

Yules Pride Farm Reaches Long Term Goal

BY HELEN KELCHNER
Columbia Co. Correspondent
BERWICK (COLUMBIA CO.)

— Richard and Virginia Yule of Millville, Columbia County, have reached a goal they set out to attain 17 years ago. At the Pennsylvania Holstein Convention in Lancaster last month, Yules Pride Dairy received the Progress Breeders Registry Award. This is national recognition from the Holstein-Friesian Asso. of America.

In order to qualify, applicants must belong to DHIR, have a 75% home-bred herd with a DHIR average of 21,481 lbs. milk minimum, 768 lbs. butterfat and a BAA of 103.4 percent. The Yule herd is more than 75% home bred, has a DHIR average of 22,686 lbs. of milk with 783 lbs. butterfat and a BAA of 106.5 percent.

Virginia and Dick feel this is a very prestigious award, one which they had set out to capture early in their farming career. They just missed it in 1980 because of their relocation from New York state to Pennsylvania when their home bred stock dropped because of their farm sale.

The Yules farmed 300 acres in New York with 200 head of cattle and a \$200,000 machinery investment, Dick was overworked with a heavy investment and was not doing what he wanted. That was to improve his registered Holsteins. His dream was to cut out the farming and concentrate on the herd.

In 1980, Yules had the opportunity to sell out -- lock, stock and

barrel with the option of retaining some of the best head for seed stock. The move to Pa. was a gamble. The Yules weren't sure they could pull off their dream of working exclusively with a dairy herd.

Dick said they chose their Millville site for several reasons. First, the farm had small acreage. He intended to purchase feed and bedding allowing him more freedom to develop the herd. Second, he needed a location convenient to available feed sources. Third, he looked for cattle merchandisers within a reasonable distance. In addition, he felt the area had the right atmosphere of competition to present a challenge. Also, Yules did not overlook the warmer climate. Their former farm in Herkimer County, New York was once described as "eleven months of winter and one month of poor sled-din". Dick recalls losing a crop of corn to a snow storm in the middle of June.

The move to Millville was not without its shortcomings. The farmhouse had only three bedrooms and the Yules still had five of their seven children living at home. A wing addition to the house was a priority.

They explained the hardest part of the move was the stock they left behind, a direct result of 19 years of herd development and one of the top herds in Herkimer County. The Yules were able to make a compromise with the buyer in which they brought 36 calves and 12



Randy Sones grooms Houghdale Rarae Phoebe. She was a Very Good 86 out of Elevation when Yule purchased her in February 1987. With a year of Dick's feeding program, she has reached a 25,450 lbs., 4.4% with 1056 B.F. and her index has increased to 91.

milking cows with them to Pennsylvania. Although their best stock went with the selling deal, they were fortunate enough to bring out calves from some of their best head which gave them an edge in their reorganized venture. At that time they had just gotten their foot in the merchandising door and the move to Pennsylvania gave them the incentive to refine their business.

The present herd consists of 51 milking head and 50 head of young stock. The herd average of 22,686 lbs. with 783 lbs. butterfat gradually increases as herd improvement methods take affect. For instance, these numbers are up from 19,264 lbs. with 685 lbs. butterfat just four years ago.

An example of a 10 year old that has benefitted from the improvement method is Killdee Van Bess sired by Rosemere Fury Ivan. Bess, an excellent 93 is the highest in butterfat production of Yules herd. Just 4 years ago she had 29,309 lbs., 4.4% test, 1295 B.F. and a BAA of 113 percent. That has increased currently to 35,480 lbs., 4.4%, 1364 B.F. and a BAA of 114.7. Bess had been in a flushing program for foreign markets. She ranks among the nation's top butterfat producers.

