

Look What's to see on Virginia farm management tour

McIntires specialize in Angus cattle

WHITE POST VA. — If not for a twist of fate, one of Virginia's top beef cattle farms might not be in existence today.

P.T. McIntire, owner of P.T. McIntire and Sons, Inc., can vividly recall the events that led him into the beef industry. "I was really interested in dairy farming," he admitted. "I wanted to make some money and I thought milking cows would be the way to do it."

The Clarke County farmer had even gone so far as to plan his milking parlor when fate stepped in. "The man who was going to buy my milk had an appointment at the farm, but he never showed up," P.T. said. "I took that as a signal. It turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to me."

McIntire's three sons also played a role in his decision to enter the beef business. "The boys got interested in beef cattle through 4-H, so we started putting a few cows together," said the 63-year-old cattleman.

From those humble beginnings, the McIntire farm has grown into one of the most respected Angus operations in the state. As such, it was chosen to be a part of the 1984 Virginia Farm Management Tour on Saturday, July 21. The farm will be open to the public from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

McIntire chose to specialize in

Angus cattle because of their popularity and desirable characteristics. "Angus are good, hardy cows and will winter on roughage that a lot of other cows won't," P.T. said. "They're also good mothers, good milkers, easy calvers and are polled, so we don't have horns to contend with."

With sons Danny, Doug and Scott, the elder McIntire cares for a herd of 125 purebred Angus cattle, as well as a commercial herd of 500 cows and heifers.

To accommodate their large beef herd, the McIntires farm 3,550 acres of land—2,400 of which is rented. "We're spread out in a ten-mile radius with about 15 different farms," explained Doug, age 38. "Each of us have different farms and cows we're responsible for."

In the farm's purebred division, about 90 of the registered cows are bred artificially to superior bulls in the Angus breed. "We breed to increase frame size, but don't want to lose any performance or maternal characteristics," said 33-year-old Scott.

The breeding program has been one of the strengths of the McIntire farm for several years. The family has won the coveted Angus Get-of-Sire award for the best offspring of a sire for animals tested by the Virginia Beef Cattle Improvement Association (BCIA).

An Aberdeen Angus, P.S. Power

Play, was bred with McIntire cows and sired six bulls with an average weight gain of 1,105 pounds each—the greatest weight gain of any group tested in the 1982-83 period. The bulls gained about 3.5 pounds per day during the test period.

Performance testing of their cattle is a standard practice with the McIntire family. "It's a tool we use to measure our progress," Doug said. "It gives us a chance to compare our cattle with the cattle of other breeders."

And in most cases, their cattle compare very favorably. The White Post farm has had the top-selling bull and one of the top gainers on test at the Culpeper Bull Test Station several times.

The McIntires have been just as successful with their commercial herd by breeding to suit the ever-changing market. "I've seen market demand go from one extreme to another," P.T. said. "We used to want cattle short and blocky, but that's not true anymore."

By the use of cross-breeding, McIntire cows have remained in constant demand at the market. "We used a popular Hereford/Angus cross a few years ago," Doug said. "Now we naturally breed Chianina-cross bulls to our Angus cows."

A large Italian breed, the

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P.T. McIntire inspects some of his purebred Angus cattle.

Farming is in their blood at Waverly Jerseys

CLEARBROOK, Va. — Dairy farming seems to be in the blood of the Stiles brothers.

The Frederick County farmers are third-generation dairymen who own and operate Waverly Farm, one of the top Jersey farms in the nation.

Because of their ability to maintain a highly profitable and productive farm, the Stiles family was chosen to be part of the 1984 Virginia Farm Management Tour in Frederick and Clarke counties.

Brothers Kenneth, Mike, Paul and Tracy are partners in an operation that was started by their late father, Robert.

"Our Dad milked Jerseys on our grandfather's farm in Maryland," explained Mike, age 35. "After our grandfather's death, the farm was sold and Dad began looking for another farm to buy."

The elder Stiles' search took him to West Virginia and the Eastern shore region of Maryland before he found what he was looking for in Clearbrook, Va. "Waverly Farm had been operated as a dairy, so the buildings were already here. All we had to do was bring in our cows and start milking," explained Paul, age 33.

