

New Park couple moves from part - to full-time farming

NEW PARK — When Dan and Amelia Buttorff established a gilt producing program in 1979, their success enabled them to switch from part- to full-time farming.

"This is something we had dreamed of doing during the previous 10 years," Dan says. "And without our gilt producing operation, I know I wouldn't be farming full-time right now. I definitely believe it has helped us to farm successfully."

For ten years prior to starting their gilt producing operation, Dan worked full-time as a public utility representative. He resented the double burden of farming and full-time employment. "This is where I wanted to be," he says. "I felt my life is right here, on the farm".

Splitting their lives between farming and outside employment also frustrated Ame, whose family has farmed for seven generations. "We didn't want to work for anyone else," she says. "This was a particularly stressful way of life. Now our future depends on how successfully we make this operation work."

So in 1979, Dan and Ame started raising crossbred gilts for Kleen Leen, Inc., a Ralston Purina

Company subsidiary. At first they produced a York x Duroc crossbred gilt. More recently they switched to a York x Landrace x Duroc cross (V-line) by rotating York-Landrace and York-Duroc boars.

Kleen Leen, a breeding stock firm, contracts with independent breeders such as Dan and Ame Buttorff to produce high-quality gilts and boars for sale as breeding stock. The independent breeding operations are carefully monitored for any health problems, and must adhere to strict disease prevention guidelines developed by Kleen Leen. These include slaughter inspections, vaccination programs and isolation of new boars.

The total confinement, shower-in breeding operation was a new experience for the Buttorffs. "For 10 years before that we raised hogs out-of-doors," Dan says.

Management Course
Raising pigs in confinement called for a complete change in production methods. The Buttorffs needed advice on constructing a clean, solidly-built confinement unit. They also took management courses to familiarize themselves with their new vocation. "Kleen



Dan and Amy Buttorff confer at barn office desk on recordkeeping for their farrow-to-finish hog confinement operation.

Leen was on call during construction of the unit, even though it was unrelated to the breeding operation," Dan says. "They also suggested I take a seven-day course through Kleen Leen's Professional Management Seminar (PMS). There were two days of classes, and five days hands-on training in a swine confinement unit in Missouri," Dan says.

The breeding operation has contributed in large part to the financial stability of the Buttorff family farm, Dan says.

Changes in overall production methods, due to Kleen Leen suggestions, and a lot of hard work and dedication by the Buttorffs, have made the operation efficient. This year, the Buttorffs produced 4,000 pigs, 50 percent of which were finished for market, or sales as feeder pigs at 50 lbs. "Having the diversity of three different markets has helped when prices are low," Ame says.

The operation's efficiency is evident in other areas as well. Using a hand-mating program, the

Buttorffs achieved a 92-93 percent conception rate — well over the 83-85 percent average for this method. In 1982, they marketed 9.6 pigs per litter, also considerably higher than the national average of 7.2

Replacement gilts are selected from finishing to be brought into the existing herd. This has proven to be especially advantageous to the operation. "We select only high quality animals," Dan says.

Splits Chores

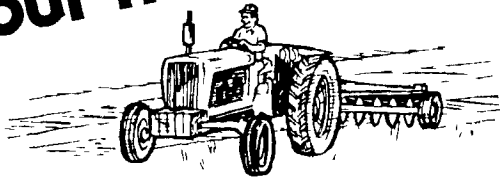
A successful farm has meant

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File in the round, the Buttorff's hog breeding wheel enables Amy and Dan to maintain accurate, fingertip-ready records on the reproductive status of each breeding animal.

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