

New Board Chairman Ready To Help Promote Milk

BY MARGIE FUSCO

Cambria Co. Correspondent

EBENSBURG — Jim Harteis is a team player. The newly-elected chairman of the Pennsylvania Milk Promotion Board likes to stress that in his new position as well as in his farming and avocations, "It's group effort that counts."

He works a family farm and runs a jug milk operation along with his brother Thomas at R.D. #4 Ebensburg in Cambria County. When he's not on the farm, he can usually be found coaching wrestling for the Central Cambria school district's elementary program. And since its founding in 1983 the Milk Promotion Board has been able to rely on Jim as a member.

As he takes on the chairmanship, Jim is upbeat about what the board has accomplished to date and about the prospects for the future. "We have a very good board of outspoken, knowledgeable men and women. As long as decisions are in the hands of that board, Pennsylvania's dairy promotion programs will be really effective."

He's pleased with the support Pennsylvania farmers have shown for the program so far, noting that in the last year they sent more than \$2 million to the board. He feels that the \$2 million has been well spent. "This is the only local that channels funds back to its local promotion committees," he notes. Jim plans to increase and enhance that program. "At a meeting earlier this week, the board made a substantial increase in the budget allotment for local promotion committees, and I'd like to see that increased again annually."

Jim is enthusiastic about the board's work. "I'm looking forward to more partnership with federal and other agencies, doing



Jim Harteis was elected chairman of the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program at their recent annual meeting.

Harteis operates his family's farm and jug milk operation outside Ebensburg in Cambria County.

complementary effort."

He says that the dairy promotion program has been remarkably effective. "Consumption is up 5 to 6%, whereas it had been declining 1 to 2% annually. You have to stop the freight train first, and we've done that. We've come from behind, and we're making some good progress." He notes that soft drink and alcoholic beverage industries are spending \$39 billion a year on advertising, versus the dairy industry's \$8-9 billion. "But I think we're getting top quality for

our dollar, and we can compete as long as we keep our quality high."

Future plans include more emphasis on promotion to accompany the advertising campaign. The board recently changed public relations agencies "to get more people-to-people programs," and the plans include more point of purchase literature, coupons, tie-in promotions, and food chain

promotions. Jim notes that Pennsylvania's Real Seal promotion with McDonald's fast food restaurants won a national award recently, and another promotion with McDonald's is already being planned.

Although the board doesn't know which Pennsylvania farmers are donating to the program because federal order procedure prohibits

release of the names, Jim would like those contributors to know that their money is being handled well. "Changes aren't going to happen overnight. Evolution takes some time. But we've got a lot of projects in the works for the coming year and beyond. We have quite a challenge ahead of us. There's a lot of potential here, lots of room to grow and to achieve."

Down On The Farm With Jim Harteis

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"Let's face it. Most of us are farmers because it's what we were raised to do," says Jim Harteis, Cambria County farmer and chairman of the Pennsylvania Milk Promotion Board. "We were brought up to farm, not to be merchandisers and businessmen."

Jim is talking about the need for a new approach to farming in the 1980's. The subject is on his mind a lot, both in his new chairmanship and in his own work on the family farm and dairy he operates with his brother.

Jim is able to take a hard look at farming these days, in part because he spent a few years away from it. After he graduated from Delaware Valley College with an agricultural science degree, he took a job as an assistant agricultural extension service agent. Then he realized he wanted to farm, and that a farming operation would be incompatible with his hours and responsibilities in his extension job. He took additional college credits and certified to become a teacher.

As a physics and chemistry teacher at Chestnut Ridge High School in Bedford, he was able to rent a farm and start his first dairy operation. He found time to coach football and wrestling, and his wrestling team responded by in-

roducing him to his wife, Dena.

When the farm next to his father's in Ebensburg, Cambria County, came up for sale, Jim jumped at the chance. He found a teaching job and coaching opportunities at Bishop Carroll High school in Ebensburg, where he taught until 1976. Since then, he's been able to farm full-time.

But in 1977, Jim and his brother and father were nearly wiped out when a barn fire killed off their herd and did \$275,000 in damages. "It was a significant setback," Jim says. What touched him most during the disaster was the help that came from both local farmers and those he knew in Bedford County. "We owe our existence today to a lot of good neighbors and friends."

