

Eastern President

(Continued from Page A1)

Laverne also is a director of the National Milk Producers Federation that sees more advertising as an answer to surpluses, not another cut in price supports.

NMPF recommends a 10 cent increase in advertising assessments.

That's certainly better than a 50 cent cut in dairy supports, McCarty agrees, but suggesting any increase in assessments doesn't come to easy to McCarty.

Laverne learned the economics of farming the hard way in the 1950s. A Korean War veteran he earned \$25 a week as a hired man, and he was married to boot.

"We had a house and milk," his wife Dora smiles, thinking back to the early 1950s. "Later the owner, Carl Molyneux, gave us a chance to buy into the farm."

"We were luck," Laverne agrees. "Farm prices were still low and we were able to swing it."

By 1957, they had bought the farm lock, stock and 28-stanchion barn.

Laverne and Dora have four children. Two daughters live in Reading. Celia is married and an attorney. Darcy is a computer operator with Reading Steel. Two sons, Tracy and Brian, are home.

Today, McCarty and the boys milk 85 registered Holsteins and ship 1,200,000 pounds a year. Tracy is a partner. Brian is thinking that way.

Advertising assessment now costs the partners \$1800 annually. Another 10 cents would add \$1200.

Laverne is a believer.

Any plans for more cows?

"We're standing pat. But we might add sheep," the older McCarty suggests. Tracy has 150 crossbred Columbia ewes on a second farm which he owns, and he's shooting for 200.

The last big herd expansion was in 1979 when Laverne and Tracy hired a contractor to add a 110-foot shed to the barn for two more rows of comfort stalls.

"A month after the addition was built we had a four foot snow. The roof collapsed. Fortunately most of the 40 cows in the addition were lying down. Only one was lost. If we'd been milking we'd been killed. It was that sudden."

The new roof went up twice as strong.

Big snows are no surprise for this northern Pennsylvania county with its picturesque mountains and forests. What is a surprise is the 300 acres of bottomland the McCartys own and rent along the Loyalsock Creek.

One 100 acre field right below the barn is a mile long and as flat as a pancake.

"Corn yields of 125 to 150 bushels aren't unusual," son Tracy says.

"I placed third in the state one year," Laverne recalls. He checks the plaque. "157 bushels in 1963."

The season is longer than one might suspect for a farm located a 38 miles uphill climb from Williamsport.

"We grow 90-day corn for silage, and 110-day for picking," Tracy reports.

"We have surplus problem up here -- deer," Laverne reports.

"This year they completely destroyed 39 acres of corn."

The McCartys fill a 16 by 60 foot upright with high moisture ear corn. Corn silage goes in a 14 by 32 by 100 foot trench.

Alfalfa does just about as well as corn. First cutting fills a 18 by 60 foot silo. Then the farm team bales approximately three tons an acre in later cuttings.

"I wouldn't build another silo if I was starting now," Laverne comments.

Pasture is important here, too. Corn stubble is seeded to rye and give cows a two week jump on pasture each spring. Sudan sorghum seedings take care of summer slump.

But back to advertising and promotion.

"I'm encouraged by our increased dairy sales. With a bigger effort they should keep going up," he says looking out at his herd.

Then he adds -- "It's more of an answer than depending on government for help."



Laverne McCarty checks out Saranac alfalfa grown along the Loyalsock Creek in Sullivan County. He once was hired man on farm he now owns and operates with his wife and two boys.

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