

'Uniformity' cited as key in buying feeder cattle

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TUCKER COUNTY, W. Va. — "Uniformity." In a word, County Agent Voras Haynes summed up what feedlot operators and "grazers" alike are looking for in feeder calves and cattle they're buying.

In a tour organized through West Virginia University Extension and coordinated by county agents Haynes and Jim Stiles, a group of potential buyers got a chance to look over some of the Mountain State's offerings on September 4.

All together, the group of feedlot operators from Ohio, and farmers from other parts of West Virginia who graze calves were shown 516 calves and 220 yearling cattle at ten different farms scattered across Randolph and Tucker counties.

According to County Agent Haynes, these potential buyers were "impressed with the fine quality calves" they saw. "Some buyers are looking for thick, heavy calves that will finish out at 1100-1150 lbs.," Haynes stated. "Others want the more exotic breed types that will finish at 1200 lbs. or better. But all in all, they liked what they saw here."

Angus, Charolais, Simmental and Black Baldy were some of the breeds and crosses represented during this tour.

One sore point, however, was the more than 100 lb. weight spread which marked some calf groups

which the buyers mined. Although a few of the "grazers" — those purchasers who pasture the calves until the animals reach 1000 lbs. before selling them to a finishing feedlot — indicated that they were willing to buy different weight groups off farms and make up various packages with them or sell them later at staggered times, the feedlot buyers did not concur. Stating that to stay profitable they had to keep their lots full at all times, the feedlot operators made known their preference for no more than a 100 lb. weight spread top to bottom on any truckload of calves they bought.

This problem of providing uniformity in weight as well as type and frame is one which West Virginia beef producers are preparing to tackle, through the utilization of programs like performance testing. By using tools such as estrus synchronization farmers like Kermit Bonner of Tucker County are reducing their calving season, in order to provide feeders with calves that meet that "less than 100-lb. spread" requirement.

And through good record-keeping, farmers Steve and Ronald Warner, Max and Hubert Teter, Kermit and Ruth Bonner, Mark Pritt, Jack Wilkins, and Roy Mullenex (those beef producers on this year's tour) will strive to continually improve their herds and the calves they offer for sale to out of state and in-state buyers.



Angus and Charolais crosses can be found on the Kermit Bonner farm in Tucker County, W. Va.



Bulls are also raised on Kermit Bonner farm. This group are all progeny of a son of Schearbrook Shoshone.

Couple attends conference

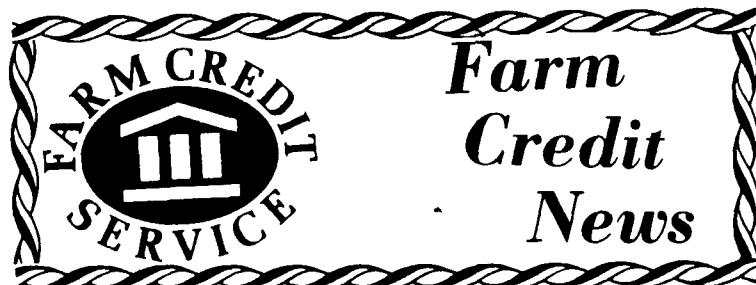
YORK — Mr. & Mrs. Barry L. Black, of R1, Biglerville, participated in a special Cooperative Couples Conference recently in Danville, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Association of Farmer Cooperatives and Penn State's College of Agriculture.

The two joined with 45 other young farm couples from throughout the Commonwealth to take part in the two-day event. Sessions were held at the Sheraton Inn, Danville.

The two are sponsored by the York Farm Credit Service which serves farmer members and communities in this region.

At the conference, they shared facts, opinions, and insights about cooperatives and their role in the strengths of our business enterprise system.

In addition, they discussed ways in which young farm men and women play a vital leadership role in cooperatives and in community affairs. They took part in discussions designed to pinpoint concerns of family farms and also major issues of cooperatives that serve their farms.



Barry and Linda Black with their daughter.

PFA launches member drive

CAMP HILL — Enthusiasm will be an integral part of the 1985 membership campaign of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association (PFA).

Groundwork for this fall's sign up campaign will be laid Monday and Tuesday during a conference of PFA membership chairman in Harrisburg.

PFA vice president D. Eugene Gayman of Franklin County and PFA administrative secretary Richard Newpher will address the

county association leaders on the importance of membership expansion in 1985. Information on how to organize a short and successful sign up campaign in each county will be conveyed in a series of education sessions. PFA plans for representatives of all 54 of its county associations to attend.

PFA president Keith Eckel said, "This year with the theme 'Campaign 85' our leaders are striving for membership goals with a renewed enthusiasm. We

believe that membership growth is possible and, indeed, vital to the continued effectiveness and progress of our organization. We think that all of agriculture will benefit from a stronger farm organization. We are looking forward to a quick, effective campaign so each county association will be able to devote more time and energy to other important farmers' association programs such as local affairs and legislation."



Randolph County, W. Va. agent Voras Haynes shows calves on Kermit Bonner farm to Dale Beckett, Monroe County. Beckett purchases calves to graze until they reach 1000 lbs. when he sells them to feedlots.



Kermit Bonner sorts calves to be weighed as part of management in his performance testing program.