

# Management makes the difference at Melwood Farm

**BY LAURA ENGLAND**  
**COCHRANVILLE** — At a time when the economy seems to be working against the agricultural industry, especially that sector involved in dairying, farmers are realizing the importance of "buckling down" and keeping a close eye on finances and management decisions.

One such farmer is a 28-year-old Cochranville dairyman who believes in using the "tools" available to make sound management decisions. These tools include the use of DHIA records, breeding and feeding programs and the knowledge and experience of other dairymen.

Melvin Stoltzfus, owner of Melwood Farm, R2 Cochranville, has been farming for seven years and credits much of his current success to the use of management tools coupled with the help he's received from other dairymen, namely his father, Jacob Stoltzfus, and E.M. Weir.

It was from these two men that

Melvin got his start in the dairy business. And it was from these two men that he acquired the foundation cattle for his high producing herd of registered Holsteins.

Melvin bought his 75-acre farm and 10 of his first heifers from E.M. Weir. In addition, he bought cattle from the Dunwood herd owned by his father. These cattle constituted about one-third of his 36-cow herd.

Melvin explained that years of high quality cattle breeding were behind his original herd. Weir's herd had been named high herd in Chester County, and the elder Stoltzfus had received high herd honors on both the county and state levels.

"My dad's breeding has had a lot of influence on the cows," Melvin said.

The influence on these cows has been evident in the production averages recorded through the Dairy Herd Improvement Association. In his first year of



• Melwood Farms, R2 Cochranville, Chester County, is home to a herd of 36 outstanding registered Holsteins which have an average production record of 22,954 pounds of milk and 883 pounds of fat.

farming, Melvin saw a herd average of 19,041 pounds of milk and 780 pounds of fat with a 4.1 percent fat test. That average has increased considerably each successive year.

In 1983, the herd produced 22,954 pounds of milk and 883 pounds of fat with a 3.8 percent fat test. These records earned Melwood Farm several awards including the Octorara Young Farmers high herd award and the Pa. Dairyman's Association high fat award.

While pleased with his herd's production ability, Melvin said he is equally excited about the caliber of some of his younger cows.

Excited he is because of the production potential of these animals and the fact that they are of his own breeding.

Two of these heifers, one a descendent of the Weir herd and the other from the Dunwood line, fit Melvin's definition of exciting and outstanding. As 3-year-olds, both have classified well, and both are high producing animals.

Dunwood Golden Sparkle-ET, owned in part by Melvin and his brother Alvin and father, has scored excellent at 91 points as a 3-year-old. She comes from a family of six direct Gold Medal Dams, and is projected to produce between 24,000 and 25,000 pounds of milk at three years.

Melwood Valiant Mitten is Melvin's other pride and joy. From the Weir line, Mitten has scored very good at 89 points. She has complemented this classification with a 24,000 pound milk average at two years and has milked over

100 pounds a day during the first three tests of her current lactation.

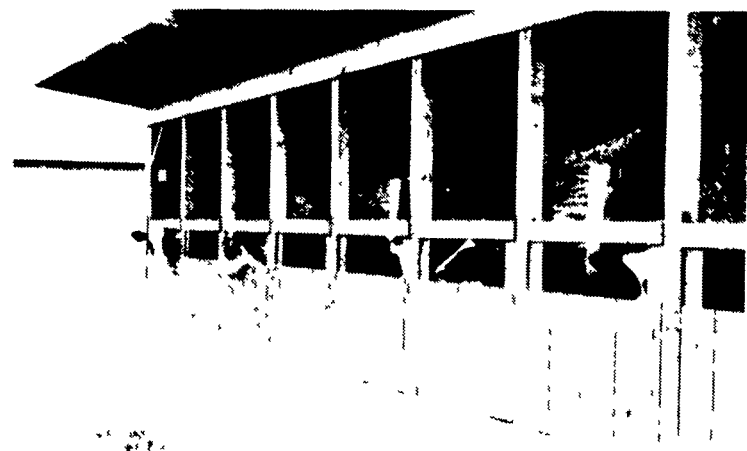
In addition to these two milking powerhouses, seven of his 2-year-olds are predicted for over 20,000 pounds of milk. Five of these

seven, Melvin said, are products of his foundation herd.

It is in these younger, more productive cattle that Melvin sees the strength in his herd.

Explaining this further, Melvin

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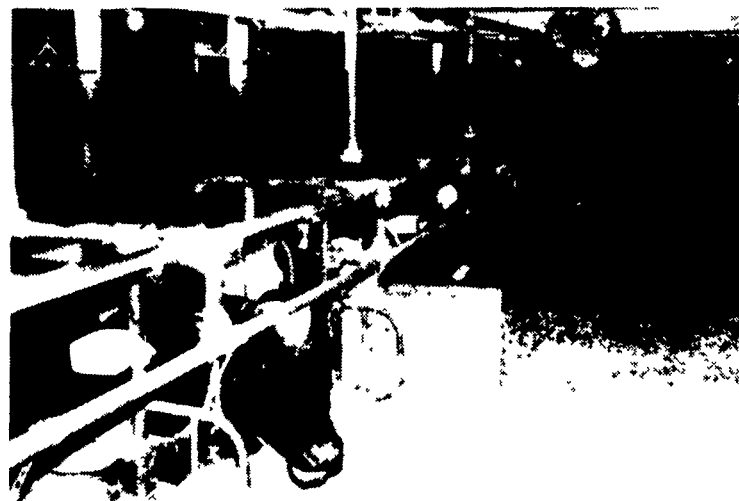
Calves are housed outdoors in individual pens and are weaned at three months.



At three years, Dunwood Golden Sparkle-ET has made her mark in the Melwood herd. She is classified excellent at 91 points and is projected at 25,000 pounds of milk this lactation.



Embryo transfer is part of the breeding program at Melwood Farms. These six calves are all ET's, from Dunwood Golden Sunlight.



Melvin Stoltzfus considers the comfort of his cows important. Feed is available at all times.



Melwood Valiant Mitten is an outstanding 3-year-old, having classified 89 points with a production record of 24,000 pounds of milk at two years.



Large, open-air pens are home to the young heifers who are grouped according to age and size.