

# Butters' Farm To Represent This Year's Farm-City Day

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**MORRIS** (Tioga County) — They hadn't been on a farm in thirty years. Perhaps the chance to relive part of their childhood was one of the reasons Dr. David Fox and his wife Vicki were excited about taking part in an exchange program set up by Sherri Elders of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) office in Wellsboro. Another reason, to be sure, was it gave them a chance to see a personal side of their patients.

Fox is an optometrist and Vicki is his receptionist in Wellsboro. The farm they visited was the picturesque Silverlea, the home of Raymond and Peggy Butters and the site of the 1993 Farm-City Day to be held this July.

Elders brought the Farm-City Day program to Tioga County in 1991. The best public relations spokesperson for agriculture probably in the state, no doubt in the county, Elders is constantly bubbling over with enthusiasm about farming and has been known to drag unsuspecting city slickers out to farms to show them what it's all about.

Elders was in her usual form when she went to Dr. Fox for an eye examine. Farm-City Day was rapidly approaching, and she wanted to organize an exchange program in which someone from town would work at the Silverlea for a day and then one of the Butters (also patients of Fox) would work at a business in town for a day. Fox was fascinated. By the end of the examination, Elders made the offer he couldn't refuse. Vicki, being a real animal lover, asked to be a part of the exchange program, too.

"The Butters, like a lot of my patients, are farmers," said Fox. "I feel people, at least those of us who haven't grown up on farms,

don't appreciate the role that family farms play in the economy." Fox realized that being a part of the exchange program would give him a chance to "walk in his patients boots."

In fact, boots were one of the things Elders recommended they get for their day on the farm. Barn boots, as every farmer knows, is one of the essentials of farming. At Silverlea, where the barn is free-stall, it's a must. ASCS office co-workers were happy to lend Elders the necessary items for David and Vicki.

Moments after arriving on the farm, the Foxes understood the importance of those boots. "It's totally different from what I remember as a child on my uncle's farm," said Vicki. Never having been in a free-stall barn before, she looked around in wide-eyed wonder as the grade holsteins congregated in groups or wandered around.

The barn, added to over the years since the farm was established in 1906, serves as an indoor pasture, with sections partitioned off for calves, heifers, milkers, and those about to freshen or be bred.

"We don't let the cows out in the winter," said Terry Butters, "and they won't go out in the summer, even when they're given the choice."

The feeding system, too, is different from what the Foxes were familiar with years ago. "I remember the cows had their own stanchions and feed was dumped in front of them," said Fox. While some farms still operate like that today, the Butters have installed three computerized feeding stanchions. Each cow wears a collar with a computer chip. As the cow steps into a stanchion, her chip is read and a portion of feed is automatically dumped for her consumption. Each cow can go into the



The Butters, the Foxes, and ASCS employee Sherri Elders take time for a photo in front of the Silverlea Dairy of Distinction sign. From left is Elders, brothers Terry and David Butters, David Fox, Peggy and Raymond Butters, and in front is Vicki Fox with Laddie.

stanchion to feed three times a day. After that, the computer refuses to give the cow more feed.

Inside the barn, Fox was given a shovel and instructed to clean out the pens while Terry jumped on a skid-steer loader and maneuvered the machine up and down the aisles, scraping as he went with efficient speed.

Vicki made her way to the maternity pen to watch a breeding take place. Sire Power technician John Zehr of Liberty explained the process, as well as the cow's cycle from being bred to freshening. The Butters use of patches on the cow's tail bone to detect when a cow's in heat was another technical wonder for the Foxes.

When it came time for milking, David and Vicki were led to the

milking parlor, a double-six herringbone. As the first of 72 cows paraded in, the Foxes were instructed on how to apply the milkers.

