

Berks County Guernsey Exhibitor

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His speech is heavily accented with Pennsylvania Dutch. If your ears are sharp, you can catch that he and Lillian "talk Dutch" to each other, and with Carl.

Along with tending to his dairy, Miles was involved as a 4-H leader, and in grange and church. He also ran a successful traveling produce business where every Friday

he would drive fresh produce, fruit, and eggs grown on 40 of their acres into Reading to sell door-to-door.

"When I quit in 1976, I had 225 customers," Miles said, noting that he was known as "the Midnight Farmer" because he worked from sunrise to midnight. His father started the business years before

on a spring wagon pulled by horses, Miles said.

He tagged along with his father, and when he began the route himself he often took one or more of his three daughters — Esther Smith, Fay Daub, and Helen Shirey.

Miles revealed the secret of his success.

"If you have a good disposition, you don't have trouble getting customers," he said.

Some of Miles' work ethic and spirit apparently rubbed off on Carl, for he and his wife, Carolyn, were named Farm Family of the year in 1985.

The herd numbers 135 animals, plus 15 Holsteins. The total number of Guernseys is down since a freak accident three years ago claimed the lives of 17 cows.

Carl explained that one night during a rain shower, the gutter cleaner shorted, electrocuting the

cows.

"It was horrible," he said of that morning when he went out to the barn to find half his herd gone. Several replacements purchased with insurance money after the accident helped build it back up somewhat.

The herd began with young Miles's desire to begin farming. Miles was born at the farm in 1914.

"I never moved," he said.

It was back in 1931, Miles said, when he was 17 and in Berks County's first 4-H dairy club that he decided he wanted a cow of his own.

The leaders went together and bought several Guernseys and the youngsters drew straws, he said.

"I drew the little lousy one, and my brother got the big one," Miles said. "But when I got home, my mother said I had the best one. And it turned out to be true."

From that cow, named Riveredge Itchin' Mabel, Miles built a herd. Although his father,

Milton, had about 10 Holsteins, Miles' Guernseys eventually took over.

Mabel gave birth to 10 heifers and five bulls, he said.

And she wasn't just a good breeder. Mabel had a good disposition, too, said Lillian.

"She was so tame we could have brought her into the kitchen," she said.

"She was 18 when she passed," Lillian noted.

Susan hopes to carry on the family farming spirit eventually with a farm of her own.

Even as she works full-time at the Four Seasons garden center in Breinigsville, she goes back home as often as she can to care for her eight cows.

"I can remember even before I was in kindergarten helping my grandpop on his farm — chasing the cows in and playing with the cats," she said.

Farming has "always been a part of me," she said. "I love cows and animals."

Long-Term Fertility Management Means More Profit

NORCROSS, Ga. — What crop year are we actually fertilizing for this fall and next spring? The answer most growers and crop advisors would give is the 1993 crop year.

For nitrogen, that clearly is the correct answer, since the crop impacted most is the crop following application. However, numerous long-term studies show that for phosphorus and potassium the residual responses are frequently larger than the first-year response. Ignoring future response, by focusing only on the needs of the next crop, can be a costly strategy.

Soil testing is an excellent tool for long-term fertility planning because it reflects the residual effect of past fertilization. Fertility programs that optimize profitability target a carefully selected optimum soil test level and adjust rates up or down to maintain that level over time.

Not all phosphorus and potassium applications should be treated like an annual crop input. Build-up fertilizer should be treated as a capital investment and amortized over a period of years. Land tenure determines the amortization period.

Long-term strategies lead to higher optimum soil test levels and greater profits. Such strategies spread the costs of increasing soil test levels over more years and more crops benefit from the elevated levels. Economic analysis of corn potassium response by the University of Illinois shows that a 5-year land tenure period results in \$13 per acre more annual profit

than a two-year tenure period. Profit increases another \$7 per acre per year for a 10-year period compared to a five-year period.

It is wise to avoid profit-robbing, short-term approaches to phosphorus and potassium management. Year-to-year cash rent arrangements may encourage the tenant to deplete soil fertility levels below the long-term optimum, causing a reduction in the productivity of the land. Lease agreements can be developed to protect the interests of both landowner and tenant. Such agreements include specific guidelines for soil testing, record keeping, and cost sharing for phosphorus and potassium fertilization.

Long-term fertility strategies that hold soil nutrient availability at optimum levels offer many benefits:

- Increased yield and income stability.
- Greater flexibility in fertilizer placement.
- Flexibility to adjust to price and cash flow fluctuations.
- Earlier harvest and lower moisture content in grain at harvest.
- Increased potential for successful conservation tillage.
- Reduction in yield losses due to compaction.
- Greater long-term nitrogen use efficiency.

For more information, contact Dr. Paul E. Fixen, Northcentral Director, PPI, P.O. Box 682, 305 5th Street, Brookings, SD 57006, (605) 692-6280.



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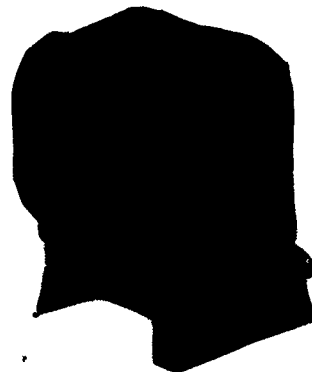


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