

### Jeffrey on tractor



Jeffrey, the eldest of the young Kennedys, is currently working fulltime on the farm.

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BUTLER — While specialization is evident on some farms today, diversification is the management philosophy seen on the Butler County farm of the James Kennedy family.

Diversification is the philosophy and excellence is the standard on Four Seasons Farm. Jim represents the third generation of Kennedys to farm using those standards. Jim notes that even in the 1930's his grandfather was breeding the "dual purpose cow," one which would both show and milk.

The Kennedy family's Brown Swiss have proven their ability to do just that. Rita Kennedy supervises the show string along with her five children, all of which are in 4-H this year. Under her guidance and with their hard work, many awards have been brought home to hang on the office walls. These 4-H's have taken grand champion honors at district competition for three years and have gone on to place in the top three at the State Junior Show. In addition, championships and premier exhibitor honors have been won at the Farm Show.

The winning this family is most proud of is a recent announcement that Jeff's 5-year-old has been named Reserve All-American in the National Contest. She had previously won first in the Eastern National Brown Swiss Show in 1983 and was the Supreme Champion at the Western Pa./Canton Show in August of 1983 where she topped more than 500 milk cows of all breeds.

Holding to the philosophy of the "dual purpose cow," Fancy has records of 21,181 pounds of milk and 902 pounds of fat.

Also in December 1983, Fullerton Perfection Marie was named high producing 3-year-old in the nation for protein with 22,530 pounds of milk, 780 pounds of protein and 859 pounds of fat. In the aged cow division, the Kennedys claimed twelfth and sixteenth places in National Competition for protein production.

Their rolling herd average on 56 cows is 14,700 pounds of milk and 619 pounds of fat with a 4.5 percent test.

Excellence is evident in the Brown Swiss herd, but it can also be found in the other aspects of this diversified farm operation. The crops aspect includes corn, oats, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa and grass hay on the 657 acres owned and 55 acres rented. The grain produced that is not needed for livestock feed is sold in the Philadelphia area and locally. However, Jim notes that

price advantage to marketing exists in the East.

In support of his philosophy of diversification, Jim notes that during the grain crunch he "would have lost it." That year, putting corn in the ground cost him \$2, and he sold it for \$1.60 a bushel. On top of that, interest rates went up.

So, in addition to dairy and grain farming, this family is involved in a Farmer's Market near Pittsburgh. They have a 34-foot stall from which they sell beef, vegetables, poultry and sweet corn. This is now a seasonal market but is open every Saturday morning, 52 weeks a year. This necessitates much preparation.

"We work all day Friday to get ready and get up at 2:30 a.m. in order to get to the market by 5 a.m.," Rita says.

In addition to these aspects of their operation, son Jason has started a small flock of Rambouillet sheep after being given an orphan lamb. Santa Claus also helped to add one more facet when he brought son John two pigs for Christmas.

Their family is very important to Jim and Rita. They believe that their children should be given an

opportunity to try new things. When a child is interested in a particular species of livestock, they provide the opportunity.

Like most farm families, they would like to see their children stay on the farm, but "we try not to make decisions for the kids," Jim says. They hope by providing opportunities and teaching their children to take responsibility that those decisions will be wise ones.

In 1977, Jim joined his brothers in purchasing a 700-acre farm of which he received 385 acres. One of his major goals with this purchase was to have enough land "to take the kids into the operation" if they choose.

"All of us go through the same thing, wondering are they or are they not going to want to stay here," Jim says.

The Kennedy's oldest son, Jeff, is currently facing that decision. After graduation, he had the opportunity to enter college but felt he needed "a year off." He has decided to spend that year working on the farm as he determines what he will pursue in the future.

### Reserve All-American



Lake Lance Fancy C, owned by the Kennedy's, is the Reserve All-American 5-year-old.

As Jim talks about his farming and five children, but Rita is also operation, he quickly points out that he and Rita are truly partners. Not only does she manage a home and five children, but Rita is also totally responsible for the show string. She is one of six coordinators for the Pennsylvania

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