

...ns and a family devoted to dairying

class each morning lessened the impact of arriving late at school some days.

Although Abbe had begun testing with just nine herds, in two years her schedule had doubled. She recently returned to the York DHIA testing program, after other employment for an interim. One of the most beneficial angles of her testing job, in Abbe's opinion, is that the milking hours she must work allow her to spend many daytime hours with her two-year-old daughter, Amanda.

When Patti's extremely full schedule occasionally backed up during extra-rushed weeks, it was her youngest sister Edwina who usually lent a hand in catching up on herds Edwina, the third Johnson daughter, graduated in June, and by August the York DHIA board had signed her one. She now tests for a full 25-herd schedule of participating dairymen.

Younger brothers Chip, a senior in vo-ag, and sophomore student, Keel, haven't committed themselves to becoming testers, but they definitely do plan to stay in agriculture, possibly with the family's own dairy herd.

Along with Edwina, and fellow FFA'er Jerry Taylor, Chip and Keel comprise Red Lion Chapter's dairy judging team. In September, at the Harrisburg All-American judging contest, FFA division, these four captured first place honors.

They credit their 4-H and FFA judging backgrounds' for the team's success at the Harrisburg competition. One individual singled out as having influenced their judging abilities is Paul King,

noted dairy judge, Delta-area Holstein breeder and 4-H coach under whom they have studied.

Taylor's brother, Allen, is a previous FFA dairy judging team competitor, and also spent time working with the four. Jerry and Allen are the sons of Peggy and Donnell Taylor, also a dairy family from Delta.

When Ed and "town girl" Doris Johnson purchased the 150-acre home farm in 1971, they had no way of knowing their children would remain so deeply devoted to dairying. Ed has spent his entire lifetime on this farm where his father, Thomas, had maintained a herd of about 14 head of registered Ayrshires, plus one Holstein herd member.

However, the younger Johnson had always maintained an interest in purebred Holsteins, and in the early 1950's, began gradually switching to grade black and whites.

"Our first registered Holstein was an Ivanhoe from the Parkchester herd," relates Johnson. "And we bought a heifer calf from a neighbor, Dave Walker."

But his interest took a slightly different twist about 1966, when Johnson began looking into polled, or naturally hornless, Holsteins, which still comprise a fairly small percentage of the breed.

Calves at Hickorymea were then housed in small pens within a larger building, a sort of inside hutch arrangement, and tied with dog-leash chains. After one dehorning session, a calf somehow managed to rub her tie chain over the spot where the horn had been removed, causing the wound to

reopen, and she bled to death.

"That turned me on horns," says the polled promoter. "I'd never go back to all horned animals."

Polled lines were introduced to the herd through purchased animals, semen from polled bulls and the select use of Hickorymea's own-bred polled sons. Breeding in the polled lines, while maintaining other desirable traits, is a lengthy process, and the Johnson herd now has about two-thirds registered polled in the milking string.

Commerically available polled sires are limited in number, so Johnson does cross back to high P.D. bulls to maintain milk, fat and type levels. Heifers born with horns will be serviced to polled bulls or semen from polled sires.

"Polled is a dominant trait," he adds, "and the first crossing gives about a fifty percent success rate. Occasionally, in later generations, there will be a throwback and an animal with horns is born."

Other than not having to deal with the inconvenience of dehorning calves, with the potential of stunting through dehorning side effects, Johnson has never seen a



Hornless Holsteins

Dairy business -

we wouldn't want to do anything else

difference between polled and regular Holstein cattle. All are equally aggressive at the feedbunk and productive in the milk line.

While the Johnsons did not necessarily have a "game plan" to keep their children active in the dairy industry, one interesting family tradition has tied birthdays to the family cattle.

As each child celebrated a birthday, he or she was given the bull calf born on or nearest that day. The calf became the

youngster's to sell at auction, the proceeds to go for whatever special purpose the celebrant intended. Since calf prices often fluctuate with the status of the agricultural economy, it was just one small, and unique, way to interest a youngster in the state of the family business.

Although encouraged by their vo-ag instructor to stay in ag-related jobs after graduation, the Johnson children have only one real reason for doing so. It's Patti who sums it up the best: "I just like it."



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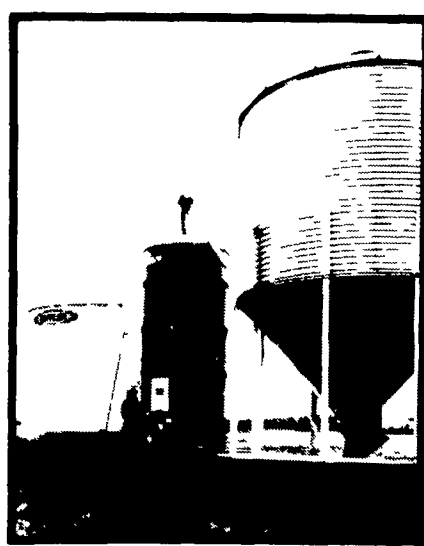
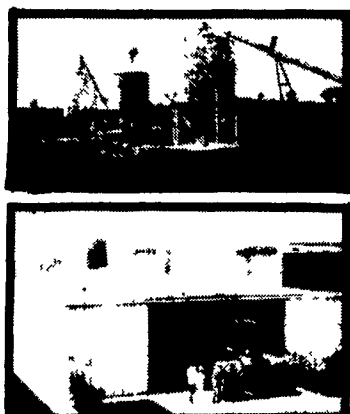
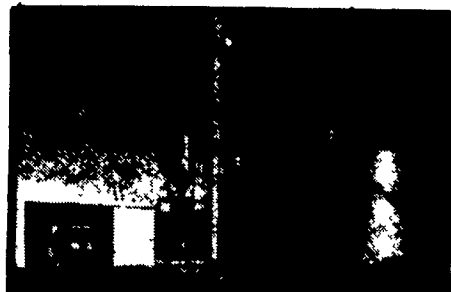
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