

# A Little Americana Goes A Longhorn Way At Circle L

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**Lancaster Farming Staff**  
**HUMMELSTOWN** (Dauphin Co.) — Wanted: An experienced farm guide.

Wanted: A place where Pennsylvania tourists can go to learn about agriculture.

Circle L Ranch may be looking for a farmer guide, but can certainly supply an excellent place to learn about one type of agriculture — raising beef animals. Last year, Ed Swartz, DVM and manager of Circle L, purchased several head of quality Texas Longhorn cattle. Along with management of the Indian Echo Caverns, Ed, wife Judy, and daughters Kim and Jennifer operate the 80-acre cow/calf ranch.

Last weekend, Ed began the season with tours of Circle L. Each weekday afternoon, tourists to the Indian Echo Caverns have a chance to take a ride on a converted hay wagon and learn about Circle L and the history of the Texas Longhorn.

### Circle L Ranch

Circle L Ranch obtained its name from the Landis family, who built the farm in the early 1800s. At that time, the farm was known as "Landsdown." The Swartz family adopted the name for the farm operation and named it Circle L to denote their brand. Because of the association with the southwestern ranch cattle, Circle L Ranch was born.

Swartz said the circle is a "very religious symbol to the native American."

The Swartzes own 80 acres, 35 of which are in pasture and 30 in hay making. They also rent an additional 10 acres of pasture. The



Here is a cross of Holstein and Texas Longhorn at Circle L Ranch in Hummelstown.



Because of the tourist orientation of the farm, Swartz said they "wanted to pick colors and horn variation" from the pedigree lines. The Texas Longhorn herdstock was obtained from Gilleys Mountain Ranch in Collinsville, Va. They also selected for other traits, including good confirmation, low birthweight, and overall performance characteristics.

Indian Echo Caverns, a part of the farm operation, became a tourist attraction in 1929. But since the Great Depression, ownership changed hands a few times. It was purchased by the Swartz family in 1942.

Circle L Ranch manages about 16 cows and about 45 head of calves. They use one Texas Longhorn bull in the operation and some AI.

### Colors and horn

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There are about seven different classes of the Texas Longhorn breed. Only two were chosen for the Circle L — the Butler and WR breeds.

"I think the reason we chose Texas Longhorns was because of their uniqueness to the area," he said. "They're not here."

Swartz said that he has enjoyed the breed since his father began holding rodeos at Indian Echo Caverns. He said his father hoisted a Texas Longhorn steer on the back of a truck and they used to "drive through towns back in the '40s, and we had this Texas Longhorn, and I'll never forget it."

### Cowboy in me

"There's probably a little bit of cowboy in me," he said.

Swartz said he also can't forget the pleasant times he spent with his



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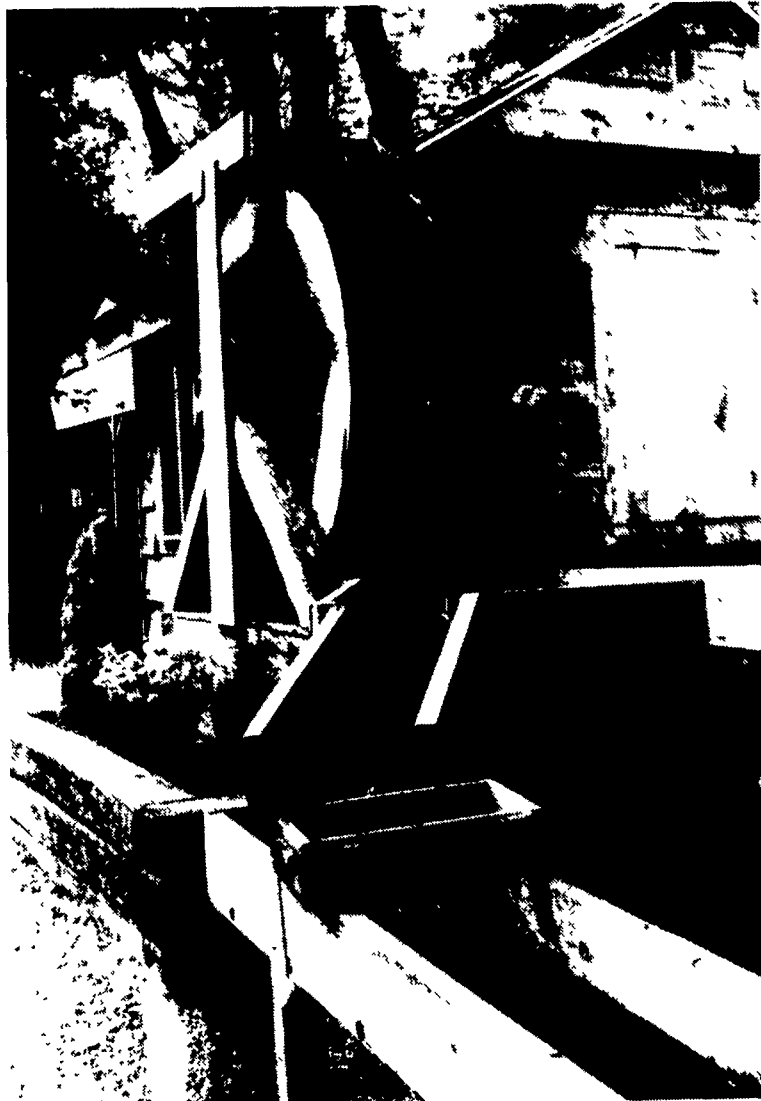
Each weekday afternoon, tourists to the Indian Echo Caverns have a chance to take a ride on a converted hay wagon and learn about Circle L and the history of the Texas Longhorn. Here, Ed Swartz takes out the wagon for a stroll.

family touring through the Southwest, including the Texas State Fair.

"So we stopped by to see the cattle. We never owned cattle before, until last year. We just took an immediate liking to them.

"And we thought, what a nice thing it would be if we could convert this crop farm, which it had been since 1942," he said, "into maybe more of a cow/calf operation and have some horses here, too. And that's how it got started."

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Recently, Swartz built this "Gem Mill Junction." Here, visitors can pan for gems at a waterwheel built from material from an old corn barn.