So in 1967, the Stiles family and 150 Jersey cows moved to Waverly Farm. One of the first family decisions at their new home involved renaming the farm or keeping its original name of Waverly.

"We decided to keep the name of Waverly and our Dad always joked that the real reason was because no one was willing to climb the silos and paint a new farm name on them," laughed Mike.

Shortly after the move, the Stiles brothers began entering into the dairy business. Only one brother and one sister chose to leave the farm.

"It was Mother's dream that we all attend college," recalled Mike. "Both Paul and I had been accepted to college, but at the last minute decided not to go. Dairying was the only thing we had ever wanted to do."

Two of the brothers, however, did attend college. Kenneth, age 44, is a University of Maryland alumnus and Tracy, age 28, is a graduate of Virginia Tech. Both brothers majored in dairy science.

"You need an education to farm today," Paul said. "We learned a lot from 4-H when we were young, but the formal education Kenneth and Tracy received has been invaluable."

The four brothers also attribute much of their success to their father, who died in 1974. "He laid a good foundation for us to build upon," Paul said.

Since 1967, the Stiles brothers have increased their herd average from 8,000 pounds of milk per cow per year to over 13,700 pounds of milk and 649 pounds of butterfat per cow. Milk is collected twice



Paul, left, and Mike Stiles look over their milking herd of 160 superior Jersey cows.

daily in a ten stall side-opening milk parlor, then marketed through Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Co-op.

The milking herd consists of 160 superior purebred Jersey cows. In fact, the farm is home to ten "Hall of Fame" cows whose records top 20,000 pounds of milk per year or 1,000 pounds of butterfat in a

lactation. The entire herd is on Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) test.

But the production of quality milk isn't the only concern of the Stiles family. Approximately one-third of the farm income comes from the sale of breeding stock—an area in which Waverly has earned a national reputation.

Waverly also has the distinction of being the only farm in the U.S. with two living National Grand Champion Jersey cows. The family favorite, Sybil Surville Jessee, is one of the highest living scored cows in the Jersey breed and is a two-time National Grand Champion. Another Waverly cow, W.F.

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Trellised apple trees make the difference

STEPHENS CITY, Va. — If Dudley Rinker was a gambling man, there's little doubt he'd come up a winner. The 30-year-old orchardist seems to have a knack for beating the odds.

For example, in 1975 he relied upon his seventh sense when he began experimenting with unusual trellised apple trees. The system had been used in Europe for many years, but was virtually unheard of in Virginia's apple country.

The technique not only brings trees into production sooner, but

also offers more production per acre than conventional methods.

"A lot of people didn't think it would work, but I felt sure I could make them work," said Dudley. "Now they're my pride and joy."

As general manager of Rinker Orchards Inc., Dudley has a lot to be proud of. The third-generation farm, known for its quality fruit, is a popular pick-your-own stop. In addition, it has been chosen to be a part of the 1984 Virginia Farm Management Tour, Saturday, July 21, and will be open to the public

from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Started as a general farm by Dudley's grandfather, the land was transformed into orchards by his father, Ray. "He decided he'd rather be in the apple business than in livestock, so he sold all the cattle and planted the farm in trees," Dudley explained.

His father suffered a stroke in 1972, the same year Dudley graduated from high school. The elder Rinker died a year later, leaving his wife, Ruth, with the

orchard. "Mother taught junior high, so she really couldn't look after the orchard," Dudley said. "Someone had to do it, so I stepped in."

Still in his teens, Dudley suddenly had responsibility for the 180-acre family orchard, as well as a leased orchard. "Fortunately I had the help of a man who had worked here for 30 years, as well as other growers in the area," he recalled. "They took me under

their wing."

The young orchardist wasn't exactly a stranger to the business, however. He and older brother, Randy, has leased their own orchard since junior high. "Our father thought it would be good experience, as well as educational, for us to operate our own business," Dudley said. "Randy didn't care for the orchard business, but I did."

The Frederick County youth

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