

Brown Is Beautiful

Red Wing Believes 'Happy Hen' Is Key To Quality Brown Egg Production

BY ROBIN PHILLIPS

Berks Co. Correspondent

FLEETWOOD — Do brown eggs make you smarter? Are they filled with more vitamins and minerals to make you healthier? Are brown eggs better for baking? Do they have tougher shells?

Whether all or none of the above is true, brown eggs from Red Wing Farms are top quality eggs produced and processed by dedicated family members and employees of a family business since 1926.

Owned and operated by R. Gordon Yorgey and Sons, R4, Fleetwood, Red Wing Farms has cornered the brown egg specialty market with a high quality product. "We have always dwelled on a good quality egg," states Mrs. Fern Yorgey, concerning the start of their operation.

When Red Wing Farms began in the early 1920's, Robert and Margaret Yorgey, Gordon Yorgey's parents, maintained a general fruit and vegetable farm, and operated a farm market. Turkeys became a part of the operation in the 1940's, and 20 years later, additional layers came to the farm. In 1963 the first chicken house was built and the JJ Warren Sex Sal Link bird was

chosen because of the high quality brown egg and the calm nature of the bird. As the family grew, and took interest in the business, so did the operation.

Today, Gordon Yorgey knows his birds and oversees the entire operation. With the large acreage farmed, flocks at different locations, and an efficient processing plant, he gives credit to dedicated family members and faithful employees for the success of the operation.

Two longtime secretaries, Betty Price and Carolyn Forlini, oversee the extensive office chores.

Because of their concern for a high quality egg, the Yorgey's employ a quality control person. Carol Adams, with the Yorgey's for over 14 years, monitors processing daily for a consistently high quality egg. She rechecks shells for consistency and cracks, and makes sure eggs are always fresh and dated.

To produce the top quality eggs, the 38,000 hens at Red Wing and the thousands of layers contracted get only the best available feeds. At Red Wing, a nutritionist controls feeding requirements, and the Yorgey's have their own milling system to insure freshness and quality of feed ingredients. They

are careful to use a great amount of corn to maintain a darkly colored yolk in their eggs.

Over 500 acres are farmed by the family, with 75 percent growing corn. The remainder is planted in barley and soybeans. Phil Levan oversees the farming operation that also includes finishing hogs and a liquid manure system.

After eggs are produced and gathered automatically, they are processed immediately and packaged. "We like to see them leaving in a few days," Mark Yorgey, one of the sons in the business, explains. Eggs are stored at 55 degrees F., with 80 degree humidity. The younger Yorgey went on to explain that refrigeration tends to pull moisture out of the egg so they are careful about controlling the humidity in the cooler.

Red Wing Farms wholesales their brown eggs throughout Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, and New Jersey. Health food stores, restaurants, and farmers markets are major customers and like the high quality and freshness of the brown eggs.

The market is shifting to ungraded eggs though, the Yorgey's explain. Where previously most of their market



Gordon Yorgey (left) explains his egg washing procedure to members of the Berks County Chamber of Commerce during a recent tour of Red Wing Farms.

was custom packaging and delivery, they now sell a great deal to other processors who can cut costs of processing.

R. Gordon and Fern Yorgey have four sons and a daughter. Sons, Mark and Joel are very active in the family business and Andy helps when home from college.

Mark Yorgey, a graduate of the Hussian School of Art, Philadelphia, was instrumental in the development of several lines of advertising that have proved very successful to Red Wing.

Addressing some of the current problems that agriculture faces with the animal welfare people, Mark explains, "believe me, if they (the chickens) were not content, they wouldn't be singing, and they wouldn't be laying eggs."

He believes in promoting his product and developed the "Happy Hen" eggs billed as "Grade A Fertile Brown Eggs, hand gathered from free running hens fed natural rations." The Yorgey's maintain some flocks for this line. Another approach Yorgey is developing is "Fancy Free Eggs ... the Natural Way." These will be packaged in boxes of eight

grade A large brown eggs.

"It's been a price erosion for the past 15 years," Mark Yorgey explains, "just too many eggs." He admits that their family has been fortunate to have a high quality brown egg when the market demand is calling for more. "They (the customers) go to these big guys and they do not have the quality," he states about larger competitors.

