

Mowry Farm Known For Production

Lancaster Farming, Saturday, November 27, 1993-A27

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ram. Still producing 106 pounds of milk on the 365th day of her 9y8m, Corinne had peaked at 180 lbs. of milk and had six or seven months over 140 lbs. She was the eighth generation from one of Ken's FFA projects, and best of all, she transmitted her will to milk and her good type to her offspring. At one time, 14 state and national leaders were photographed together at Mowry Farms. They were also known for their fine show string as

well, with winners at the Farm Show in Harrisburg and other major shows.

As neighboring farms became available, the Mowry family purchased additional land. Today, Steve, his dad, and two brothers, Ron and Bob, and sister Susie and other family members and eight employees farm 1300 acres, all but 400 owned by the Mowry family. And the tradition of high production has continued too. In the January, 1993, USDA national listing,

their New-Life Melwood Halo heifer was listed sixth in the national Total Cow Performance Index (TCPI) with 42,000 lbs. of milk. Halo is classified VG87. Naturally there is a lot of interest in this heifer.

The high production has been achieved even though the herd has been expanding in size for many years. At present they have 300 head milking with 380 on test. Tie stalls house 240 cows and 106 new frees stalls were built this summer.

PFU Holds Annual Convention

CARLISLE (Cumberland Co.) — The Pennsylvania Farmers' Union (PFU) held its 22nd annual convention at the Embury Convention Center in Carlisle recently.

House Ag Chairman William Lloyd addressed the convention on issues concerning nutrient management, ag advisory to DER, animal rights enforcement, and the future of land preservation. Walt Pocchatka, deputy secretary to Boyd Wolff, spoke about animal enforcement officers firearms training and restaurant inspections moving from DER to the Department of Agriculture.

National Farmers' Union (NFU) President Leland Swenson spoke on the issues of NAFTA and the effects it will have on agriculture. Wardell Townsend, secretary of the administration from

USDA, talked about the reorganization of the USDA.

Bill George, state president of Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, spoke about NAFTA and how it would affect jobs, farmers, and the environment. He also addressed working with PFU as a team on issues now and into the future.

Other speakers who addressed the convention were State Treasurer Catherine Baker Knoll, who spoke about the positive changes that have taken place in the treasurer's office. A field trip to the new trading room made for an interesting afternoon. Auditor General Barbara Hafer informed PFU about WAM, which is walking around money that representatives use for their pet projects and how difficult the money is to track.

Nancy Danielson from NFU

spoke on the national health care issue and the approval of BGH. Elizabeth Fry, executive director of Pennsylvania Green Thumb, talked about the money available to train older workers in our rural communities.

Election of officers was held, and Robert Junk was elected to another term as president, Gerald Seyler vice president, Naomi Spahr treasurer, and Terry Pattison was elected secretary. Delegates to the national convention are Scott McNamara, Gerald Seyler, Paul Yates, and Dale Snyder as alternate.

The ground for a second free stall barn has been graded to be ready for plans to build additional room for up to 500 cows this winter.

"We have been expanding the herd ever since I was a kid," Steve said. "Sometimes you have to back up and say you can't do things like you use to do. When you grow in numbers, you can't cater to the individual needs of each cow as much, but it's still important."

"I marvel when I think of Corinne," Steve said. "At her peak production she was being fed 18 times a day and eating 60 lbs. of grain and two bales of hay. You have to have good individuals with a will to milk if you are going to be successful. Luck plays a part too. We have also had our share of failures."

A great disappointment came last winter when the roof of the free stall barn caved in under heavy snow and killed 17 cows, several national record holders.

"We have always tried to keep up with the breeding demand of the industry, but of late the industry has gone with the high producing young cow that doesn't last," Steve said. "High producing two-year-olds are a double edge sword. Sure, I'm tickled when a two year-old

milks real well, but I'd rather she be an average producer and stick around longer.

"Currently, everything is geared for high producing two year-olds. The later records don't mean much on the index any more. It's sad to say the cows with three or four lactations are a rare breed now," Steve said.

"The other day I bought some semen from Mark Anthony, an old strength bull from Canada. We had a lot of good old cows out of him. I'm planning to use him on some of these frail cows that can't take it and hope to breed some strength into them. The industry has ignored strength for years, and it's getting critical. These frail two year-olds milk 80 to 90 lbs. of milk for a year and then they're dead.

Steve is a director of Pennsylvania DHIA and sees dairy herds getting larger. "No one here at our farm wants to get bigger, but I just don't see any small herds around in the future," Steve said. "I don't like to say that, but I don't see how the 50 or even 80 cow herd can survive. You have to get large enough that you can buy in volume. We try to fight becoming a milk factory, but you are kidding yourself."

Ken agrees.

"The slant of your story should be that we should not need to keep getting bigger to survive," Ken said. "As it is, you need to keep adding cows to stay even. That's a reflection on our farm economy that should not be. But we have no control over our milk market."

Steve agrees.

"As for milk pricing, I've come to the point that when I see an article of someone's solution to low milk prices, I don't read it anymore," Steve said. "Headlines of \$13.00 milk give you a buzz for a few days, but when the milk check comes, they have taken so much off..."

As for DHIA, Steve sees it going the way of the dairy industry. "I feel there are going to be fewer service centers, and we are going to need to keep the centers running around the clock to be efficient," Steve said.

"In addition, we are going to need to cater to the large herd so we don't price ourselves out of the market. With new computer systems on farms, the milk is weighed daily, and with the coming electronic ID, many large commercial dairymen will have on the farm all the information they need to manage their herds. With protein levels in milk more constant than fat across the breeds, the need for component testing in commercial herds is less critical. DHIA must prepare to meet these challenges," Steve said.

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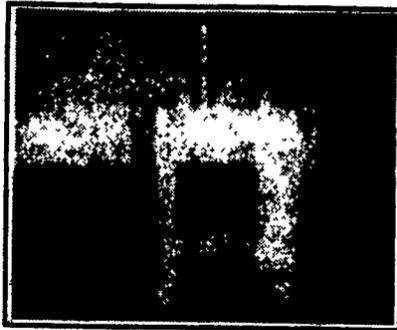
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