

Team Effort Increases Herd Average 5,000 Pounds

COATESVILLE — Be it football, baseball, hockey or basketball, a team's performance traces directly to the manager who helps a team achieve its potential.

One team which recently registered a dramatic turnaround is capable of kicking long distance, chasing flies, and scoring foul points. In the past year, this team has been skating towards its goal thanks in large part to a new manager and a host of specialty coaches.

The team walks on four legs and produces milk. In a period of 18-months, the dairy herd of Sam and Marian Stoltzfus, has increased its rolling herd average by nearly 5,000 pounds of milk as well as increasing income over feed costs.

Sam and Marian took the opportunity to manage a herd of their own last year. In January 1986 when they took over, the herd maintained an average of 14,132 pounds of milk, 506 pounds of fat, and 440 pounds of protein on 44 cows. At this time the income over feed costs stood at \$2.87 per cow per day.

The herd average on 38 cows increased to 19,004 pounds of milk, 677 pounds of fat, and 626 pounds of protein at the end of June 1987. For this DHIA testing period the herd registered an income of \$4.55 over feed costs per cow per day. During the 18-month period the DHIA reports show an increase in total feed costs.

Sam credits the vet, breeder and nutritionist with helping to set his Chester-Plane herd on course to a 20,000 pound herd average. But, he added, it does not make sense to employ these individuals if you are not going to follow their advice.

Prior to taking over the herd, the Stoltzfus family worked as herds-

men for Henry Lapp where they used the same team of support personnel. Sam notes he has the vet in at least every two weeks to check on cows which have just freshened, were recently bred or any other problem. He watches the herd closely and tries to catch small problems before they become major problems.

For the herd's breeding program, he follows a total AI linear mate program and selects sires which are 1,000 pounds plus on milk and 1.5 points higher on type. This fall he will be milking heifers from his matings.

By paying close attention to the breeding and health of his herd, Sam has achieved a 12.9 month calving interval.

The third cog in the management team is the feeding program. Last summer's drought forced Sam to look at feeding alternatives to stretch his feed supply. Sam, who grows all of the forages and corn needed by the herd, started using mixing Purina's Topdress 37 in with his ear corn. His cows found the product to be palatable and it has helped him see clear to the fall harvest.

Sam tests every crop to be able to balance the rations to meet the cow's needs. Last year hay was also in short supply for Stoltzfus. This spring he started using Maxi-Tech 32 FF to get the most energy from his feed.

His nutritionist-consultant Doug High explained that Maxi-Tech increases the energy a cow can pull from its feed. This in turn enables the dairymen to meet the nutritional needs of higher producing cows. In the first half of a cow's lactation, she is short on energy. With Maxi-Tech she is able to gain the additional energy to carry her through her lactation at



Sam feeds his herd frequently throughout the day and pays close attention to keeping the cows as comfortable as possible.

a higher production level. The dairyman will make more milk at a profitable level.

Sam and Marian gear their routines to making their cows comfortable. They commented that if the cows are comfortable and the cows' needs are met, the cows will produce more milk.

The Coatesville dairy couple bring their cows in from the pasture about 11 a.m. during the summer months. "They're not going to make as much milk when they're standing in that hot sun," Sam said. By bringing the herd into the barn in the late morning, Sam feels he can get more roughages into the herd. "I know it's in front of them and they're not standing in a creek somewhere."

In the barn, the Stoltzfus family has four large fans positioned over the front of the cows to keep them cool. "That's where the air intake is and that's where you need to keep them cool," Sam said. The fans run the entire time when the cows are in the barn.

He feeds grain at four-hour intervals and keeps hay in the feed bunk at all times. He harvests all of his alfalfa in the form of baled hay. Sam notes he can make more milk by feeding alfalfa hay because of its higher protein content.

Sam finds it important to keep hay in front of the cows at all times. "You don't make milk on concrete. The more they eat, the more milk they'll make," Sam said.

"A lot of people when they go to feed worry about the feed bill so they cut back some," the Coatesville dairyman said. "When it comes to feeding milking cows you've got to feed them enough so they can fill the tank." He feeds according to production and feeds recently fresh cows more feed to get a higher peak in their lactation. Sam also cuts back on the cows at the end of their lactation. By using Maxi-Tech he has been able to keep more body weight on his fresh cows to help the cow through her lactation.

Dry cows are fed a ration lower in protein and according to their body condition. The feeding regimen includes more hay which lowers the total energy of the ration.

Heifers receive all the silage and roughages they can eat as well as having access free choice protein and mineral block.



Sam and Marian Stoltzfus relax with their children, Jay Richard (next to Sam) and Beverly. The Coatesville dairy couple recently increased their herd average by nearly 5,000 pounds.