He would like to get into more research and testing to substantiate many of the beliefs about brown eggs and looks to the future for better markets.

Red Wing Farms also educates the public for a better understanding of their business. The Yorgey family recently hosted over 25 members of the Berks County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and the Ag-Business Committee for a nutritional country breakfast and a tour of their farm and plant.

There were many questions as businessmen tried to understand the Yorgey operation, their marketing concerns, and their dedication to a superior product.

"If you want to do a good job, it takes longer," Fern Yorgey sums up.

Lamb and Wool Festival Begins Tuesday

STATE COLLEGE — A record 35 exhibitors will participate in the Pennsylvania Lamb and Wool Festival July 8-10 at the new Ag Arena on the campus of Penn State University.

Coinciding with the popular Central Pennsylvania Arts Festival, the 2nd Annual Lamb and Wool Festival is a "woolly wonderland" spanning 4500 square feet of booths featuring quality lamb and wool related crafts.

Sheepskins, slippers, coats and vests along with unique wool yarns and fleece will be sold. Other specialty items to be unveiled are sheep pottery, glowing oil lamps, casserole dishes to soap dishes, sheepishly silly cards, wrapping paper and stuffed lambs suitable for hugging or display in a prized

corner of the family room.

Creatively-spun and woven "Art to Wear," including shawls, ponchos, vests, shirts, sweaters and jackets are among the featured offerings. In the market for sheepish T-shirts, wind chimes, Christmas tree ornaments or embroidered aprons? The Festival will provide these and other surprises.

In addition to crafts, daily demonstrations will be presented. These include sheepdog demonstrations, sheep trimming and shearing, lamb cookery, wool dyeing, a fleece to shawl exhibition, plus much more.

Lamb recipes tempting the most discriminating taste buds, include shish kebobs, gyros, burgers, roast leg of lamb sandwiches plus beverages and sweets.

A 100 percent wool shawl and sheepskin vest will be raffled. Competition will be held in sheep art, photography, wool crafts and exhibits. A fleece show and sale is also scheduled, offering quality fleeces for the most discriminating spinner. More than \$1,000 is offered in premiums.

The Pennsylvania Lamb Cook-Off Contest, will be featured Thursday, along with a craft auction at noon.

Days and hours for the Festival are Tuesday, July 8 from noon to 7 p.m.; July 9 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and July 10 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Penn State Ag Arena is located behind Beaver Stadium at the corner of Fox Hollow Road and East Park Avenue, State College. Admission and parking are free.

York Angus Exhibitor Wins in Dixie



York's Jennifer Calderazzo showed the South that Pennsylvania is beef country when she made the trip to the Eastern Regional Junior Angus Show held in Montgomery, Alabama on June 20-21. Not only did she take top honors in the showmanship contest's junior division, but she exhibited the reserve intermediate champion heifers, as well. Shown with Jennifer and Premier Lass 6257A is show judge Knic Overpeck. Young Angus enthusiasts from 12 states exhibited 154 head of heifers, bulls and steers at this year's show.

LIVESTOCK LATEST



Health Care Workshop Offered

UNIVERSITY PARK — Basic livestock health care is the subject of a practical workshop at Penn State's Circleville Farm July 19 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, July 19.

The program will emphasize preventive husbandry, minimizing drug use and using alternative therapies for beef and sheep production. Workshop leaders, Dr. Colleen Erbel and Dr. Ron Erskine of the Department of Veterinary Science, will demonstrate a number of preventive measures related to housing, nutrition and pasture practices.

This will be a practical, hands-on workshop and participants should dress for barn and pasture work. All who come are asked to bring a bag lunch; beverages will be provided.

The workshop is free and open to students, faculty, staff and to anyone interested in livestock health care.

The farm is located on Circleville Road between Science Park Road and North Atherton Streets in State College. For more information about the workshop, contact Tim Bowser at the Farm Office at (814) 863-2745.

NAILE Show Dates Set

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Harold Workman, executive director of the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE), has announced that NAILE premium catalogs were mailed July 1. According to Workman, over 10,000 catalogs will be mailed. He said that anyone who does not

receive a catalog should contact the NAILE office at 502/588-3166.

The North American International Livestock Exposition is the largest livestock show in the world.

This year marks the 13th annual NAILE, and dates have been set for November 8-21, 1986.