

Hostetters To Retire

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Breeders Shows. They talk about the large national shows and the little fairs with the shows that kept them busy for a week at a time. Most of these shows are history now.

They like to talk about one of

their drivers who, in his lifetime, worked an eight-mule team and drove a 40 foot tractor trailer. Not many people do that in one lifetime.

They like to talk about the load of Ivanhoe daughters that Earl Groff put together to go to Califor-

nia. These Ivanhoes were pictured on the cover of The Holstein World. And the Hostetters hauled them with such care they got a \$100 tip from the California buyer. Clean trucks and expert care of the cattle on long trips became the trademark of these truckers.

On long hauls they would stop and milk the cows along the way. And the animals were delivered in

excellent condition. "We drove and handled all the animals the same," Melvin said. "It made no difference to us if the cow cost \$100,000 or some lesser amount. We haven't made a lot of money. It was not a get-rich scheme. But we have met a lot of nice people, good people," Melvin said.

"Almost anywhere in the U.S. we get invited to eat a meal or stay

over night. About two weeks ago we took a load of cattle to Tennessee and were treated to overnight accommodations and a breakfast of fresh biscuits, ham and eggs the next morning. We really didn't know the people that well. But they knew us."

"No you can't get us lost anywhere in the United States," Nelson agreed.

"Of course a lot of things have changed in our lifetime. Dad bought gas at the Millersville Service Station for six gallon for a dollar. And our first new tractor and trailer cost us \$6,500 in 1956. Today the same comparable rig would cost \$110,000. Insurance has tripled. And diesel fuel has gone up from 15 cents a gallon."

"But most of all, the production of the dairy cow has gone up tremendously. Artificial breeding helped it along. When we first started, a 10,000 pound cow was tremendous. And you didn't hear of a 3.5 percent testing cow."

"You must hand it to Austin Backus. He promoted the cows that were high in test. We remember the first four percent cow that was sold in the Garden Spot Sale. She was an Ivanhoe, but she only gave about 8,000 pounds of milk. Now these cows give 30,000 pounds of milk and test five percent."

Will the Hostetters miss trucking when they retire in October? "No," says Nelson. But Melvin corrects him. "Sure we'll miss it. You can't do something this long and just walk away without some feeling. But we are getting too old. But I suppose like everyone else who drove for us and retired, we'll likely be back just to go along for the ride when Daniel Charles and Paul Booth continue to operate under the Hostetter name."

"Well, we may be back," Nelson concedes. "But I have a lot of catching up to do at home first."



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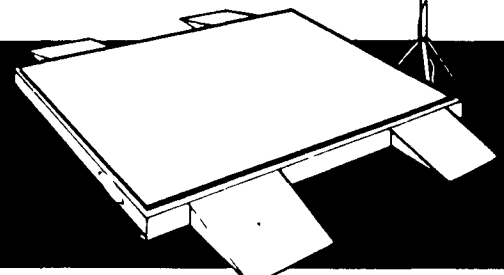
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