

Ag leader to host Berks Farm Tour visitors

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS
Staff Correspondent

BETHEL — Berks County farmers are opening their doors this week and as they host city visitors and urban neighbors on their farms as part of the Berks County annual Farm Tours program. Sponsored each year by the Berks County Farmers Association in cooperation with the county 4-H clubs, FFA clubs, extension service and intermediate unit, the tours are designed to educate the public on the big business of agriculture and the dedication of farm people.

For over four years, George and Pearl Moyer have greeted hundreds of visitors to their Mor-Dale Dairy Farm along the Frystown Road, to the south of Bethel. They strive to show the public the dedication that a farm family puts into their work and the quality product they strive to produce.

Mor-Dale Farm, owned by George and Pearl Moyer consists of 225 registered Holsteins with 100 milking and 450 acres of cropland, growing corn and alfalfa. Son, Ralph, works full time on the farm managing the cattle and helping with the crops while sons, Curtis, a carpenter, and Mark, a combine operator, help out whenever they are able.

"Basically, it's a family operation," Moyer explains about his farm, "I would like to keep it that way," he adds. "Everybody pitches in and works here," he continues. "The family is the backbone of the operation."

With a very minimum of hired help, Moyer and his son, Ralph, the only full time employee, manage the entire farm chores with the help of their wives, Pearl and Crystal. They are able to do this because research, cost comparisons, and acquired



The homebred herd of Mor-Dale Farm rests peacefully in the pasture while awaiting their next milking.

management skills went into the building of Mor-Dale Farm.

Mor-Dale Farm began in 1966 with the purchase of the current farm after having given up operations in Schuylkill County, originally milking registered Ayrshires. Moyer relates that he was 14 years old when he received the responsibilities of the family dairy herd and adds that he has worked and paid for everything that he has today. As he milked the Ayrshires, he became more production-oriented and eventually phased out the Ayrshires to registered Holsteins. Increasing his herd to 50 cows and milking in an 18 stanchion "flat parlor", Moyer built a milking parlor on his present farm in 1977.

A farm accident in 1975 gave this self-made man more determination to make his farm even better. "That's all I did all my life. Why should I give it up?" He

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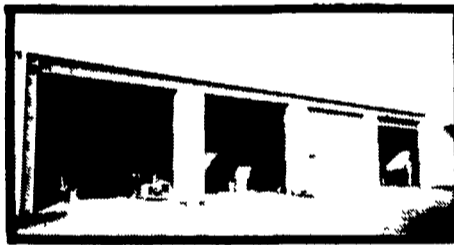
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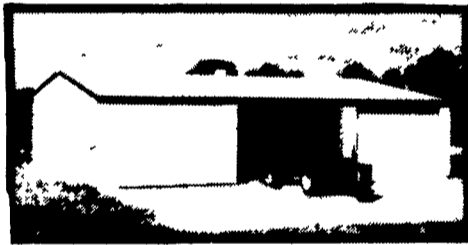
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