

Four outstanding Holstein herds showcased on farm tour

BY JOYCE BUPP
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YORK — Undaunted by the late season snow last Tuesday, York County Holstein breeders slipped northeast to the warmer and sunnier climate of Lehigh and Berks counties, for a look at outstanding investor cattle and high production family herds.

Hosts for the busload of York dairymen were Rothrock Farms, Kempton; Junge Farms, New Tripoli; Reu-Hel Farms, Mohrsville; and Hidden-View Farms, Robesonia.

Rothrock Farms

"Designers of golden opportunities" says the bright, attractive farm brochure of Rothrock, a summation of the investor herd philosophy. Established in 1981 by automobile dealership owner Bruce Rothrock, the cattle operation's aim has been to develop a farm "of the highest caliber," and "one of the premier herds in the country." Other initial goals were to develop an outstanding sale and to eventually expand to larger facilities.

The first goal has been met with extreme success. The 21 Excellents, 27 Very Goods and 12 Good Plus animals, majority of them young cows, average a BAA of 109.6. Production is equally impressive, although the 1983 average of more than 22,100 milk and 796 fat has dropped to 19,000, due to heavy E.T. flushing of these super-pedigreed individuals.

Among the outstanding foundation cows of the herd are the Holstein breed's highest production twins, Millerhurst Astronaut Dot-Twin (EX-94) and Millerhurst Astro-Dash-Twin (EX-92). The pair were the first sisters to average 2,000 pounds fat. Another top family is headed by the \$440,000 Balls Pollyboots Demand (EX-91).

Both herd and housing are immaculately kept, in the facility built from scratch with attention to unique details designed for cow comfort and operational efficiency.

An evaporation system located on the end of the barn air-conditions the tie and box stall

barn, with air drawn over a radiator-like system of piped cold water. The herd, in turn, is used to heat the sprawling complex during cold weather. A "cow power" system of heat pumps converts cow body warmth into heat for adjoining offices and employee housing, and heat exchangers pull heat from cooling milk for maintaining hot water supplies in the facility.

Feed rations are fine-tuned monthly, for a steady 20 percent protein total mixed ration. Fed four times daily, the blend is of haylage, wet brewers grain, high moisture shelled corn, cottonseed and mineral blend. Sixty-pound and over producers earn a top dressing mix of distiller's grain, high moisture shelled corn, soy meal, cotton seed and minerals. A fifth daily feeding goes to cows milking 130 pounds per day.

An anti-metal detection system of handling haylage has proved its worth according to farm manager Jack Miller. Haylage passes over two magnetic areas as it exits the unloader, and is run over an additional two magnets in the mixer wagon.

Modified calf-hutch pens provide housing for baby calves, in a high-ceilinged, side-opened area, readily visible to employees and protected between the barn, office and young stock complex. After weaning, bulls and heifers are grouped in larger pens by age and size.

Sandblasting of the foundation stone and original hewn beams have restored the bank barn to original beauty. Maternity pens fill the barn's first floor, with feed storage overhead.

Rothrock's recent Golden Opportunities sale met another initial farm goal, setting state records. And work on the third goal, expansion, is in planning. Already the milking string has far outgrown the initial barn, and will be handled in nearby rented barns.

A 200-head facility is on the drawing boards, but on hold until the future of the dairy industry is more certain.

Junge Farms

Just minutes away from the



Rothrock Farms. "Special touch" features of the Rothrock box and tie stall barn include 10-foot ceilings; summer water-cooled air conditioning; a "cow power" heat pump system to convert cow body heat to warm offices and houses; crushed stone and drain fields under box stalls; and a manager's office overlooking the entire complex.



Junge Farms. Contented cows take a mid-day rest in the picturesque Lehigh County setting of Junge Farms. Ray and Karen Moyer maintain a herd average of 19,000 pounds milk and 749 pounds fat on an unusual cattle diet incorporating raw soybeans, and a mere "taste" of hay per day.

Rothrock farm is the rustic red barn housing the Junge (pronounced young-ee) registered Holstein herd. Owned by Robert Junge, this high production string has been managed since its inception 15 years ago by former Bucks County DHIA tester Ray Moyer and his wife, Karen.

A 1981 tie-stall addition doubled the previous capacity. Seventy-five are now in the milking line-up, and plans are to fill the barn to a full 80 head. Herd average is over 19,000 milk with 749 butterfat. Classification tabulates to a BAA on the homebreds of 104.2 and sire selections are made with an eye toward high PD statistics, while maintaining butterfat test. Recently, the Moyers added protein test as still another determining factor in herd mating decisions.

Feeding a total mixed ration, and a maximum of only two books of hay per day to the milking herd, has not cut the four percent fat test. Since last October, the backbone protein booster has been an unusual ingredient—raw soybeans.

"We've had no negative effect using raw beans," claims Moyer, who crumps the high-protein legumes every day to prevent the oils from turning rancid and unpalatable. Cows get three and a half pounds of the beans in the ration, with a blend of 60 percent

haylage and 40 percent corn silage, run through a Rissler mixer.

A supplemental top-dressing is half bean meal and half a mix of distillers and brewers grains. An additional two or up to three pounds of beans go to top producers at a bonus noontime feeding.

In the works at Junge is a new calf-raising facility, with planned six-by-six pens, and box stalls for older groups, all designed for quick skid loader cleanout. Calves are all raised, including bulls. Better pedigreed young bulls go to the breeding market, with the rest are fed out as steers, and the majority custom-retailed by the half.

An earthen dam storage holds manure, which is moved from the barn via a ram pump. To eliminate bedding material tangles in the system, Moyer harvest the 150 acres of straw with a forage chopper, then stacks the chopped bedding above the tie stalls in the upper storage floor of the bank barn. A large, wheeled wire cart holds adequate bedding for a few days' needs, and can be wheeled where needed in the tie stalls.

Reu-Hel Farms

A herd dispersal five years ago drastically thinned the milking ranks at Reu-Hel Farms, owned and operated by Elwood, Ruth, Constance and Cathleen Ohlinger. When the last retailer had pulled away, only the girls' 4-H animals

and young calves from the herd remained.

Now the tie-stall barn is again bulging at the seams, with 80 head milking, 66 of the individuals carrying the farm prefix. A herd of strong, tall, well-uddered cattle, they're milking average is currently at 20,300 milk and 754 fat. Classification is equally impressive, with a BAA of 106.5, including eight head bearing EX scorings.

"I enjoy looking at good cows," says Ohlinger of this string, among them 14 daughters of Elevation, six S-W-D Valiants and four Sweet Haven Traditions.

Special favorite is Reu-Hel Valiant Cristy, a Valiant owned and successfully exhibited across the country by daughter Constance. Cristy was All-Pennsylvania junior yearling and took high honorable mention in junior All-American runoffs during 1983. She freshened with a heifer calf for her 4-H owner, and is now settled to Tradition under contract to Sire Power.

Both Cristy and a second outstanding young cow, Reu-Hel Farms Tradition Ann-ET, are on the prestigious "Elite" list. Ann's Valiant son, plus another young sire from herd bloodlines, are currently awaiting proof at Carnation Genetics.

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Reu-Hel Farms. A brief history on the barn at Reu-Hel Farms towers over the York County visitors as they assemble for a look at the Elwood and Ruth Ohlinger herd in Berks County.