

## Master Farmer Now Has Dairy Of Distinction

**Beth Miller**  
Cumberland Co. Correspondent

NEWVILLE (Cumberland Co.) — Richard G. Mains has won many prestigious farming awards over the years and now he has another honor to add to that list.

His farms in West Pennsboro and Penn Townships have been picked for the coveted Dairy of Distinction honor.

Mains, who runs the six farms in his operation in partnership with his son, Richard Jr., is proof of what hard work and intelligent planning can bring.

Mains showed his talent for farming early when he enrolled in the two-year Agriculture Management Program at Penn State University after graduating from Carlisle High School in 1954. He finished the course in one and one-half years.

After finishing at Penn State in 1956, Mains' father, Norman, who is 86 and still walks to the farms every morning, offered him a three-way partnership with his brother.

His career with the farms, which all touch, grew from there.

"All our equipment is bought and paid for. A lot of people can't start up in small farms because it costs a lot to start up," Mains said. "You can make good money because of the high prices, but if things get bad you fall big."

By 1970, the Mains' were milking one of the biggest herds in the county. Mains in fact started milking in one of the first parlors in the area. They still are milking in a parlor they built 23 years ago.

Their herd average production has risen from 12,000 pounds in 1970 to an average of 19,000 pounds today, Mains said.

Mains owns 750 acres and rents

another 200. The main farm has been in the Mains family since 1832. The original farmhouse was involved in the Civil War when Confederate soldiers stayed there on their way to Carlisle, and the famous Battle of Gettysburg, Mains said.

The Mains' milk 150 cows and raise 200 young cattle for replacements. They employ one hired man full-time to help with the operation.

They grow most of the feed for the cattle - corn, alfalfa, wheat, barley and soybeans. Mains said they roast their soybeans.

The Mains' sell the corn they don't use and they sell wheat also.

They have no plans to expand their operation at present, Mains said.

The Dairy of Distinction honor is just one of the awards Mains has won for his expertise in farming.



Richard Mains stands with one of the non-milking cows at his Dairy of Distinction farm.



Richard Mains with calves that will keep his Dairy of Distinction operation going in the future.

Another major honor was awarded to him in 1991 when the Pennsylvania Farmers Association bestowed the Master Farmer Award on him. His own father had won the same coveted award in 1969.

Richard Jr. also seems to be following in his father's footsteps since, like his dad, he also is a graduate of the agriculture course at Penn State. Two of Mains' three daughters are in farming also.

Richard Sr. is active in farming beyond the boundaries of his own farms as well.

He is a member of the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Board and a state director in the Pennsylvania Farmers Association. In addition, he is promoting agriculture security areas in the townships where his farms are located.

Mains said he is trying to sign easements to preserve all the farms for farming use. So far, two

farms are signed in, he said.

His other activities include being a session member of the First United Presbyterian Church for 15 years.

Mains said he and his wife, Shelby, try to travel in the winter. They have managed to make it to 40 of the 50 states so far, he said.

Mains said his operation also includes one of the area's most colorful landmarks, the "reddest barn in the county."

The barn ended up being painted a Chinese red, he said, because Richard Jr. kept teasing him about all the buildings on the operation being painted white with green trim.

So Richard Sr. said he started calling around, saying he would paint the barn the brightest red he could find. He did, a very bright red.

"It's an eye-catcher," Mains said. "A lot of people drive by and take pictures."

### President Baker's Message

Since the Dairy of Distinction program began in 1987, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, hundreds of dairy farmers have applied to have their farms recognized as a "Dairy of Distinction".

Those attractive farms that were honored to receive the colorful farm sign are truly an advertisement for their industry not only to their neighbors, but to those who pass their farms. This is the purpose of the program: to be a point of pride in promoting the source of the state beverage — milk.

However, the executive committee recognizes there are many more farms that would merit the designation if only they would submit an application to the program. Also, there are those farms that entered in the past that have truly improved the appearance of their farms and would now qualify. But no one else can enter for you. Mr., Mrs., or Ms. Dairy farmer, this is a self nominating program. Only you can take the initiative to complete the application and send it in. We encourage you to participate in 1994.

It will make us all proud to see more farms strive to become a "Dairy of Distinction."

Thank you again to all our hard-working volunteers on the committees for making the program successful the past seven years.

**Dan Baker**  
President, Pennsylvania  
Dairy of Distinction Program

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** 1994 application forms for Dairy of Distinction will be available after January 1, 1994. Forms are distributed by American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Inc., 239 Schuyler Avenue STE 105, Kingston, PA 18704-3329. And will also be printed in various farm newspapers.