

Post-Dip Method Lowers SCC For Empet Farms

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff

KINGSLEY (Susquehanna Co.) — In 1988, the somatic cell count (SCC) was 89,000. The SCC dropped the next year to 76,000. Then, in 1990, the count was the best ever — 60,000 — the lowest SCC for the 20-100 cow group in the state.

Empet Farms, managed by Dale and Peggy Empet and family, owes a great deal of the recognition for the best SCC to a post-dip, dry treat method of managing the cows. After each milking, the cows' teats are dipped into a solution to clean them and help prevent bacteria from entering the udder and causing mastitis.

Empet Farms also dry treats with antibiotics to prevent mastitis, thus reducing the SCC and enabling a better count.

"Our cows aren't stressed," said Peggy Empet. "We don't push them." She and her husband milk about 75 cows twice a day, and manage 70 replacements of mostly registered Holsteins.

But it was the month-by-month checking by the DHIA that showed

them which cows were having problems and how they could control the problems of SCC.

"Each month, a sample is tested for SCC, and we keep a running account of how each individual test stands up," said Peggy.

Peggy and Dale grew up on dairy farms, she near Avondale, Pa., and he in Kingsley. After they married, they rented a farm for eight years and bought the machines for the operation. The farm, in the family since the early 1960s, was rented to Peggy and Dale from Dale's father, Arthur. In 1985, Peggy and Dale purchased heifers and other animals from Arthur Empet. Peggy and Dale now manage about 400 acres (300 tillable) and milk twice a day.

The Empets live on a separate farm about three miles from the main farm. They arrive on the dairy farm about 6 a.m., and milk with a pipeline from a tie stall. The rest of the day is taken up by various chores, including managing the feed (they raise their own hay but purchase high moisture corn).

"We would like to go to total mixed rations, sometime down the

road," said Peggy.

If given the chance, the Empets would like to diversify into other types of farming, particularly sheep farming. "But that's not feasible now," she said, "maybe not until retirement." The family recently grew 2-3 acres of sweet corn and would like to expand their produce operation in the future.

Part of why Peggy and Dale remain farmers is "we get to be our own boss. Every job has its stresses, and ours are a different type than others."

The only regret Peggy has about farming is not being able to take time away from farming responsibilities every once in a while, she said. They have a part-time employee, Bill Raub, who helps them in the evenings.

But the Empets involve their children, Rick, 16; Tim, 14; and Becky, 8 — all of who are enrolled in the Mount View school system — on the farm.

"We like this occupation, because the whole family is involved," she said. "The children know what we are doing every day."

RCMA Elects Officers

BATAVIA, NY — William G. Zuber, a dairy farmer from Churchville, N.Y., was re-elected president of the Regional Cooperative Marketing Agency (RCMA).

Mr. Zuber heads the slate of officers and Executive Committee members that were unanimously re-elected at RCMA's December Board of Directors meeting on December 7 in Syracuse, N.Y.

The presidency of RCMA, a dairy bargaining cooperative with 22,000 members in 11 states of the Northeast, continues a distinguished leadership career in agricultural organizations for Mr. Zuber, who was first elected RCMA president in 1984.

He is president of Upstate Milk Cooperatives, based in Le Roy, N.Y., a post he has held for 11 years. He has also been active in the Cooperative Extension Service of Monroe County and the American Dairy Association. He was formerly president of the Monroe County Farm Bureau.

Other officers re-elected were Vice President Norman Harvey of Florence, Vt., who is president of Agri-Mark cooperative; Treasurer Lloyd Patterson of St. Johnsbury, Vt., president of Cabot Cooperative; and Secretary William Murphy of Stamford, N.Y., independent director of RCMA Region 11.

Re-elected to the Executive Committee were Robert Storch of Troy; George Demeree of Little Falls, N.Y.; Don Duncan of Robeson; Roy Hetrick of Bernville; Harold Howrigan of Fairfield, Vt.; Lewis Gardner of Galeston; and Clyde Rutherford of Otego, N.Y.



The Empets, in front, Becky, 8; left, Tim, 14; and right Rick, 16. In back are Peggy and her husband Dale.

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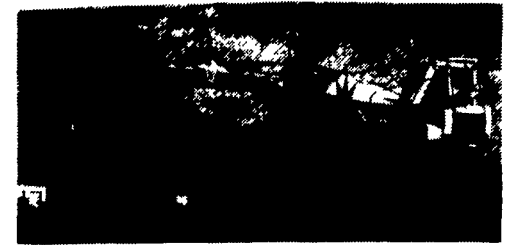
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