

Beatty family raises Guernseys for five decades

BY BETH NESBIT
Staff Correspondent

INDIANA — Situated two miles outside a university town is the Beatty family's Al-Mon Farm. A farm that has been raising quality registered Guernsey cattle for over five decades.

In 1930, Charles Beatty bought one registered cow and one grade Guernsey cow. It was with these two cows that Charles and his three sons Paul, Alvin and Clair based one of Indiana county's top Guernsey herds.

Charles's middle son, Alvin, took an active interest in the farm and formed a partnership with his father. Today Alvin Beatty credits the herd to the one registered cow his father purchased in 1930.

This cow, Itchen Nancy Ann, averaged 931 pounds of milk, and 372 pounds of fat for 339 days, which was good for that time. Itchen Nancy Ann stood in the Beatty barn for a total of sixteen years before she was sold to a neighboring dairy farmer for dairy purposes.

Alvin took as his first 4-H project one of Ann's many offspring in 1937.

As the years passed, Charles and Alvin continued to build their Guernsey herd until they were hit with a catastrophe. In 1945 the Beattys were fighting a losing battle with brucellosis. The disease almost destroyed the herd that they had worked so hard to build in the past fifteen years.

Alvin remembers those few years well, the brucellosis struck approximately forty of their animals, forcing the Beattys to struggle to reestablish themselves. It took nearly three years to rebuild the herd and gain a certified and accredited standing once again.

As the 1950's approached the

Beattys were beginning to modernize their dairy operation. In 1949, the family bought their first mechanized milkers. This was followed eight years later with the addition of a new twenty eight tie stall milking facility.

It is in this facility that Alvin and his family have built their strong Guernsey herd. It is interesting to state that not an animal has been brought into this milking herd since 1957.

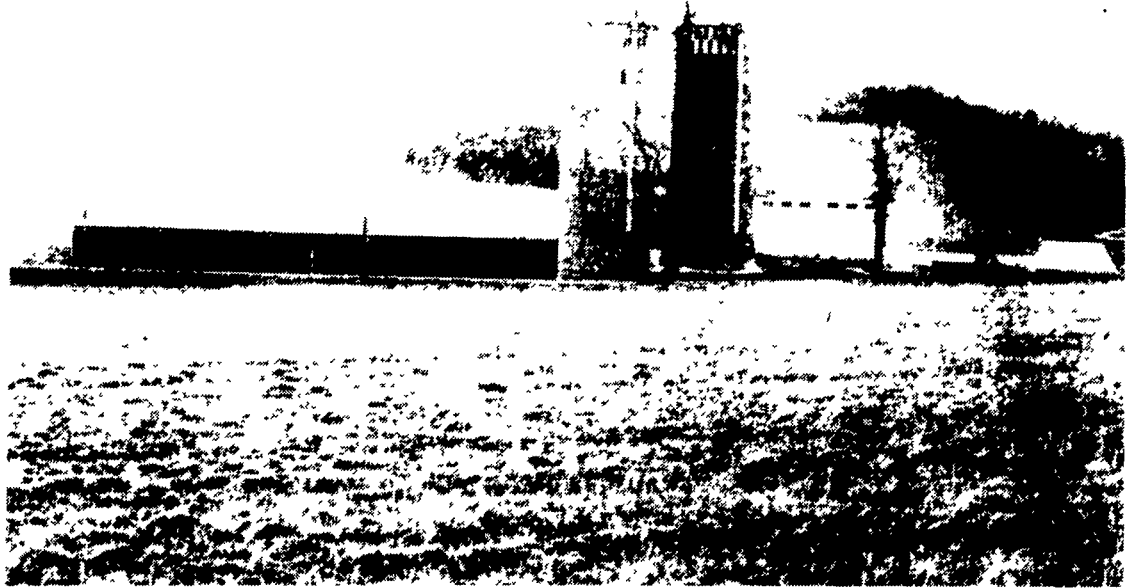
Alvin took the farm over for his ailing father in the mid sixties. With his wife Mona, and their four children, Alvin once again made the Beatty dairy operation a family affair.

Just as their father Alvin, Roger, Cheryl, June, and Robert, became active members in various dairy organizations. Roger and Robert, the oldest and youngest sons respectively, took their 4-H projects to the state level of competition where they stood at the top of their classes.

In 1980, the Beattys made the "biggest improvement so far." This improvement was a heifer and dry cow addition to their milking barn. With this addition, the Beattys are able to monitor the feeds their young heifers and dry cows are receiving.

When Alvin and Mona's children were growing up they were active in 4-H, FFA, and other agriculture related activities. Both Roger and Robert were active in their high school's Future Farmers of America chapters, and received their keystone farmer degrees.

