

# Richard Mains Honored As Master Farmer

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, February 23, 1991-A19

Beth Pitzer  
Cumberland Co.  
Correspondent

success as a dairy farmer to family teamwork, being resourceful on the farm, and the new techniques he's tried in the past twenty years. "Mains Acres" includes 700 plus acres of land in 6 farms. The efficient farm has been in the family for 140 years! Richard started as a partner with his dad in 1956. From 1956 until 1972 he was in this partnership with his dad and brother Francis. When the father died, the two brothers divided

property and each went their own way. The Mains family has the policy of selling the farm to interested family members before ever going outside to a public auction. Today his wife, son, and 2 part-time people all help to run the farm. He credits his wife, Shelva, for doing a good job with the records and helping to milk. His son Richard Jr. runs the dairy herd and is the farm specialist with artificial breeding. They've had better

conception rates since he's doing the artificial breeding. Teamwork is Richard's advice for young families. That's what's helped him build a strong dairy farm. He also feels it important to have the cattle and equipment paid for first before investing in real estate.

Early in the business Richard and Shelva aspired to produce 1 million pounds of milk a year. They've over doubled their goal; 2.24 million pounds of milk are produced a year! The milk is shipped to Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Associations.

He uses as much of his own feed as he can to be self-sufficient. Soybean, corn and alfalfa are all grown on the farm, processed through the wagon with scales, and fed to the 140 Holsteins cows. He diversifies slightly from the dairy farm by planting extra acreage in corn and contracting it to parties in Lancaster County. Wheat is also grown as a cash crop and also used as straw. Occasionally 20-30 yearling heifers are bought when extra silage is available. The yearlings are fed, bred, and sold at 6-9 months.

In the fifties Richard spent 1 1/2 years at Penn State in a two year program which he thinks has really paid off. From that experience he decided to use a milking parlor rather than a stall barn and to purchase a diesel farm tractor. He's been happy with both decisions. Another technique he strongly believes in is no-till. Half of the property is no-till. It's saved on labor and has helped to conserve soil on the slopes.

In his "free" time, he's very active with farmer groups. He's



Richard & Shelva Mains

presently the State Director for Pennsylvania Farmer's Association (PFA). This includes 9 districts and takes about 30 days of his time a year. He's recently just joined the Dairy Promotion Board. Two of his values which he'd like to share are to promote his own products and to educate animal rights groups that farm animals aren't mistreated.

Ag Security Areas are another topic very important to him. He's helped to form them in West Pennsboro and in Penn townships. His goal is to help to plan them for each township in his districts.

Richard has also been an active church board member for the past 13 years. He's a member of the Session for his Presbyterian Church.

When asked what he would like to see in the future, he responded that he's turned down offers to sell farmland near Route 81. He hopes to be able to continue to do so. Rather than have the land developed, he'd like to offer his son and son-in-law the chance to farm the 700 plus acres. A father giving his sons the chance his father gave him.

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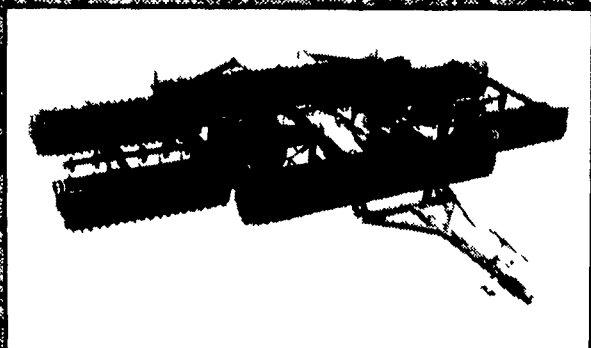
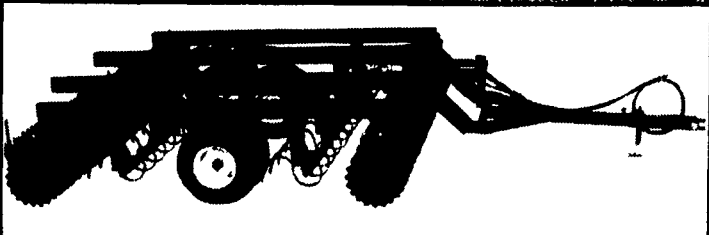
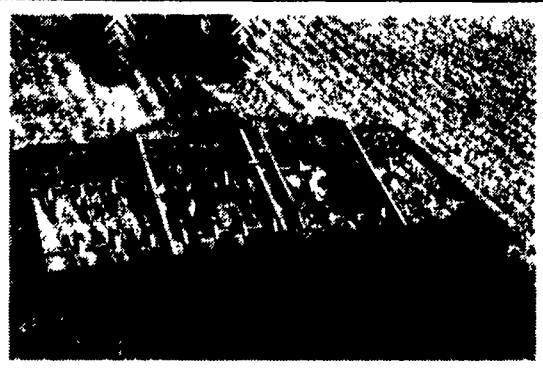
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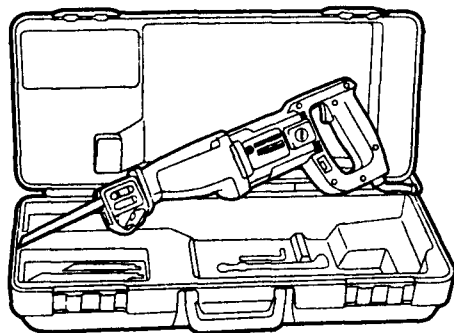
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