

# Raising The Top Guernsey Herd In Columbia County

By Helen Kelchner

Columbia Co. Correspondent  
MILLVILLE (Columbia)

Tucked into a secluded area of Millville is the 250-acre Tri-Dee-Bee Farm where Richard and Doris and their sons Bruce and Dana have nurtured their herd of Guernseys into the fifth-highest producer in the state and the highest in the county.

The Hemsarth's herd average is 15,121 lbs., 4.8%, 714 B F and 544 protein. The milking herd consists of 48 head with 35 replacements. Six beef cattle also are raised on the farm.

Bruce says they are particularly proud of a four-cow family that is doing very well for them. Twinny, the great grand dam in this high-producing family, had a record of 20,000 lbs. in 305 days with 874 B F at 4.3%. Her daughter, Terry, was a 13,626 lb. producer with 679 B F and 5% at two years. Terry's daughter, Tonya, just had a heifer, Tootsie, who has been chosen by Bruce's eight-year-old daughter Amanda for her first 4-H project.

Another cow from the Twinny family, Terra, was junior champ-

ion at the Blomsburg Fair last year. The Hemsarths recently had her flushed at part of their embryo-transfer program. Sires such as King and Victory are used in that program, while other sires are Fayette, Playboy, and Utopia.

One of the Hemsarths' goals is to build a heifer-raising program in which the heifers freshen in two years as compared to the usual 27 to 28 months. Bruce says they've found that they can accomplish this through a good feeding program. "You can't cut corners with calves," he stated.

The young stock is fed good-quality forage and excellent alfalfa until they are about six months. After that age the feed quality is dropped back to average, but grain and supplements are added to the diet.

This year the Hemsarths had more replacement heifers than they needed so they entered into an ET program with a neighboring farmer who had flushed Jerseys. Presently four of the Guernsey heifers are pregnant with a possible three more.

Calves are contained in groups



Debble and Dana Hemsarth with children Becky, 4 and Phillip, 2. The dry cows and beef cattle are housed in this second farm apart from the milking herd on the main farm.

of three, and there are few health problems. A few years back the family purchased a neighboring farm where the dry cows are now housed. This division has created a healthier atmosphere for the milking herd as well as the dry cows.

Bruce attributes the herd's high production to their diet, which he carefully balances. About four months ago the Hemsarths got a computer that has already proven valuable in saving feed and

increasing milk production. Bruce explained that in 20 minutes he can rework a ration program. The cows are healthier with no imbalances, and he expects the money the farm is saving will pay for the computer within six months.

The herd is fed 22 pounds of corn silage, 22 pounds of haylage, and seven pounds of alfalfa hay daily, and a grain ration that is dictated by the computer. The grain consists of ear corn, shelled corn, soy beans, distillers, cotton seed,

vitamins, and minerals. The Hemsarths feed grain twice a day to the milking herd, and top-dressed silage is fed three times with free-choice hay. The cows are kept in a free-stall barn and fed with a taper-board feeder.

The Hemsarths raise alfalfa and corn on the farm. A 16 by 20 silo stores corn silage, a 14 by 50 silo holds haylage, and a 10 by 40 silo handles any overflow. The family has found that the baled hay that

(Turn to Page D4)



Brenda and Bruce Hemsarth with children Amanda, 8, Andy, 2 and Greg, 5. Bruce holds Tonya the dam of Amanda's six-week-old calf Tootsie.

## Columbia County Correspondent

Helen Kelchner

Lancaster Farming's Columbia County correspondent is Helen Kelchner of Berwick.

Helen says her freelance writing and photography grew out of a need to keep busy at "something other than housekeeping." When her four children were through high school, she began to take her writing and photography seriously.

Helen was born and lived on a farm in Lewisburg for 16 years. In 1940 her family moved to Berwick, where she finished school, married and raised a family. "My husband's business did not lend itself to rural living, so my farming background lay dormant until several years ago," Helen said.

Although her first sales were nature photography and feature stories for the *Harrisburg Patriot*, Helen says she found her favorite subjects in a farm setting. "Having lived in what I call the 'dark ages' of farming, I had much to learn in the computer age where some dairy operations are automated from the silo to the emptying of the manure pit and all points in between," Helen notes.

Draft horses are one of Helen's pet subjects, especially the few owners and breeders



who continue to use horses as cultivation power.

Helen is 61 years old and would like to remain active as long as she has a story to write. Her work has appeared in the *Harrisburg Patriot*, the *Reading Eagle*, *Baltimore Sun*, the *Evening Draft Horse Journal* (Iowa), *Small Farmers Journal* (Eugene, Oregon), *Horse Illustrated*, and *Dog Illustrated* (California), various church publications and local papers in Berwick, Sunbury, Williamsport and Wilkes Barre.



The Hemsarths are proud of this high performing cow family. Doris is holding Twinny the great grand dam. Richard holds Terrie the grand dam. Bruce holds Tonya, the dam of the six week old calf held by 8 year old Amanda. Amanda's mother, Brenda and Dana are at far right.



The Hemsarth farm is situated in a pretty secluded area of Millville, Columbia County.