

Dairy Family Tree Stems From the Hessians

(Continued from Page A1)

Jim and Mary Laughlin farm 300 acres in partnership with their son Joe and his wife Beth. They often have "help" from Joe and Beth's three children, Charlie, 8, David, 6, and Katie, 3. Jim's father, Glenn keeps an eye on things from his garden tractor. His wife Elizabeth keeps the cupboards well stocked for great-grandchildren visits. With 300 acres, the Laughlin families raise everything they need, including their own replacement stock, for their 43 registered milking cow herd, except protein supplement.

"We're a rare situation in this area," said Joe. "We have an excess of most things and sell some corn and hay."

The Laughlins rent fifty of the 300 acres from what they call the ridge farm, a Century farm owned by Joe's grandmother's side of the family (Glenn's wife, formerly Elizabeth Brought). It's just a mile from Jim and Mary's "home" farm, Beech Run, where the dairy cows are kept. The Brought family bought the ridge farm in 1878, and Jim remembers the story of how his grandfather Brought met his future wife — retailing milk door to door.

Jim's grandfather, John C. Laughlin, started "dipping" milk (retailing milk from milk cans before bottles) to his customers around the 1900s. He bought Beech Run in 1921. Glenn, his son, remembers starting to retail milk from a car and purchasing their first truck in 1924. Their retailing of Guernsey milk helped satisfy the demand for quality heavy cream back then, and helped the Laughlins through the Depression. With labor one dollar a day per person, the Glenn Laughlin family hired workers to build two houses and an addition onto the barn during the Depression. Joe and his family live on a neighboring farm, bought in 1984.

Jim remembers continuing their milk route through the early '50s, being one of the last farmers to stop delivering milk door to door. "I delivered milk with an uncle

and cousin before going to school," Jim said. Jim has farmed ever since high school except for two years in the Army.

But in July 1965, the barn on Beech Run caught fire. Jim and Mary had the family's bags packed for the World's Fair when a neighbor pounded on their door to tell them of the fire. With the fire confined to the top part of the barn, they were able to get the calves out of the lower part. The fire claimed a wagon shed but not the silo and milkhouse (except for the roof). The Laughlins decided to build a dome shaped stanchion barn on the same site to connect the silo at one end and the milkhouse at the other end. In the meantime, they milked in the pipeline-less chicken house and hauled the milk up to put in the tank. They were back milking in the new barn by November.

Of Jim and Mary's three children, Joe, Steve, and Mary Beth, Joe chose to stay in farming. Jim is thankful for Joe's interest in farming, but wouldn't want to give advice on how children decide whether to stay or not. "It must just happen. It would be difficult to farm without someone who was really interested in it. Joe's always been interested in the cows."

Mary agrees. "It's only one's guess. We have a nine-year-old grandson in Martinsburg who is saving money for his first tractor!"

Family farming ranks number one in the Laughlin family, but community service carries a close second.

Glenn, a member of the Fort Granville Grange for 57 years, received his 50-year pin in 1987. He also served on the ASC County Committee for a number of years.

Jim served on the Agway Committee and was active in senior extension. He has served as Grange treasurer for 10 years and Mary serves as secretary. The Fort Granville Grange boasts 372 members.

Joe and Beth's service to their community through leadership reached a new height this past

March when they placed second in the state Atlantic Dairy Cooperative's Pennmarva Young Cooperator Contest at the Willow Valley Resort and Conference Center in Lancaster. Winners of the contest were recognized for their dairy proficiency and community leadership.

"I think it's important for people to be active in the community. It makes for a social outlet," Joe said. And, he's quick to point out that he and his wife's impressive leadership resume for the Atlantic contest covers a span of 10 years or more.

For Joe, their resume includes Mifflin County Conservation District's 1992 Cooperator of the Year Award with his father, president of the local Atlantic co-op for three or more years, secretary of Atlantic's District 18, past president of the Mifflin County Farmers' Association, vice president and secretary-treasurer of the Mifflin County Holstein Club, past member of the PFA Young Farmer & Rancher Committee, and current member of PFB's Advisory Council Committee. Joe currently serves on Agway's Geographic Committee and spent six years on their Petroleum committee. He served one year on the Mifflin County Extension Association Board, as well as six years on the local Sire Power Advisory Board, one year as president and another as junior director.

Joe and Beth attended the Young Farmer and Rancher leadership conference as Mifflin County representatives and attended Agway's annual meeting eight years ago. Joe serves on the Granville Township Ag Security Area board and the Mifflin County Agland Preservation Board.

