

A Nice Place

(Continued from Page A1)
farm have a good impression of the source of their dairy products.

Besides having a farm "that was a nice-looking farm when my parents managed it," said Gary, there was little else they had to do to win the award. A panel of judges visited the farm and took pictures. All Gary had to do was fill out a few forms and wait for the results.

Judges consider clean and attractive buildings and surroundings and figure these into the final selection. The qualifications indicate that fencing and feed areas should be in good repair, and unnecessary items such as trash piles should be removed.

The Stoltzfus farm was one of eight farms in District 20 honored in Pennsylvania. Other farms



Gary Stoltzfus provides a cool drink of water to his Holstein calves during a recent hot afternoon at his farm in Elverson.

included Dalton and Vickie Biehl, in Kutztown; Promise Land Dairy, Perkusie; Delaware Valley College, Doylestown; Dale Hoover, Lebanon; Vincent and Juliet Wagner, Myerstown; Lester and Marianne Zimmerman, Myerstown; and Junge Farms, New Tripoli.

Nice location

Gary attributes the honor mostly to "a nice location here, back off the road a nice distance," he said. "It's a nice place to have a family, away from the main road."

Gary doesn't think his family did anything in particular to win the award. "I don't know if we did anything differently," he said. "We try to keep the place up. We've always tried to keep the place looking nice over the years."

One of the things, besides regular mowing and maintenance, was the installation of a liquid manure holding tank on the farm in 1982.

Dairy manure and waste water is pumped once a day into the 400,000-gallon capacity tank. There is enough storage for nearly five months. The manure is spread in the fields in the spring and fall — either disced or chiseled into the soil.

In 1982, Gary went into partnership with his father, Marvin. In the spring this year, Gary bought his father's share of the partnership, including all the dairy cattle and equipment. "My parents still own the farm, but we do all the managing," he said.

Work rotated

In cooperation with his father and one hired man, Paul Ranck, the work of milking the cows is rotated every third weekend, to give Gary and the others a chance to be with their families.

"I guess I always enjoyed working with dairy cattle," said Gary. "Sharon will sometimes help

milk, or my daughter Laura will help milk once in a while, if I need it."

Gary is usually up at 4 a.m. Milking is twice a day, 6 a.m. and again by 6 p.m. They're usually in bed by 9 p.m.

The farm has been in the family several generations, said Gary. "I like farming," he said. "I don't know where else I'd go to buy land at this price for what we have."

Start out farming

These days, Gary said, you couldn't start out farming on your own. "I wouldn't be farming, I guess, if it wouldn't be for my parents, in this location anyway."

Gary enjoys the recognition and is happy that the honor "gives the public a good image of farming."

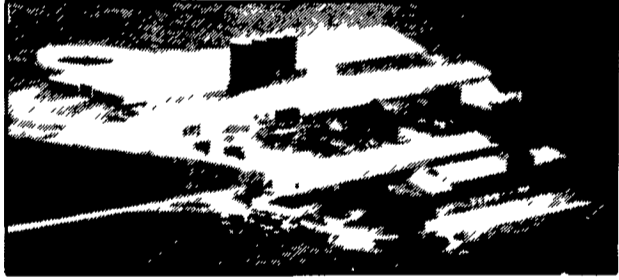
"There are some nice farms out here. It gives the farmers a good name when they see a farm like this."



Gary stands in the lane leading up to his Dairy of Distinction farm with daughters Laura, 8, left and Shell, 6. A caution sign warns visitors that "kids & kats at play."

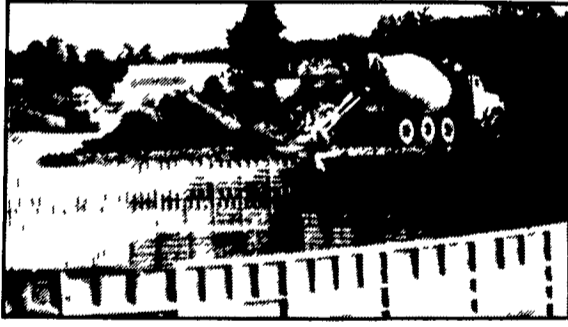
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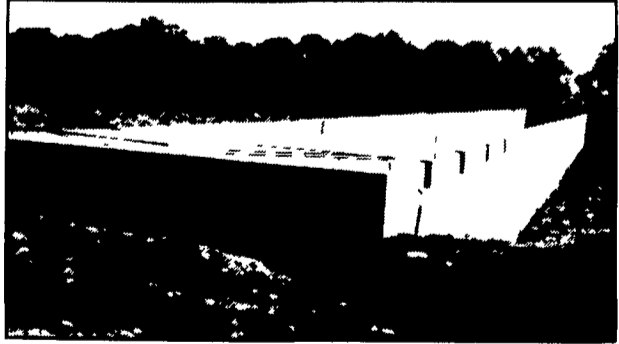


Far Left: 1-Million Gallon Circular Manure Storage Tank

Far Right: 2 Silage Pits In-Barn Manure Receiving Pit



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