He says the barn was put up in just two months in the middle of winter, and before long they were able to start trying to rebuild a herd.

Faced with starting from scratch, the Harteis's decided to build toward the best possible breeding. Today they are on their third generation. In 86 lactations, they have a rolling herd average of 21,780 lbs. and 789 fat. Their B.A.A. is 104.4. Jim is justifiably proud of what they've achieved through careful breeding. In the current milking herd of 86 cows, there are 2 classified as excellent and 19 as very good. The Harteis's are about to send 8 bulls into stud. They also have an Elite List cow that has produced 27 eggs in two embryo

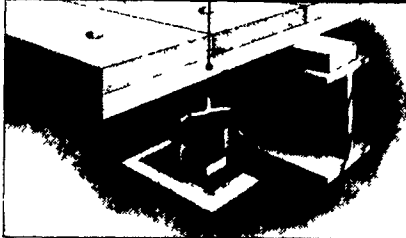
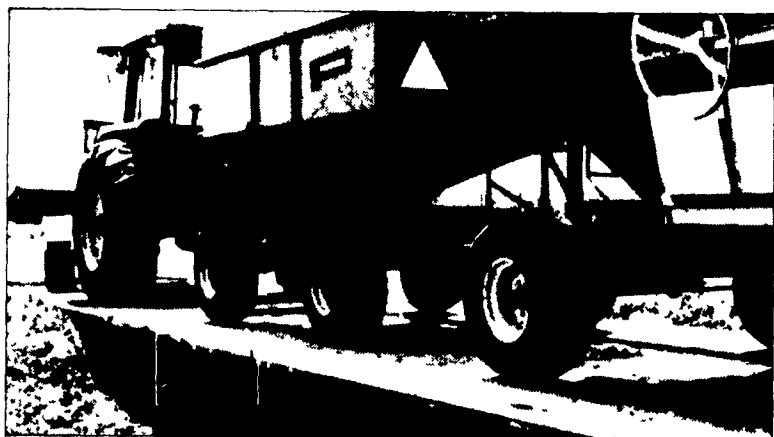
flushes this year.

They are now breeding for cheese production, which Jim feels is the best possible merchandising direction for his milk. This winter they plan to install an electric feed cart, and they are presently in construction to double the size of their Friend-Lea dairy operation and store. As he polishes the 2,000-gallon tank in the milk house, Jim laughs. "It's a pretty ambitious tank for an 80-cow operation, but we like to think big."

In addition to his family operation, Jim is proud of the other Cambria County dairy farmers. "There are only 15 or 17 on test, but did you know they rank number one in the state for herd average?" he says. He's also proud of the helpers on the Harteis farm, high school age youngsters from the area. In addition to the outside help, Jim's 14-year-old son can be found in the barn when he's not busy with sports and studying. And his younger sons, ages 3 and 5, and his 2-year-old daughter are growing up in the barn as Jim did with his 13 brothers and sisters.

Jim is optimistic about the future of farming, but he stresses that dairy farmers must develop new attitudes and directions to succeed. "In today's game, merchandising cattle is everything. You've got to consider merchandising your herd. An average herd is only going to give average results. If your herd classifies and performs, that's all you need. You'll do well."

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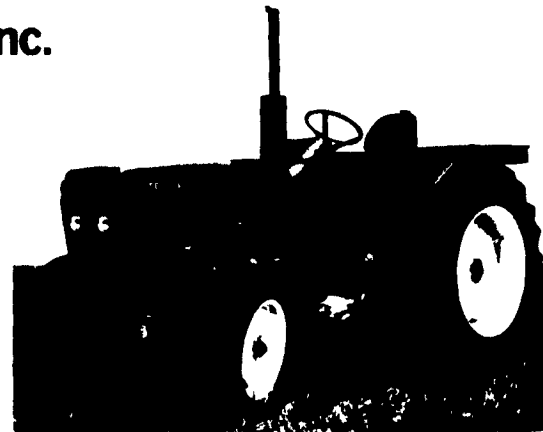
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