In addition to proper management, Sam culled hard in the beginning. One criteria which he uses for culling is Somatic Cell Count. "Usually those aren't the better cows anyway," Sam noted. His herd SCC runs between 120,000 to 275,000 on a yearly basis.

One of his goals in the future, in addition to a 20,000 pound herd average, is to be able to sell his cull for milk purposes rather than beef purposes.

When Sam and Marian started in the dairy business full time, they were admittedly hesitant. Now, however, they admit they are enjoying the challenge. When they started renting the farm, the only thing they owned was a tractor and manure spreader. Sam gears his cropping and feeding program towards what he has. He does not want to over extend his capital.

Both Sam, 24, and Marian, 23, have a dairy farm background. Marian notes that she was the oldest and helped her family with the herd.

Marian's father, Leroy Stoltzfus from nearby Gap, is supportive of

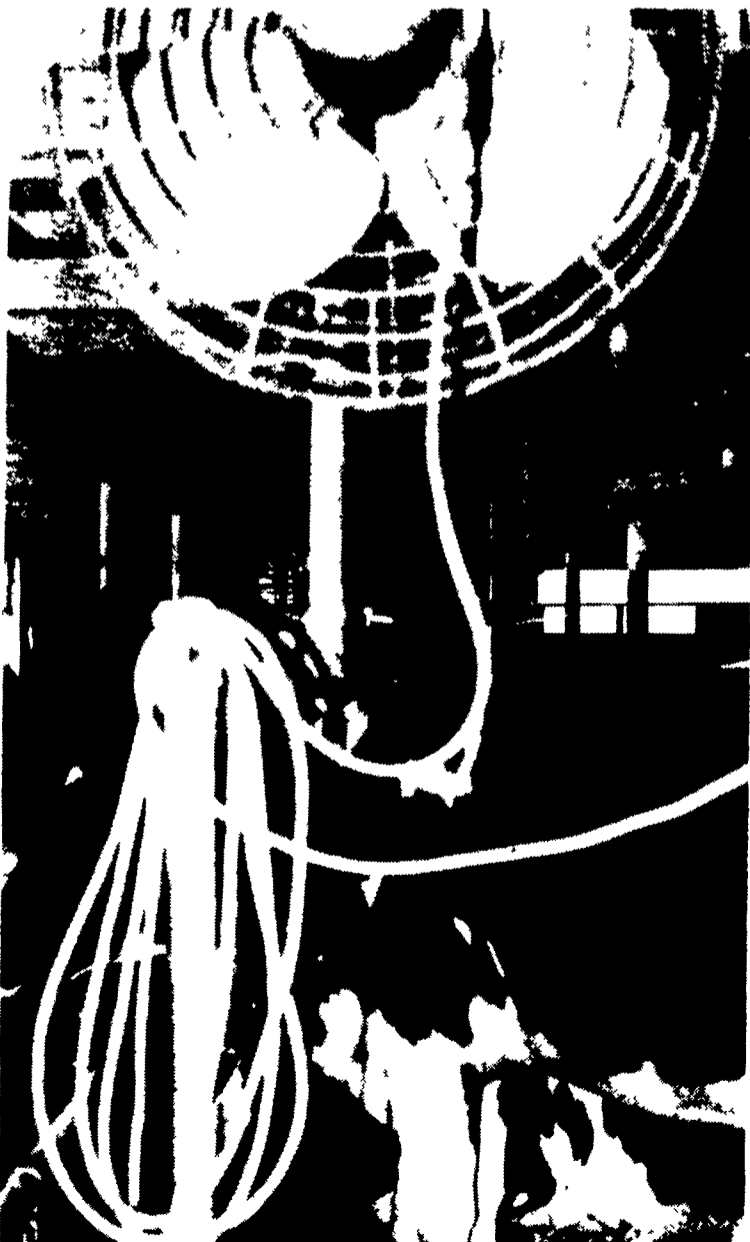
his daughter and her husband's efforts. He feels there is a living to be made in the dairy industry, it is just not as easy as some.

The Gap dairyman maintains a rolling herd average of 20,500 pounds of milk on 38 cows. He feeds the Maxi-Tech concentrate and corn silage in his feed bunk. The herd receives haylage in the tie-stall barn. High producers have access to a magnetic feeder to meet their nutritional requirements.

On 95 acres, Leroy is able to raise all of the feed for the herd and only buys concentrates.

Leroy noted that borrowers need to encourage prospective loaners to make more milk on fewer cows rather than the same milk on more cows.

Sam and Marian are attempting to prove that with the right management team, bigger is not necessarily better.



The Stoltzfus herd is brought in from pasture in late morning. Four fans run throughout the day to keep the herd cool.

