

# Son Ignites Spark Of Optimism On Century Farm

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff  
STRASBURG (Lancaster Co.)

— Spiraling equipment costs, lower crop prices, and sporadic rainfall do not deter Carl Landis in his quest to farm.

The 28-year-old farmer said, "I'm not easily discouraged by setbacks. If it's a dry year, you just put up with it, work a couple of extra hours, and spend less."

His wife, Audrey, laughs heartily at the idea that her husband might ever become discouraged by farming obstacles.

"Him, scared of farming setbacks? Not him. To him, farming is a game. He has enough optimism for both of us," she said.

Carl attributes his positive attitude as a result of the realistic way in which he was raised.

"My dad let me do things myself. He always let me see the bills when I was growing up so I wasn't shocked when I started farming," he said.

Carl's parents, Clair and Arlene Landis, were recently honored for their Century Farm. It was Carl who researched the family farm to validate that it had been in the family since 1853. The original 93 acres were purchased by the Landis's great-great grandparents Jacob and Susan Ranck. For about 60 years, the farm was rented to non-relatives until Clair and Arlene moved on it 30 years ago.

Son Carl is the sixth generation of the family to farm. In addition to Carl, the Landis family includes Charlotte, who works for an accountant but helps on the farm weekends; Cindy who is married to Todd Gingrich; and Calvin, a junior at Lampeter Strasburg. He takes an interest in farming but has not decided whether or not to make it a career.

"We don't have a partnership but each have our own thing we are responsible to do," said Carl. He lives with his wife and 18-month-old daughter in the tenant house on the property that now comprises 120 acres.

During the farm's history, an additional 10 acres were purchased, but Carl said, "We still don't know how 18 acres were added. We want to take more time to research it at the courthouse."

He suspects it may be the plot of ground that the tenant house stands on since it borders another road and is located several acres from the farmhouse. Generally, tenant houses were built near the barn.

The tenant house was built about the same time as the farmhouse, so the Landis family surmise that the house on an 18-acre plot was sold to the family after the initial purchase.

A unique feature of the farmhouse is that it has a window between two bedrooms. The window was used to pass medicine and food back and forth when family members were quarantined from flu and other epidemics.

The two Landis families are not in partnership, but they work together. Clair and Arlene are responsible for milking 75 cows of registered and grade Holsteins and take care of most of work on the Century Farm. Carl owns 10 registered cows and plans to switch slowly to all-registered cows.

Carl and Audrey take care of registration, milk every other Sunday, operate a custom combining and silo filling business, and rent an additional 180 acres for crop farming.

Arlene is in charge of the bookwork for the dairy. Audrey does the bookkeeping for the custom combining business and helps with milking every other weekends and as a fill-in during busy times on the farm.

Carl is just finishing up combining and silo filling of 1,000 acres. With the land he rents, he raised high moisture corn that he puts in ag bags and sells. He made 19,000 bales of hay.

"We don't sleep too much around here," Carl said. "One thing we got around here is steady work. We don't have to worry about running out of work."

Carl said that he likes milking cows, field work, and everything that needs to be done on the farm. The only drawback is that farming doesn't pay enough for all the hours that he puts in it, but he is optimistic that it will change someday.

In the meantime, "I can make enough money. It's just that there is too much government in everything," he said.

His advice to those who hope to start farming on their own is to start buying equipment and animals slowly but as early as possible. He started buying when he was a teen-ager and now owns a lot of equipment.

"That way, when I'm ready to take over my dad's farm someday, I'll already own the equipment and it won't be as much outlay for the farm," he said.



Clair and Arlene Landis, standing, were recently honored for their century farm that has been in the family since 1850. The house in the background was built in 1865. Their son Carl, his wife Audrey and daughter Arlisa, live in the tenant house on the property and work on the farm in addition to operating a custom combining business and renting additional acreage.

## Homestead Notes

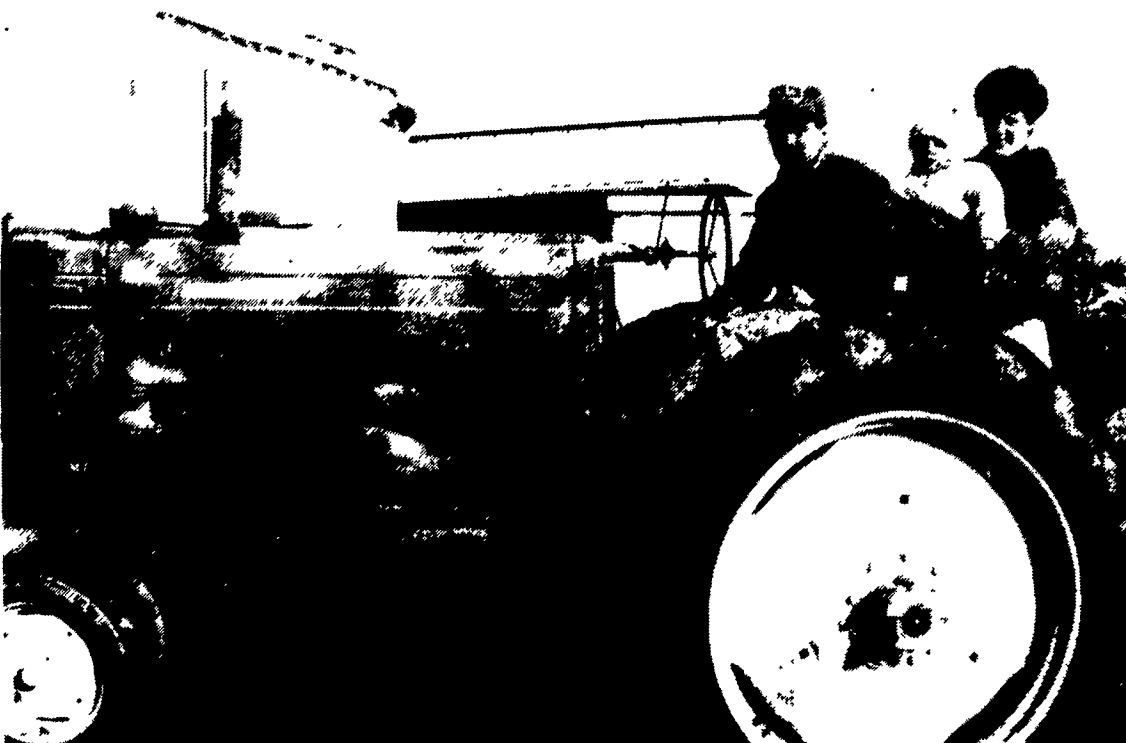
This year, for the first time, Carl used a lot of no-till practices on the land. He said that he experimented with disc, chisel plow, and no-till with beans but could not tell the difference in results. Consequently, Carl leans toward no till.

For the rented ground, Carl hauls in chicken manure but cow manure is spread daily on the century farm. A manure pit is on his wish list.

The rolling herd average is 22,500 pounds.

"I always say my dad was breeding for the future years ago," Carl said. "He never made fat when

(Turn to Page B3)



Carl takes a break from work to talk over plans with his wife Audrey and daughter Arlisa. "This is the first tractor we had on the farm and was my favorite as a kid," Carl said.



Eighteen-month-old Arlisa tries out one of the chairs that her grandmother Arlene finished with macrame while her grandpa Clair looks on.