

The Second Generation

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pay for an expansion of their free-stall facility, and because they have added first lactation heifers.

Those first lactation heifers make up 40 percent of the current, 84-cow milking herd.

This August and September, in an attempt to raise the average, they tried going back to three-times-per day milking, but decided that the extra work wasn't worth the increase in milk production.

But they appear to have good reason for being optimistic about the herd's chances for getting back to the top.

They have a couple of good cow lines to follow up — two of the top 10 1993 Pa.DHIA-tested Holsteins are from the Snyders' herd.

At third place statewide is Pepper, a 6-year-old which recorded a 305-day, 1993 lactation of 40,502 pounds of milk, 3.1 percent, or 1,236 pounds of fat, and 3.2 percent, or 1,278 pounds of protein.

Pepper is a homebred cow whose dam had made a top production of 32,000 pounds of milk, with 1,000 pounds of fat and 900 pounds of protein.

Steve said that Pepper's sire is Macabob Cane Dutchman Cinnamon, no longer in the lineup of a Midwestern artificial insemination company, and which was used for cleanup work, because Pepper wouldn't settle with the higher priced semen.

Despite her production record, Steve and Tracy said they aren't looking use Pepper as the foundation of the herd, but they aren't about to count out her benefit to the operation.

She's freshened four times and has had four bull calves, all of which were sold for beef.

Pepper is a well-statured, strong milking cow that has held up well, Steve said. She classified 84 points, Good Plus, and, while bull studs aren't interested in her pedigree, there has been some interest in her sons from local dairymen who use natural insemination market. Especially with her production record.

The cow to which the brothers are looking to build up the herd is dead. Her name was Poppy.

Steve said that Poppy, ranked 10th in the state in production, unfortunately died shortly after calving stillborn twins. Her earlier offspring hold lots of promise, Steve said.

Before she died, she bore three heifers, two from average bulls apparently are headed on the same production direction as Poppy. Her first calf made 32,000 pounds of milk as a 3-year-old; the other posted a production record of 23,000 pounds on a first lactation. Her last heifer is a Rocky daughter and Steve said there is some interest.

But there is a twist to following the pedigree. Poppy is also a homegrown cow, the daughter of a homegrown bull which was purchased by Oakenbound Farms in Richland (listed under Berks County by the Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association, but the owners, Richard and Nelson Troutman, are members of the Lebanon Holstein Club.)

According to Steve, Poppy's sire is Carl A. Oakenbound Fred. The bull came from a good cow at Carl A. Farm and was sold to the Troutmans and later the bull got a good proof through an AI operation and was used as a sire by the Snyders.

"That's a pretty strong family,"

Steve said, "and the Poppy cow had some index. That's why we hope this Rocky heifer does good for us, because there was some interest in the Poppy family."

The couple hundred acre farm has an interesting, if not unorthodox, history upon which Steve and Tracy are building.

The history of the farm goes back to the Snyder's maternal grandfather, Frank Kehler, from whom Carl and Alice (Kehler) Snyder bought the farm in 1960.

Kehler had started the farm with chickens, pigs and a few dairy cattle.

The dairy cattle had mainly come through unintentional purchases — Art Morgan, a local cattle hauler who would pick up culls and take them to auction, used to stop by the Kehler farm and show him cattle that Morgan thought were too good to go to slaughter.

According to the Snyders, the cattle would have a case of mastitis, or a stepped on teat, or some problem that Kehler would be able to fix. He would decide if the rehabilitative effort would be worth the price, albeit much reduced from the cost of a sound cow.

And many of those salvaged bossies ended up milking well, even if a quarter shy on the udder.

When Carl and Alice took over from her father, they changed the operation to an all dairy farm, except for some horses, and farmed for 30 years before their sons took over.

Carl still directs and does most of the fieldwork and Alice likes to cut hay; insists on it, according to her sons.

"She likes the self-propelled haybine," Steve said. "She's mowed hay since 1960s. She's probably mowed 90 percent of the hay raised on the farm and she'll continue to do it until she can't," he said. "She's given up milking though."

The transition to Steve and Tracy taking over the farm wasn't immediate.

At first, all four of Snyder's sons worked together. Steve graduated from Cornell University in 1985 and, after working for Pennfield Feeds, came back to the farm in 1988. That was an impetus for the sons to take over.

Mark, 27, is now an accountant, and Donald, 31, sells feed. But when it became apparent that the farm was not really big enough to support all four and families, and because of interests other than full-time dairying, Steve and Tracy formed a partnership.

Penn-Jersey Products Inc. gave a July tour of Pennsylvania farms to Canadian farmers and the Carl A. Farm was one of the stops.

It's no accident that Steve and Tracy's operation was chosen. They are continuing the family tradition of seeking to build and maintain a sensible, safe, and profitable farming operation.