Another outstanding cow is

Tops-Up Ginger Spirit, Excellent 92. She is a 10-year-old with records up to 24,700 lbs. 4.5 test and 1090 lbs. butterfat. She was the 100,000 lb. cow at Bloomsburg Fair in 1987. Her embryos have been exported to France, Germany and England. She has a very good 86 daughter, Yules Pride I Jon Sonya- E T whose embryos were bought by Germany.

Sire Power purchased one of Yule's bulls, Yules Pride Elevation Ace, which scored 89. Ace was top sire for Sire Power in his heyday between 1977 and 1979. This was prior to the Pennsylvania relocation. Dick had several of this bull's daughters which a group from Germany viewed at the New York farm.

The German group was so impressed that they took a substantial supply of Ace's semen back home with them. Then, last summer the group made a return visit, this time to Yule's Pennsylvania farm to view the present herd. They brought along a photograph of one of Ace's offspring, a daughter which is doing a super job for them. They were well pleased with the Ace progeny and the Yules were equally pleased to learn of the positive results. Yule's embryo exports run 70 to 80% successful. They have also had three yearling bulls and one two-year-old purchased by Russia.

Dick has a feeding program which he credits for his improved production figures. The herd is fed dry hay and high moisture corn with protein supplement. He says his mix of 1/2 each soy bean meal, distillers and whole cotton seed is the basis of his improved butter fat. The whole cotton seed, a high energy ingredient, is the factor that makes the difference. While some dairymen find its use controversial, Dick says you've got to give it a chance. When he first tried it, he, too, didn't notice any difference, but he stuck with it. After 3 or 4 months, he felt his cows took on a "blush". He can only describe it as a signal when the butterfat began to increase.

Over the past several years, Dick has reassessed his value of a cow. The USDA index for production gives a cow only about one and a half lactations "life". After this peak period, many dairymen following the index numbers get

rid of the cow. Dick feels the index is important, but only as a tool used with other factors. He can't see a 3-year-old high-producer not growing into an 8 or 10-year-old cow which not only continues substantial production, but which has the capacity for providing calves and embryos for marketing.

Dairymen can get carried away with index numbers and what happens is they end up with prime stock having a productive life average of 3.4 years built from index on top of index on top of index. Although this can impress some markets, Yule has experience which shows otherwise.

Dick likes to look at cow families. He purchased Houghdale Rarae Phoebe at the State Convention sale in February 1987. She was a Very Good 86 out of Elevation, not an impressive index by today's standards to attract competitive merchandising. But, her mother was a 12-year-old with high production and tests and she had two maternal sisters that are excellent with good milking fat. Last year Phoebe's production reached 25,450 lbs., 4.4% with 1056 B.F. and her index increased to 91.

What has pleased Dick about this cow is that after the German group that visited his farm to view the herd had studied Phoebe's family, they ordered embryos from her because of her type rather than her index. Phoebe is still a productive cow at age 6. Dick is concerned that young farmers starting out will take the Holstein Red Book too seriously. If they use the basis of high production for 2 and 3 year olds which aren't around as old cows, what have they accomplished?

The Yule philosophy is that if the cow can pay for herself in one or two years, then hang on to her-- let her produce calves and embryos along with milk and allow her to be financially productive to age 8 or 10. Indexes make "good looking" cows, but which in many cases burn out too young, while "types" provide cows that can work even as aged stock. This is where the cow's family history is valuable.

Dick says, "A two-year-old with a 16,000 lb. production which becomes a 25,000 lb. to 28,000 lb. producing age cow is of more value financially, than breeding that

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Dick and Virginia Yules holding their Progress Breeders Award presented to them at the Pa. Holstein Convention in Lancaster. This is a national recognition of the Holstein-Friesian Asso. of America.



Dick with His 3 yr. old bull, Yules Pride Spirit Master, son of Sunny Craft Chief Spirit and My Kinda Aprils Milkmaid, an excellent cow which Yule still has in his herd. This bull was judged Excellent at 2 yrs. 10 mos. Dick chose to keep the bull on the farm and prove him under his care. He has produced outstanding heifers.