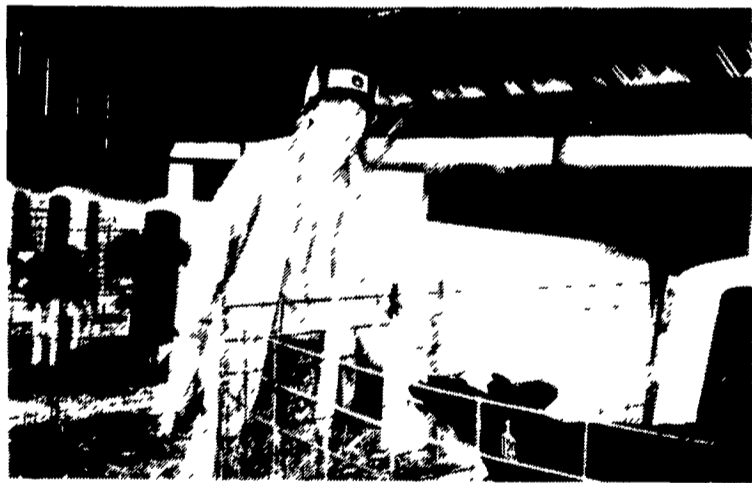
"There are four?" asked Fox, as he counted the units and matched them to the teats. He was a bit surprised at the vacuum pressure and the effort it took to slip them in place. Stepping back with a wide grin on his face, he watched the milk make its way along the tubing into the weighing jars in the center of the parlor.

The work gave him a feeling of satisfaction. In regards to the exchange program, Fox said, "Being here has confirmed my thoughts on how much a farming family has to be dedicated. It requires a lot of team work and

they have to be good businessmen. Farmers certainly have my respect."

For Vicki, the day was an education in economics, as well. "I was shocked to find out how much farmers actually earn in wages. Milk prices are so low, we need to make it worth their while."

Since her visit to the Butters at Silverlea, Vicki has joined Elders in promoting the dairy farmer. Recently, she relayed her experiences to a group known as the Wellsboro Business and Professional Women. Her anecdotes of the day's events, particularly the artificial insemination part, gave her audience a few chuckles, along with a new insight to the world of farming as it is today.



Her first "chore" was feeding the calves. Afterwards, Vicki Fox enjoyed a calf suckling her fingers, although they became raw up to her knuckles.



Upon his arrival at Silverlea, Dr. David Fox was handed a wrench. With it, he proceeded to help install a new ceiling in the milking parlor. The experience showed him first hand how much a "jack-of-all-trades" farmers had to be.

## Mollenhauer To Serve On DHIA Board

ITHACA, N.Y. — Northeast Dairy Herd Improvement Director David Mollenhauer was recently elected to serve on the National DHIA Board of Directors.

Mollenhauer and his wife Linda are partners in a four family sub-chapter S operation in Newark, N.Y. Other members of the corporation include Allan Ruffalo, Ted and Carol Peck, and George and Colleen Andrew. A fifth partner, Wade Peck is currently being worked into the operation. The partnership farms 1900 acres and milks 300 cows with another 300 head of youngstock. Cash crops include corn, peas, wheat, and soybeans.

Mollenhauer has two children. A son Jim is 25 and involved in housing construction in Rochester, New York, while daughter Patty will be graduating in May from Oswego State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English.

The Northeast DHIA Board of Directors is comprised of 13 dairy farmers representing the six states within the Northeast service region. Mollenhauer has been a Northeast Director since December of 1988 and will continue to serve on both the Northeast and

National boards. During the past four years Mollenhauer has also served on the Executive Committee, the Long Range Planning Committee, and as Chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee. Currently he is a member of the Finance Committee and a member of the Dairy Records Processing Advisory Board. He is also an active member of the

Dairy Cooperative where he serves as Chairman of the Resolutions Committee.

Dick Scott of Maine is the second Director from the Northeast Dairy Herd Improvement service area. David Mollenhauer replaces John Noble who had served with distinction as National Director for six years.

## AGA Appoints Jensen

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio — The American Guernsey Association Board of Directors has appointed Neil Jensen as the new executive secretary-treasurer of the organization.

Jensen, who has been the interim executive secretary-treasurer since Nov. 1, replaces Erick Metzger.

Jensen began his employment with the American Guernsey Association in September 1990 as records department coordinator and young sire program director. In 1991, he added the responsibilities of appraiser to his duties.

A native of Wisconsin, Jensen

has an extensive history with Guernseys and in the dairy industry. His Guernsey background began at home with Level Gold Guernseys Inc., Balsam Lake, Wis. He and his brother managed their family's Guernsey herd for eight years and maintained a level of production 30 percent above the national breed average.

Upon leaving the home farm, Jensen worked at Sire Power, Inc. for one and one-half years as district sales manager.

The American Guernsey Association is the national organization for the registration and promotion of Guernsey cattle and is headquartered in Reynoldsburg, Ohio.