In addition to leading county average production from late last year into this spring, the farm's herd been at or near the top of the county list several times: in 1969 it was top; second in 1972 and 1979; and fourth in 1991.

But the brothers said they didn't expect the distinction of leading the county to last, because, though dairy farming may sometimes seem routine and monotonous, things really do change.

Farms have been, especially within the past 30 years, one of the most ever-changing, dynamic businesses to be operating.



The average milk production of the Holstein herd at Carl A. Farm in Schuylkill County jumped to the top of the county because of changes in milking, feeding and nutrition implemented by Steve and Tracy Snyder, brothers in partnership. At first a single family farm, it was expanded last year in order to support the families of the brothers' families. The Thoroughbred horses in the foreground belong to the farm, but are not a major business concern.



Steve Snyder waters calves, hopefuls for the future herd.

Not only is there increased competition in milk production as other farms up-size their herds and modernize in an attempt to give the next generation a shot at staying in dairying, but real estate speculators and increasing societal costs effectively pressure all farmers to seek means of increasing cash flow.

Over the years, the goal of the Carl A. Farm has been to achieve a smoothly running, and family oriented operation.

In the transfer between generations, while that goal has not changed, the methods of achieving it have.

Steven and Tracy added a TMR mixer, use a nutritionist, expanded the barn, and have conducted other experiments based on research to see what works for them and what doesn't.

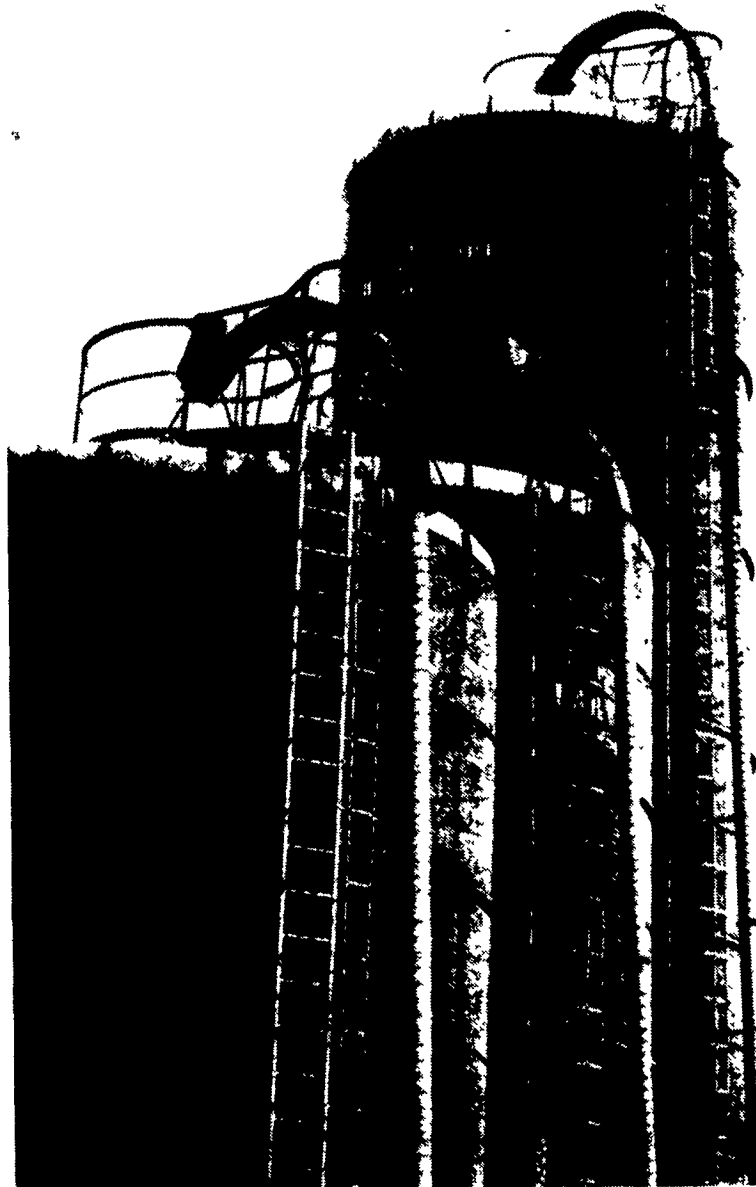
Some of the "experiments," such as 3X milking, have been pretty well put on the back, back burner.

The two were maintaining a 6 a.m., 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. milking schedule.

"I was getting as much sleep," Steve said, "but we couldn't leave the farm."

Even before that, there was change at the farm. In 1991, a cousin was getting married and no one wanted to stay at the farm. In order to allow everyone to enjoy the family occasion, the sons switched to a noon and midnight milking schedule.

Now, after selling cattle and try-



Atop one of four silos on their farm, Steve Snyder watches to make sure haylage is being blown into the silo correctly.

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