

White Rock Farm: Where Tourists Find Joy In Country Living

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— Farming and travel are two loves that Les and Lois Hershey share. Before marriage, both Les and Lois traveled extensively to other countries. It was something they hoped to continue throughout life. Both also intended to choose farming as a career.

But, it's almost impossible to travel when operating a 150-acre beef and crop farm — unless you come up with the solution the Hersheys have chosen. This friendly, outgoing couple opened a bed and breakfast in their 1860 farmhouse in southern Lancaster County.

"We decided to let the travelers come to us. It's just like traveling without leaving home," Les said of the opportunity to visit with guests from around the world.

Many of the guests return again and again to White Rock Farm in its tranquil setting surrounded by woodland and overlooking the scenic Octorara Creek.

As guests relax on the porch, listen to the crickets sing and to the occasional clip-clop of an Amish horse and buggy passing, they often remark: You're so lucky to live where it's so peaceful and have no stress, no worries, no headaches....

Les shakes his head. "If they

only knew, the challenges we face as farmers — especially the weather."

But there is no better place than at White Rock Farm for travelers to find out first-hand exactly what it is like to farm in the 20th century.

"Many guests come with the concept of living on an "Old MacDonald's farm," Les said. They are fascinated to learn that farming is big business with computers, long hours, and record keeping an integral part of everyday life.

Many of the guests have no previous experience with farm life and "think that anything with four legs is a cow." Sometimes this concept becomes a bit hilarious. Les tells of the time a guy with several degrees behind his name visited the farm. The guest kept referring to the steers as cows. The Hershey's five-year-old son repeatedly corrected the guest. In exasperation, the guest turned to Les and said, "Tell your sons that these animals are cows — not steers!"

Guests like to follow Les around the farm as he completes chores. At times, it is inconvenient as Les needs to complete planting and harvesting schedules. Nonetheless Les enjoys spending time with guests and explaining the intricacies of farming and the culture of Lancaster County.



Les and Lois Hershey with children, from left, Linford, 5; Lisa, 3; and Loren, 7.

One of the most asked questions is "What is the difference between Mennonites and Amish?"

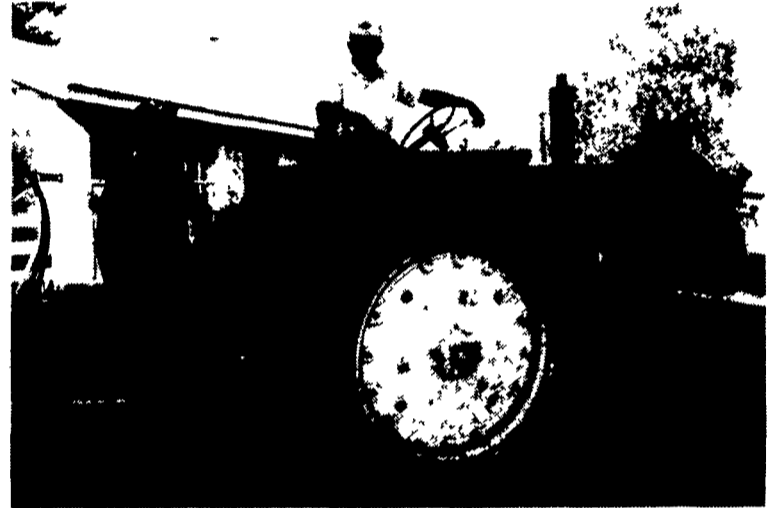
The Hersheys, who are Mennonite, enjoy sharing their faith and find that many guests are searching for spiritual truth. One time, a Jewish stockbroker spent hours questioning Les about his faith. Later, the stockbroker embraced Christianity and quit his job on Wall Street so that he could teach in an inner-city ghetto in order to help others.

From childhood, Les always intended to take over the family farm, but when he graduated from high school, his father, Floyd, did not need full-time help. Les filled several years with college, and with jobs such as crop farming 1,000 acres with a neighboring farmer, and working in construction.

"I liked the variety these other jobs offered me," Les said, who found the experience valuable when he took over the farm place.

Lois also grew up on a Lancaster County dairy farm, but the couple did not meet each other until both had finished college. Lois returned home to teach physical education, but always felt that someday she would marry a farmer.

Ten years ago, her intuition came true. At first, the Hersheys milked cows for a neighboring farmer. Both loved the dairy industry, but it was during the dairy buyout and Les' father decided to sell the



Les chats with his father, Floyd Hershey, through which the White Rock Farm has been handed down.

herd.

A few years later, when Les took over the family farm, he wanted to go back into dairy, but it did not seem financially feasible. Although the Hersheys adapted to raising 200 head of steers and crop farming, they still speak longingly of someday having their own dairy herd.

"I like working long days. I'd rather be milking cows than spending that time on a freeway," Les said.

In the meantime, Les spends long hours with his seed cleaning and Ag Bagger sideline businesses.

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Homestead Notes



Homemade bread, made by Lois and sampled by Lisa, is always part of the country breakfasts served to guests at the Bed and Breakfast.



The Hershey children pedal corn and puppies around the White Rock farmhouse that dates back to 1860.



Loren and Lisa spend happy hours with the cats and puppies at White Rock Farm.