

Kroeck's Advice: Keep Up With The Change, Dollars Will Follow

C.J. HOUGHTALING
 Tioga Co. Correspondent
 KNOXVILLE (Tioga Co.) — If farmers are to survive, they must be willing to change.

For the Kroecks, that philosophy is evident throughout their dairy operation. Farming, to them, isn't just a business, it's big business. And keeping it big requires making necessary changes in their farming practices as the entire dairy industry changes.

Change has always been taking

place on the Kroeck farm. Karl moved his family to Knoxville from Lancaster County in 1969.

Prior to the move, the Kroecks raised hogs on 80 acres. But Karl wanted to farm on a bigger scale, so the Kroecks came north where land was cheaper. Purchasing two farms with a total of 500 acres, they began milking 50 head.

Since that move, the size of the Kroeck family, as well as the farm, increased. Karl and his wife Beverly have five children: Mike,



John Kroeck takes care of the herd's needs such as feeding and medicating.

33; Larry, 31; Julie, 30; David, 28; and John, 20.

Karl and his sons Mike and John now milk 160 head of registered and grade Holstein and own 2,000 acres of land. Managing an operation of this size requires a lot of careful planning and making efficient use of time.

Helping the Kroecks with their milking are three part-time employees. Fran Hija is the first one in the barn each morning to start the milking. She is joined later by Mike and John.

Others who assist with the evening milking and chores are Clayton McLean and Randy Morseman. The bulk of the field work is done by Karl, although his sons join him after the milking is completed.

Over the years, the Kroecks have changed their crop management practices and feeding system, both which have had positive effects on their herd's health and milk production.

Future changes include switching their stanchion barn and pipeline operation to a free stall and parlor set up to further increase their herd's size and manageability.

(Turn to Page D3)



Beverly Kroeck, bringing milk back from the barn, poses with her youngest son, John, on his way to the barn for the morning milking. Their dog, Duke, also wanted a little recognition.

COLLEEN HOUGHTALING
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C.J. Houghtaling joined the Correspondent staff at Lancaster Farming in March of 1992. Previously, she worked as an editor and reporter at two Tioga County newspapers, as well as a substitute teacher.

She has a bachelor's in elementary education, with an area of concentration in communication skills from Mansfield University, and is a graduate of the Writer's Digest School for fiction.

Her award winning fiction, nonfiction, and poetry have appeared in *Byline Magazine*, *The Carousel News and Trader*, *Endless Mountain Review*,

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, *Children's Playmate*, *Midwest Poetry Review*, and many more, including nine area newspapers and several anthologies.

She is president of the Middlebury Union Cemetery, the Northern Appalachian Pennwriters, and is a board member of the statewide Pennwriters organization.

Her hobbies include scuba diving, woodworking, and animals. She and husband Kevin live with their Pomeranian, two cats, three aquariums, and gold fish pond in Middlebury Center, Tioga County.

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