

# Meet Art Baxter, new president of the Pennsylvania Holstein Association

BY JOYCE BUPP  
Staff Correspondent

STONEBORO — "I'm automatically a good boy because my father was good," teases Art Baxter, a grin tugging at the corners of his mouth and a twinkle in his eye.

Baxter, a registered Holstein breeder from Mercer County, is the Pennsylvania Holstein Association's new president, installed during the annual convention last week in Pittsburgh.

His tongue-in-cheek comment is a personal bit of sarcasm leveled at the hotly-debated "numbers game." These computer formulas that put a numeric genetic measure on cattle, based on their ancestry, are coming under increasing criticism from many registered breeders. While sire and dam information is weighted into the formula, critics argue that the animal's actual performance is neglected in valuing genetic merit.

As president of the state's largest dairy cattle breed, Baxter has set two goals for his two-year term of office.

The first goal is to encourage and promote the re-evaluation of the indexing program within the Holstein industry.

It bothers Baxter that less than five percent of the breed now carries any amount of "numbers" value. He figures that the indexing trend is badly hurting the national association's pocketbook, too, with deficits now turning up after years of operation in the black.

"Why rush to register cattle if they have very little dollar value over commercial animals; why bother to keep the records?" laments the Mercer dairy leader.

Baxter wants to see a re-emphasis on classification,

reflecting the need to give credit to cows that are capable and deserving of selection as bull mothers.

For his own herd, Baxter favors the longevity of animals that prove they can stay in the herd, producing and reproducing year after year.

It's a philosophy that has paid off for the Garden Acres herd. Rolling herd average on 40 head is over 20,000 with 759 fat. That kind of results has earned the Baxter herd the high milk herd award in Mercer County for 1981 through 1984, plus high protein awards in 1983 and 1984.

Baxter credits genetics, plus a good feeding program and what he might label his best asset, his wife Alice, whom her husband proudly calls "a good milker."

Type is highly respected here as well. Pedigrees in the herd trace eight and nine generations of Excellents, some with the first four dams over 20,000 milk, 900 fat, and 150,000 milk production lifetime.

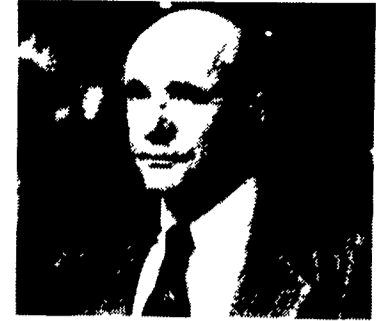
"And not one has an index," he observes.

Garden Acres values the "good old cows that hang around long enough to see what their daughters will look like."

Young cows which start on the slow slide don't bother this veteran breeder. He figures a first lactation of 14-16,000 is a fair start, with a followup second lactation in the 18-20,000 pound range.

"Then, at four they can cut loose and hang in the 24-26,000 pound range for years; you don't burn out big strong cows," Baxter noted.

One example Baxter offers is a daughter of his own Garden Acres Trademark bull, milking since the first day of September and holding steady at 100 pounds of milk per



Man of a thousand faces, newly installed Pennsylvania Holstein Association President, Art Baxter, lists two of his goals: to take a hard look at the current index program and rework or restructure it, and to put through a product supply management program.

day. And, he'll tell you she doesn't have an index.

Having made his feelings perfectly clear on the index-numbers issue, Baxter tackles his second goal as a Holstein state leader: a supply-management program. Baxter is ready to work very hard to encourage the organization of supply management, often simply labeled "quotas."

"If farmers are going to be able to be in the industry in five years - if families are to stay in business - then we must have supply management."

That could easily be established, adds Baxter, with quotas of 90 percent of a farm's production over a historic base period.

"A dairyman with a million pound base can make it with 50 head, each producing 20,000 pounds. His less efficient neighbor down the road might need 70 cows to attain the same total production. And with growth hormones coming, cow numbers might be cut to 30 for that level. I'm not afraid of isoacids and hormones if we can work within a supply management program," reflects the Holstein president.

"As it is now, we're just working harder to sell more for less money."

Supply management. And a rework of the index system. Art

Baxter has given both ideas a great deal of thought.

"If we have those two things, the registered breeder will be here forever."

## Merchandising Holstein

### Workshop slated

OXFORD — Learn 100 great ideas to promote and sell more Holsteins at the Holstein Investment Opportunities, Inc.'s workshop to be held at the Bird-In-Hand-Motel on March 20, 1986 from 8:45 to 4:15.

This workshop will review different factors of selling good Holstein cattle. Effective business, office, and advertising procedures will be learned. Speakers will present programs on photography, financing, and advertising.

It will be stimulating, goal oriented, practical, down-to-earth, and most useful in 1986.

The fee for this workshop is \$50.00 per person paid in advance.

Graduates of this program will receive a certificate and valuable coupon.

To sign-up and receive further information on this workshop send name, address, phone number, check and your best Holstein ad to Glenn Freese, 902 Forge Rd., Oxford, PA 19363, (215-932-9762).



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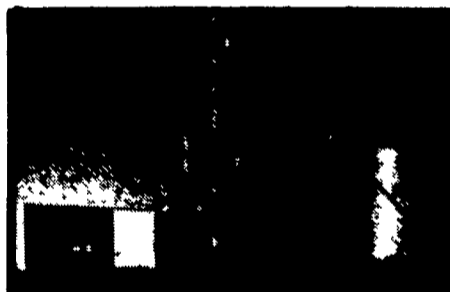
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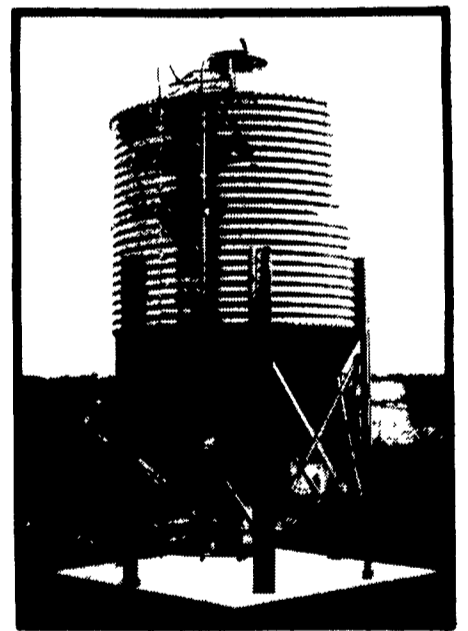


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