

Way-Win Farm: Ecologically Sound, Financially Efficient

BY RANDY WELLS

Indiana Co. Correspondent
NORTH FREEDOM (Jefferson Co.)— At the Way-Win Valley Farm in eastern Jefferson County during the first week of May, brothers Dave and Charles Boddorf began spreading eight months worth of manure.

But the brothers were actually a little excited about the onerous-sounding chore.

Changes made at Way-Win last summer were about to become time-savers. The farm was about to become ecologically responsi-

ble. And the Boddorfs were about to make better use of one of the farm's most valuable by-products: 248,000 gallons of semi-liquid manure.

Last August the Boddorfs completed construction of a poured concrete manure storage tank, the only concrete facility -- and one of only about ten manure storage systems of any description -- in their county.

Twelve feet deep and 74 feet in diameter, the tank has a capacity of 386,000 gallons -- more than Way-Win needs now, but big

enough to allow for future growth.

Situated in an area of rolling green pastures and scenic country homes near the villages of North Freedom on the Jefferson-Armstrong county border, Way-Win is a Dairy of Distinction, and is not only technology-conscious but esthetically pleasing. The brothers Boddorf believe their new storage tank will enhance both of those attributes.

The actual tank construction was performed by Sollenberger Silo of Chambersburg, but hours of additional work before and after was done by the Boddorfs. The brothers excavated the site before construction and back filled afterward. They also poured concrete and installed much of the peripheral equipment.

For younger brother Dave, 34, a Penn State degree in civil engineering has been helpful not only in building the new system, but in day-to-day farming operations.

After working on the family farm during his high school years, Dave said he was ready for something different. With his Penn State degree in hand he moved east, and spent the next five years helping build hydraulic cranes at Grove Manufacturing in Shady Grove.

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A highlight of 1991 so far for Indiana County correspondent Randy Wells was his acceptance of a Keystone Press Award from the Pennsylvania Newspaper Publishers' Association in May.

Wells received a first place award for investigative reporting for a series of articles on home burglaries he co-authored for the Indiana Gazette, where he is a reporter and staff writer.

A journalism graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, he has contributed articles to Lancaster Farming from Indiana, Jefferson and Armstrong counties since 1988.