Their daughter Cheryl was a 4-H dairy club member and daughter June, along with her brothers, has received many outstanding dairy club awards. Along with being an outstanding 4-H dairy club member she has been named outstanding Guernsey Girl, held



The Al-Mon Farm, located in Indiana County houses a herd of quality Guernseys.

the dairy princess title, and is currently chairman of the county's dairy princess promotion committee.

Last year Alvin underwent a period of hospitalization and is now unable to do much strenuous work. This required Robert to take charge of running the farm under his father's guidance.

Today Al-Mon Farm manages a total of 240 acres of crops. Approximately 80 acres are corn, 35 acres barley, and the rest is in alfalfa and other hay mixtures.

The majority of the farm crops are put out under the strip plan. This system attracts many tour groups to the Beatty farm operation. These groups include biology and geography classes from the neighboring Indiana University of Pennsylvania. In 1979, Alvin received the county's conservation award for his soil

conservation farming program.

Besides helping manage this dairy operation, Robert is increasingly involved with the advertising and distribution of his product. Along with being an active member of Pennsylvania Farmers Association, he is the vice president of the district board of Allied Milk Producers.

This board studies ways of lowering milk advertising costs and explores ways to increase advertising in the immediate area. It is gratifying for Robert to be active in this type of milk advertising organization as it gives him hands on experience with the public.

Al-Mon Farm's current rolling herd average stands at 37.3 cows with 11,864 pounds of milk, and 561 pounds of fat. Corn Silage and haylage is fed to the herd year round with each cow receiving approximately fifteen pounds of

hay daily. Their grain feeding program is then balanced by Agway Inc., with the highest producers receiving soybean as a toppers.

Many of today's farmers see expansion as the key to remaining competitive in the marketplace. The Beattys, however, have taken a different strategy. Maintaining a quality herd of cattle has brought them where they are today. Robert and Alvin believe that by keeping the operation in the family, it will take them where they plan to go in the future.

Roger's oldest son Timothy, is starting his first 4-H project this year. He is the fourth generation of Beattys to be interested in the dairy industry.

The persistence and dedication of the entire Beatty family, have been the two key characteristics to maintaining their quality Guernsey herd.



With this new housing facility for the heifers and dry cows, Alvin is able to feed the heifers according to what they require.



The Beatty family reviews their DHIA records which indicate a drastic rise since they first began testing in 1942. From left are Kathy, Robert's wife, Robert, Alvin, Mona.

Guernsey breeders meet in Lebanon

LEBANON — About 125 Guernsey breeders were converging at week's end on the Quality Inn for the 55th annual Pennsylvania Guernsey Breeders Meeting.

Highlights of the meeting include:

- John R. Moulton's presentation on the future of the Guernsey breed.

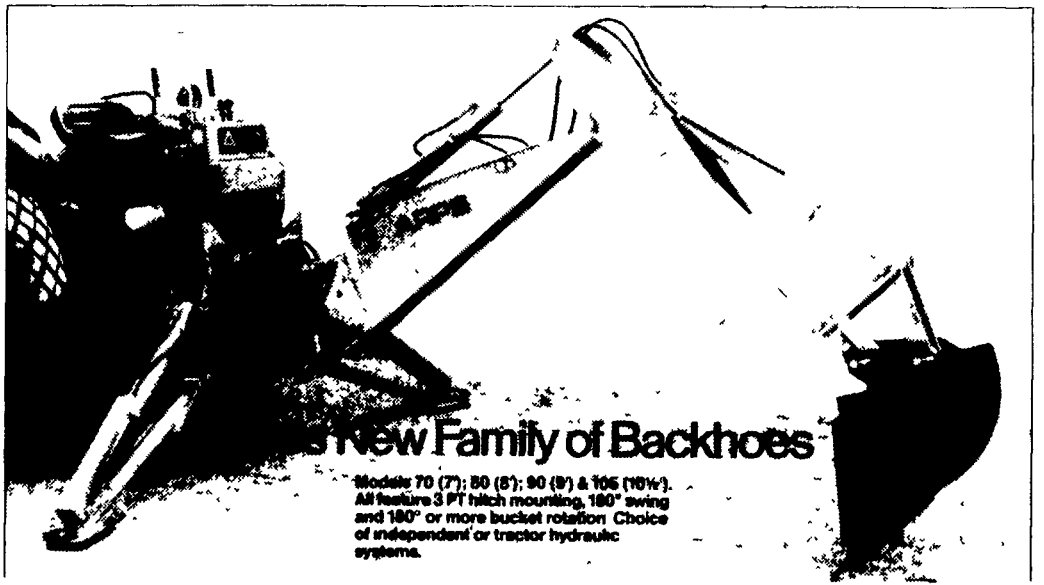
- The Annual Awards banquet featuring the selection of the new Pennsylvania Queen.

- A farm tour to Lebanon Valley Farms, the Robert B. Smith family.

- The eighth annual Blue Halter Calf Sale and Bred Heifer Sale.

For full coverage of convention activities, see next week's edition of Lancaster Farming.

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