

# Shalom Farm stresses quality of its product



Solomon, second youngest of the 10 Meyer children, holds Rose Petal in front of farm sign mounted on milk house.

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS  
Staff Correspondent

BETHEL — Top quality and extensive promotion are two items that Jacob Meyer and his son, Joseph, insist on in their family dairy operation along I-78 at R1, Bethel.

"I'm a great believer in advertising," Meyer states.

"It's my opinion if farmers would improve milk quality, it would help the dairy situation. I'm still convinced that if you put out a better product, more people are going to buy it."

Meyer and his family operate Shalom Farm. They sell raw milk, ice cream, and cheese. Although very small by today's standards, milking 12 cows, they incorporate all the modern, time-proven practices in their operation.

They milk in a two-stanchion parlor with one bucket milker. Milk from each cow is weighed every milking and they are on an owner-sampler DHIA testing plan. Cows are tied in a well bedded, loose housing type barn and fed a 16% grain mix with alfalfa and grass hay several times a day. Udders and flanks are also chipped and cows are kept extremely clean. Shalom Farm may not be representative of a large working dairy operation, but the cows, equipment, products, and methods reflect the individualized attention paid to every detail by this family.

"They get individual attention," Meyer's oldest son, Joseph, says about the cows. Ayrshires and Jerseys make up the milking string and receive weekly injections of vitamin B when they are under stress and milking heavily. milking is done every 12 hours and the cows are always handled very gently.

"I enjoy it," Jacob Meyer says about milking chores and adds that he considers the cows as his hobby.

"These little cows are intelligent," he says. "They're almost like part of the family." Meyer currently has a small Jersey cow milking 71 pounds a day that he is very proud of. Purchased by Meyer at a dispersal sale, very cheaply, Meyer says that every 18 days, "Tis" milks her weight in five percent milk.

Meyer explains that they started with several Ayrshires and decided to add some Jerseys for the higher quality milk. Jerseys were also easier for them to handle. "I was raised with colored cows," he states.

Jacob Meyer's main occupation is that of a preacher and teacher. He is the founder of the Assemblies of Yahweh, a non-profit, religious organization that follows faithfully the literal interpretations of the Bible. He does extensive research



Jacob Meyer, whose main profession is teaching and preaching with the Assemblies of Yahweh, Bethel, says he enjoys milking cows as a kind of hobby.



Sixteen-year-old Nathaniel Meyer pours milk into tank after milking is weighed from each cow.



Joseph Meyer, oldest son, displays products sold at Shalom Farm, where quality takes precedence over quantity and foremost concern is a high nutritional, unadulterated product.



Milking parlor at Shalom Farm typifies simplicity and cleanliness of Meyer operation. Only two cows are in the stanchion parlor at a time as each is milked separately.

around the world and teaches Hebrew and Greek.

Meyer and his older sons also do missionary work on several continents. Meyer ancestors came from Germany in 1719 and settled in Lancaster County. In 1732, they started farming in Lebanon County and the current operation was started in Berks County in 1977.

"One of the reasons for this farm," Meyer explains, "is that we wanted really good products for our families." In keeping with this principle, they raise their own vegetables, meat and milk. Their Pennsylvania approved raw milk license enables them to sell their milk right out of the tank.

The requirements for the license were very stringent, according to Meyer. "But that's what we want,

quality," he says. An ultraviolet purifier was installed for the water, milk is cooled down to 32 degrees in less than one-half hour in their "ice bank" tank, and bacteria counts as low as 700 with less than one coliform are maintained. All equipment is completely taken apart and cleaned after each milking.

"Our milk is virtually as pure as pasturized milk and yet it has the natural enzymes in it," Meyer states.

To keep their milk fresh, excess milk from retail sales is picked up at the farm every other day by a cheese plant in Winfield. There, it is traded for high quality cheeses that are sold in their store. Some of their milk is also shipped to a

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