

# Dairy farming helps change young lives

**BY ROBIN PHILLIPS**  
Staff Correspondent

**REHRERSBURG** — It's called "the hill," God's Mountain, and includes over 300 acres of rolling countryside. Smiles are easily found here; cooperation, compassion and sharing are in abundance. Lives change. Former outcasts are transformed into good citizens and active Christians.

This haven is the Teen Challenge Farm and Training Center, located outside of Rehrersburg, Berks County.

The training center includes a print shop, ceramics shop, auto body shop, greenhouse, gymnasium, chapel, classrooms, and a dairy farm. The purpose of the center is to rehabilitate men with "life controlling problems," mainly alcohol and drug addiction.

Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and must go through an induction center where they have demonstrated their interest in improving themselves and in becoming a Christian. Once at the center, training emphasizes building Christian character, upgrading schooling, and learning one of the 21 vocational trades at the center to prepare them for a new life in society once again.

The teaching at the center stresses the application of Biblical principles to relationships in the family, church, chosen vocation and the community.

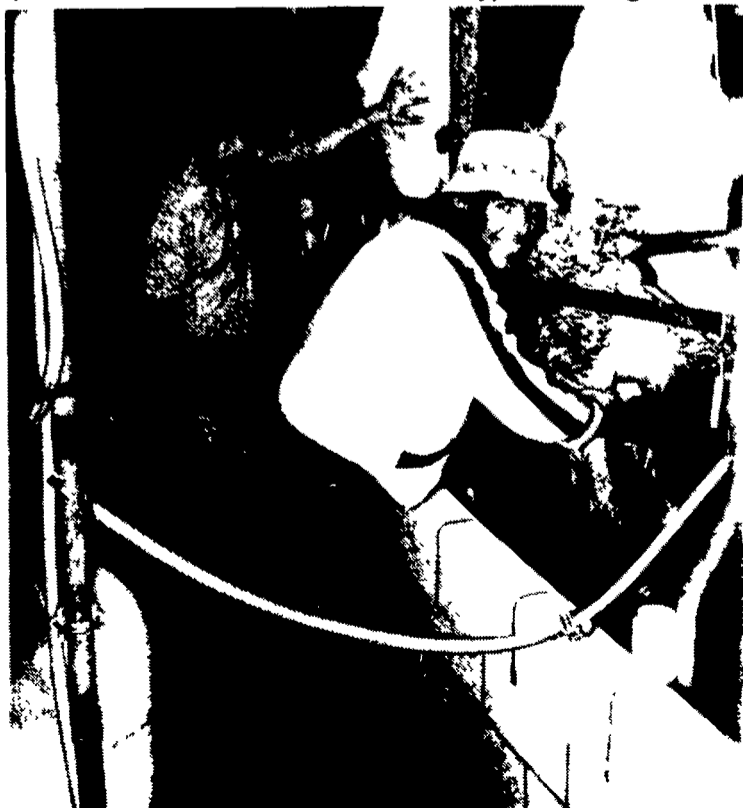
One of the best means of teaching these principles at the center is the dairy farm located within the complex. One hundred and fifteen Holstein cows are milked twice a day by students who volunteer to learn farming. Approximately 500 acres are tilled by students who learn that farmers



Teen Challenge complex in Rehrersburg, Berks County, includes dairy farm in the background, other vocational-educational structures and staff housing in the foreground.



Philipian, a student, works with calves. Number of stones placed on hutches reminds students of type of feeding.



Three students and a staff member make up a milking crew on Teen Challenge Farm

work in all kinds of weather, even when they are sick. Replacement stock and bulls are raised by the students, in addition to some sheep.

The herd currently averages 15,762 pounds milk, 3.7% butterfat with 586 pounds butterfat. The herdsman predicts production will surpass 16,000 pounds in a month or two. The farm is able to support itself, the staff and still make contributions to the main complex on "the hill."

"It costs us to have students here," states Nelson Martin, farm manager. "But, we're not that interested in the money, but in changing lives."

"It's rewarding working with the students and seeing the changes," Martin states. Martin has been with Teen Challenge for five years. A previous dairy farmer, he sold his operation to work at Teen Challenge.

"This is considered a ministry," says Lewis Sager, herdsman. "We deal with all kinds of mixed up backgrounds. We aren't working for ourselves, we're working for the Lord," he states.

Teen Challenge is a national network of rehabilitation centers for men and women. It receives no

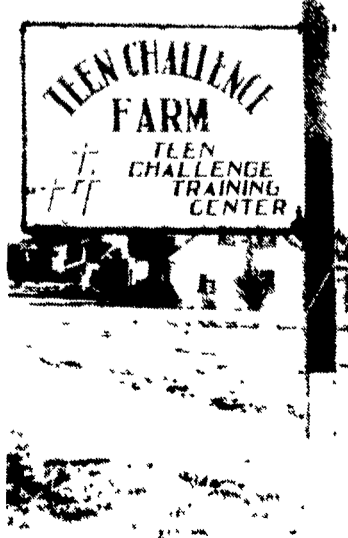
government funding and relies on support from churches of all demoninations, groups, and any individual who would like to help support its concepts. There are no tuition fees for students and anyone is welcomed.

The Rehrersburg center can accomodate 240 students. The average age of the students is 24. There is no upper age limit but the minimum age is 16 years. Martin explains that the older students have seen more alcohol related

problems while the problems of the younger generations are more drug related. At the center, "there is absolutely no smoking or drinking permitted ever," Martin states.

Students are housed, four to a room. "They have to learn to deal with each other's personalities," Martin explains. In the first four months of the ten-month program, a student gets to switch from one vocation to another. At the end of

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Kevin, a student, and Nelson Martin, farm manager, hold a set of triplet lambs recently born on farm.