Beth led the state PFB Young Farmer and Rancher Committee as chairperson for three years and is currently chairperson for the PFB state Advisory Council committee. A 4-H leader, Beth serves on the Mifflin County Youth Fair Committee and coordinates the open craft show at the Mifflin County Youth Fair. Beth helps plan farm/city activities as a member of the county committee, and is a member of the Mifflin County Garden Club.

All of the Laughlins are active members of the Ellen Chapel United Methodist Church.

Although they didn't know each other at the time, both Joe and Beth graduated from Penn State. "At one time I thought Dad and my grandfather did a lot of things I might have questioned (on the farm). But I learned that they were doing a lot of things I saw at Penn State. We've always read a lot and attended meetings to keep up-to-date," Joe said.

Joe has no immediate plans for the herd but would like to see a new heifer barn in the future, and to make things generally more efficient. The families have helped each other out with both work and leisure. Jim and Mary's resume of trips abroad include tours of the British Isles, Germany, Austria, Scotland, Iceland, and Greenland. But Jim puts their traveling in perspective.

"We generally stay at home and attend plays and concerts. But every once in a while we really take off. Two weeks is long enough. We can go months without missing a milking. Sometimes there's plenty of reasons to go, but we're always glad to get back."

"I'm appreciative of the oppor-



Joe, Beth, and Katie (age 3) Laughlin stand before what will soon be a blooming flower garden and Beth's favorite hobby. Joe farms 300 acres with his father, Jim Laughlin. Katie's two brothers were at school.

tunities Mom and Dad have given me," Joe says. "I've never had a bad relationship with my parents. That's not the way we do it."

What Gail Strock enjoys most about writing for *Lancaster Farming* is bringing into print the people and news events of Mifflin County. For 4½ years, she has met with area people to tell their stories - hobbies, crafts, and careers, ag conventions, dairy shows and sales.

Her other publishing credits include *Pennsylvania Magazine*, *Common Ground*, a tourism brochure for the Juniata/Mifflin Tourist Promotion Agency, a Harvestfest promotional guide, a Bridal Guide, and Spotlight and

Dining guide articles for the *County Observer* newspaper.

She also conducted a "Dealing With the Media" workshop for Pennsylvania Farm Bureau at their Young Farmer and Rancher State Leadership Conference in Somerset.

Gail was graduated from Penn State in 1979 with a degree in agricultural economics and rural sociology. After college, she and her husband Dennis traveled throughout the United States and Canada with his job as a Sperry New Holland combine field test analyst.

They have two boys, Evan, 10, and Aaron, 6, and live on their 27-acre farm near Belleville.

On-Farm Composting Field Day Set

MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) — A field day on composting manure will be held at the farm of Robert and Lois Keller on Monday, June 27 at 6:30 p.m.

The event will focus on compost utilization, the economics of composting, current status of nutrient management regulations, and a demonstration of compost production with a Sandberger turner.

Robert Keller began composting his poultry and beef manure two years ago. Composting enables him to clean out his poultry houses with 66,000 layers on a 7-10 day schedule and in this manner control flies and reduce ammonia levels.

Keller is also interested in composting as a means of increasing the marketability of manure. He began composting by using a skid loader to turn the compost piles. He recently purchased a Sandberger turner to produce a more consistent and higher quality compost. The turner will be demonstrated as part of the meeting.

A field trial to assess corn utilization of nitrogen and phosphorus from composted manure, raw

manure, and chemical fertilizer treatments is being conducted by Penn State and the Rodale Institute on the Keller farm. The results of this trial, which was also conducted at three other farms in 1993, will be discussed by Dr. Doug Beegle, an agronomist at Penn State.

The economics of composting on the Keller's farm was also documented as part of this study. Preliminary results of what it *really* costs to produce compost will be presented by Cary Oshins, composting specialist from Rodale Institute.

Beegle, who serves as a consultant to the Nutrient Management Advisory Board, will also provide an update on the current status of the nutrient management regulations.

Keller's farm is located on Rt. 772, 2.5 miles west of Lititz and 1.5 miles east of Manheim.

For additional information about the field day, contact Leon Ressler, Lancaster Cooperative Extension (717) 394-6851, Cary Oshins (610) 683-1415, or Leon Weber (610) 683-1401 at the Rodale Institute.



Riding out to keep an eye on things, Glenn Laughlin joins his son Jim and wife Mary, right, and grandson Joe and wife Beth, left, and great-granddaughter Katie.