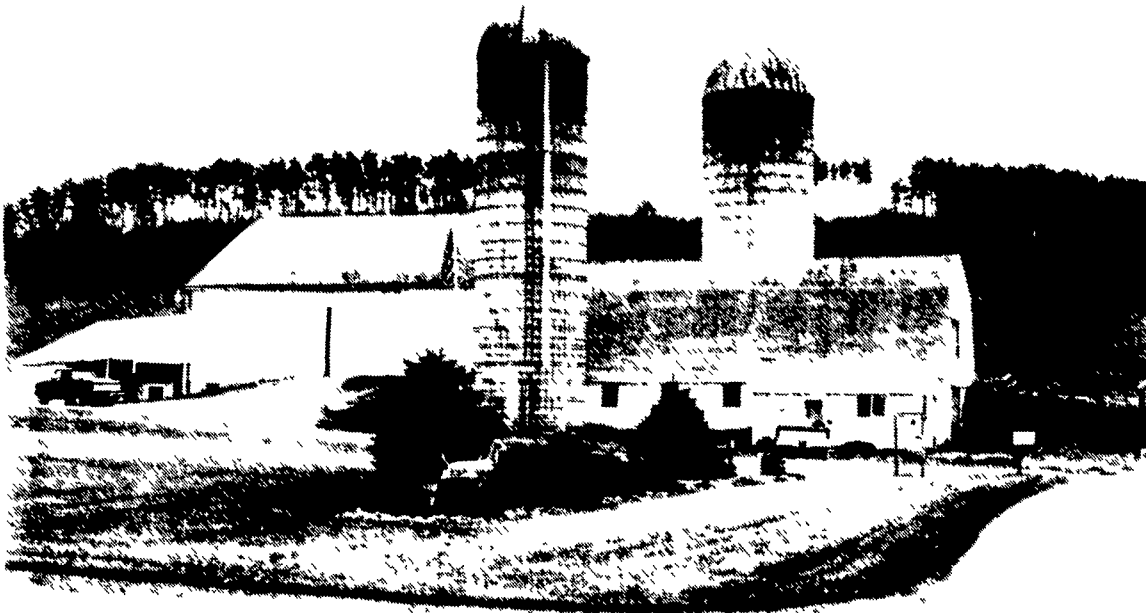


Randy Wells

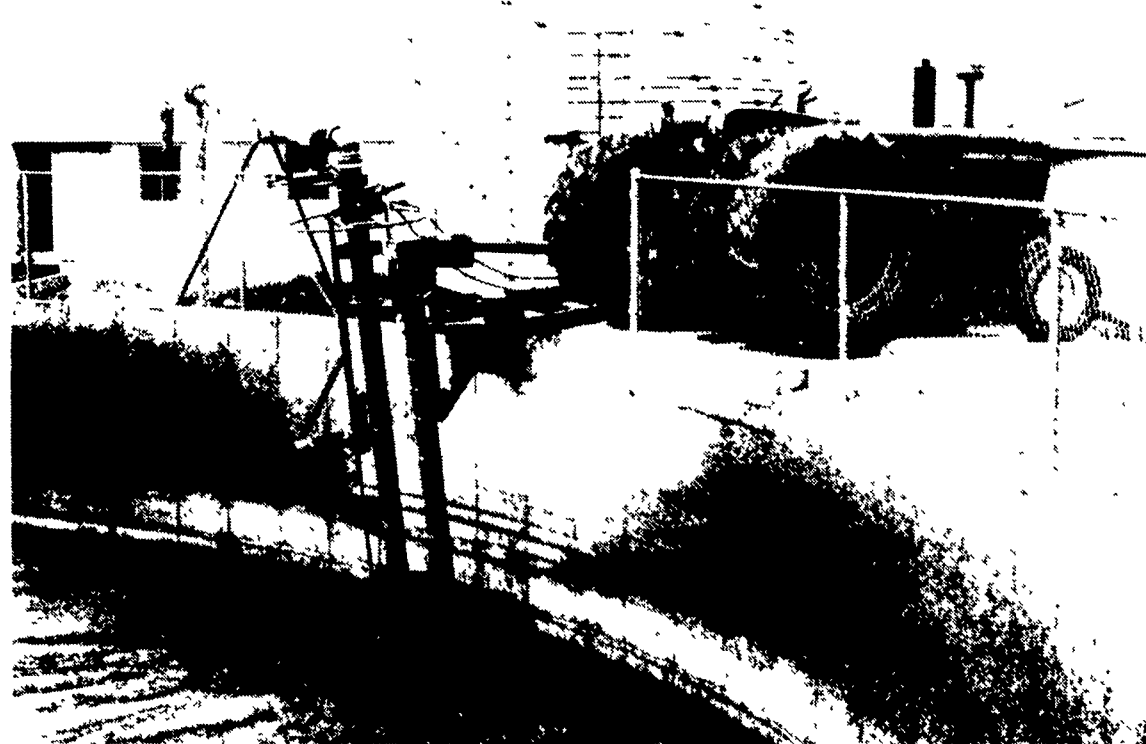
He and his wife Pat and two children live near Marion Center.



From the left, Dave and Charles Boddorf stand along the edge of a manure system they installed last year to store and take advantage of the waste from their Holstein herd.



Located in Jefferson County, Way-Win Valley Farm is a Dairy of Distinction, an honor earned in 1989. The landscaping, attention to detail and efforts to make the operation as efficient and responsible as possible.



The PTO from the tractor runs a 12-foot vertical pump that also agitates the slurry into a pumpable mixture. The level rings along the side of the 74-foot diameter pit shows the different levels of manure. One inch in change in level represents a change of 2,300 gallons. The entire poured concrete pit has a capacity of 386,000 gallons, enough to allow the brothers to expand the herd and still be able to maintain the effectiveness of the nutrient management system.

After returning to the farm he and older brother Chuck, 51, entered their herd in the DHIA program in March 1985. Their first rolling herd average in March 1986 was 17,645 pounds of production, 629 pounds of fat and 540 pounds of protein.

Their most recent DHIA figures from April of this year show significant improvement: 20,963 production, 771 of fat and 663 of protein.

Another of the Boddorfs' goals was herd improvement, and today 72 of the farm's 77 Holsteins are registered.

That same drive for improvement was behind the new manure storage system.

"We wanted to save those nutrients (in the manure). There's no sense hauling it in winter and letting it leach away," Dave said.

According to a waste management plan provided the Boddorfs

by the Jefferson County ASCS office, 50 percent of the nitrogen in manure evaporates into the atmosphere within three days after it is spread on top of the ground. And in winter when the ground is frozen, valuable nutrients are often washed away into streams, contaminating groundwater.

With the storage tank, the Boddorfs are able to accumulate the manure and its nutrients throughout the year, then spread it at the most advantageous time to benefit crops.

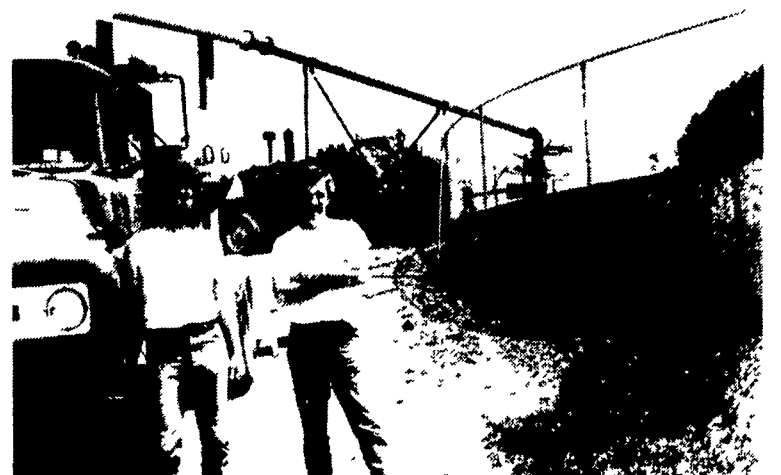
For 12 to 15 minutes twice a day, a gutter cleaner removes manure from the barn and empties it into a reception pit just outside. A 7.5 hp J-Star ram pump then forces the manure about 60 feet underground through a 12-inch pvc pipe and into the bottom of the storage tank.

For about 50 weeks a year the

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Dave uses accounting and ration balancing software programs on the farm computer to help the Boddorfs manage their farm.



A converted 1974 Mack truck is part of the manure spreading program at the Boddorf farm, Way-Win Valley Farm. Here, from left, Dave and Charles Boddorf stand by the front of the truck while the PTO from the tractor runs a 12-foot vertical pump. The pump also acts as an agitator to smooth out of the slurry before it is pumped into the truck for hauling to fields several miles away from the main farm.