

Here's Our "Hats-Off-To-The-Dairy-Industry" Issue. Read And Enjoy.



The four-generation Kilgore family got together for this portrait on their 300-acre McCalls Ferry farm located near the Susquehanna River at Holtwood in York Co. They have 140 registered and grade Holsteins that include McCalls Ferry Likabal Frizzy, the first place junior calf at the York County Holstein Show last year.

In the photo are left to right, in front, Rebecca, York County Little Dairy Miss, age 8; and Raechel, age 6. In back of Frizzy is Emory, grandfather, age 89, and ready to go rake hay as soon as this photo session was over; Eugene; Douglas and Pam.

Photo by Everett Newswanger, managing editor.

Area Dairy Farmers Battle Low Milk Prices

JOYCE BUPP

York Co. Correspondent
YORK (York Co.) — What a difference a year makes.

June Dairy Month, 1990, saw

area dairy farmers coming out of a spring of mediocre-quality feed supplies from a previous wet season, but riding a Minnesota-Wisconsin price series of \$13.28.

Since then dairy farm budgets have taken a walloping, as farm milk prices dropped like a rock when the basic Minnesota-Wisconsin formula price took a record plunge last fall - and kept sinking. The September M-W of \$12.50 nosedived \$2.02 in a single month, to October's \$10.48 level and has slid steadily downward.

And while most area dairy producers welcomed this spring with more quality feedstuffs, the M-W price hit \$10.02 for May. A 2-cent nudge-up, to \$10.04 for June, offers a glimmer of optimism - just in time for Dairy Month, 1991.

But despite the price predicament of the last six months, and ongoing debates on remedies, producers are generally in agreement on one issue.

While cash flow has been extremely tight, most are finding ways to hang on.

In the intrepid spirit of the American dairy farmer, they're tightening belts, refinancing payments, delaying some purchases - and eyeballing management details with the proverbial fine-toothed comb.

Many, like young dairy farmer Doug Kilgore of Airville, are making adjustments in their feeding programs.

"We've changed our feeding system," affirms Kilgore. "We're buying inputs like beans and minerals and mixing our own, rather than purchasing prepared mixes. We keep pushing to try to get the most from what we have. And we're not spending for anything that isn't absolutely necessary."

At the Kilgore's Airville R2 residence, it also means "putting little projects on hold," like a porch Kilgore and his wife Pam had planned to add to their farm home.

A bright spot Kilgore sees is the steadiness of over-order premiums in the Federal Order 4 area, adding dollars to milk checks that otherwise would have been lost.

"I hope we can hold on to those," he emphasizes.

Melvin and Barb Marks, also of Airville, are tackling milk price

drops with a switch to a 3-X milking schedule, implemented in late February. Not only has production gone up an average of 14 pounds per cow, but improved udder health is a bonus.

"Our Somatic Cell Count dropped 20 percent," says Marks, putting the average near an impressive 100,000 for the 50-head Holstein herd.

"We also somewhat changed the feeding; we're using a total mixed ration to maximize feed inputs," Marks adds. "Overall grain use is down and we're getting more forages in the cows."

While vet visits have been reduced somewhat, Marks is watching that cutback very carefully. "We could lose money there," he acknowledges, if cow health and reproduction efficiency suffer.

Part-time labor hours are kept to a minimum and Barb Marks is working part-time off the farm. The couple and their two small daughters have also put on hold a family vacation they hoped to take to visit Michigan relatives.

"We're trying to play it as conservative as possible," says Thomasville dairyman Ted Haberland, Jr.

DAIRY ISSUE SPECIAL REPORT

Forages And Dairying: Is There A Place For Pastures?

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High quality forage is still a key to efficient, profitable milk production. Regardless of the changes and new technological developments in the dairy industry in the next 10 to 20 years, high quality forages will still be essential. A

key question for future dairy farm management is how dairy producers should utilize their land resources to supply high quality forages that will, when balanced with grains and/or purchased feeds, maximize profitability. The four basic forages available to dairy farmers include hays, hay crop sil-

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