

Guernsey gold

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Buildings are not a big money item here. The buildings are well-maintained but no new buildings have been added, with the exception of an extension on the dairy barn 12 years ago. Dave is very proud of his calf barn which is a renovated shed with individual pens.

When Dave returned to the farm after graduation from Virginia Polytech, he brought with him many valuable skills. He now does most of the health work including pregnancy checks, as well as all of the AI. Although these are not large dollar items, over a year's time, the amount saved is significant.

Dave now plans the breeding program. Cows are individually mated considering their weaknesses. Type is a consideration but milk production is not sacrificed. "Showing does not pay the bills," says Dave.

Type is not the major consideration but it has become more important in the past few years. Dave and Tom have become more active in the showing with Lebanon Valley Guernseys. Their most recent sweep was at the 1984 Pa. Farm Show where they captured Grand Champion, Junior Champion, Premier Breeder, and Premier Exhibitor honors.

Maryland State Fair was another stop on the show circuit for the Smiths this year, where they swept the junior classes. They are particularly proud of their winning in the produce of dam class at Maryland, when they won with heifers over pairs of cows.

These Guernseys have also made their mark on the national level as well. Tom has had a senior yearling nominated for Junior All-

American honors and received honorable mention. This year their fancy junior yearling was nominated for All-American honors. The Smiths recently were notified that she, too, received honorable mention. They are especially happy with their show winnings as their herd is almost 100 percent home-bred.

Dave admits that some of their older cows are kept on the farm because of their pedigrees. They can show and sell type heifers out of these cows which justifies tolerating lower milk production. Ten of the cows in the herd have produced over 100,000 pounds of milk with three of those having over 120,000. Milk and type definitely go hand in hand here. The Farm Show champion has a record of 19,000 pounds of milk and 900 pounds of fat as a 3-year-old.

What do future plans for Lebanon Valley Farms include? Dave said that an important goal is to have better quality cattle while maintaining production. Their hope is to be able to have available for sale those cattle which would provide a good foundation for someone else and breed on.

Another goal is to produce 100 percent of their own feed and forage. However, urban pressure is definitely felt in their current location. Rental cropland is also at a premium with some nearby property rented recently for over \$125 an acre.

Dave and Tom plan to continue their contact with other breeds. Tom currently reads breed magazines from all breeds to stay current with all aspects of the dairy industry.

Tom will be graduating in May from Delaware Valley College and hopes to find employment near

nome so that he can stay involved in the family farm.

Plans have been made to continue in the show ring. The future looks bright here as more of their outstanding young heifers mature. "We're going to be back again," Dave said proudly. Tom also has been hooked on his success on the tanbark and looks forward to continuing.

As is the case on many farms, this family is also active in the community. Bob is a director of Pennsylvania Guernsey Association, is a director of Lebanon County Extension Association and is active in the Palmyra Church of the Brethren.

Dave is involved with 4-H dairy projects and has assisted in coaching the Lebanon county dairy judging team in the past. He also serves on the Mid-Atlantic Guernsey Sire Committee. This group picks bulls which they then work to establish a proof on. Semen is collected from these bulls and distributed among the 30 to 40 member herds.

Tom has been active at Delaware Valley College. He judged with the dairy judging team which topped the VPI team at Harrisburg this fall. That win resulted in much family banter at the Smith home. Tom credits his judging experience with giving him the opportunity to see cattle and dairy shows all over the United States. He also returns home every other weekend to assist with milking and other farm chores. This allows Bob and Dave to each have one Sunday a month off.

Betty Smith is involved in the management of the retail store and helps with the record keeping.

Dave's wife, Sharon, has only been a "farm wife" for five months. Although a "city girl" by birth, she has taken a very active interest in the farm. She is employed full-time at the Hershey



Buildings on the Smith farm are not a big dollar item as Dave points out with this shed converted to individual calf pens.

Medical Center but still finds time to help care for the calves and attend shows and sales. "She is our helper at the shows and is the 'official show sign letterer,'" Bob said. Sharon had her first experience in showing a cow at the Farm Show.

As all farmers know, good help is a real asset and the Smiths have

had Mark Habecker working full-time for them for 13 years. Bob introduces Mark as "part of the family" which indicates his importance on this farm.

The sum of this farm family teamwork is Lebanon Valley Farms' Guernseys, a name to look for in the future.



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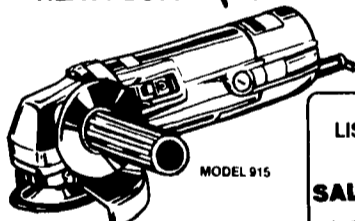
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