the first on June 1 for haylage and the remainder on July 7, Aug. 15 and Sept. 29 for hay.

He attributed much of his winning yield to fertilization with large amounts of manure particularly during the corn phase of the crop rotation.

Hoffer follows a rotation schedule of small grains, followed by soybeans, followed by corn, then after manuring all winter he plants alfalfa in the spring. With a disk, he incorporates a starter fertilizer, insecticide, and a herbicide. Then he seeds 22 pounds of alfalfa seed per acre with a Brillion seeder.

"As a general rule," said Hoffer, "we try to put the first and fourth cuttings from our 50 acres of alfalfa in the silo. The second and third cuttings are harvested for hay."

"If there is one thing Don can't stand, it's weeds in his alfalfa," Sherry offered.

For this reason Hoffer spray his alfalfa stands with Princep, a herbicide, late in the fall when the alfalfa is dormant. Hoffer claims this prevents weeds that would normally be in the first cutting from growing.

Hoffer soil tests his alfalfa fields after the third cutting has been harvested. He applies fertilizer according to the soil analysis after

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## Feeding haylage



From a motorized cart, Hoffer feeds out his high quality haylage to anxiously awaiting cows.

## 'Cake Baker'



Sherry Hoffer mixes the concentrate for each cow individually from this custom designed feed cart. The four small containers on the side of the cart contain vitamins and minerals, which are added to the rations of high producers.

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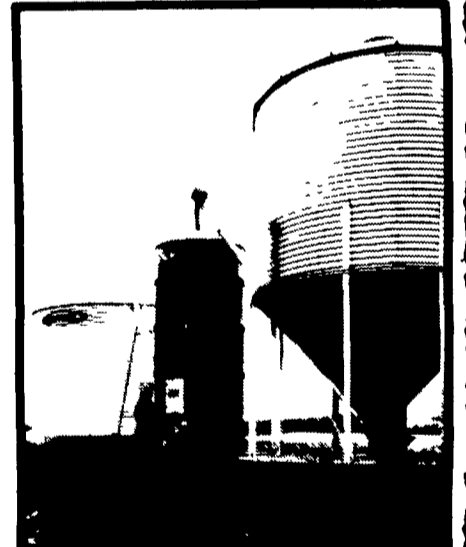
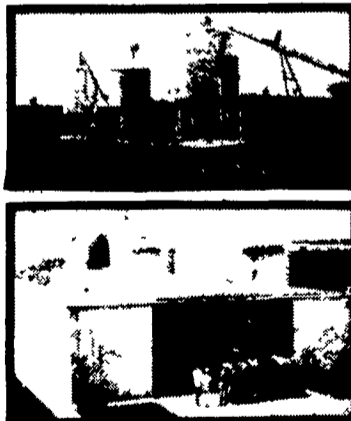
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