

# Grober Inc. Presents A Modern Veal Raising Facility

(Continued from Page A27)

According to Long, who knew of the farm, even though it wasn't listed for sale when Grober initially sought help in selecting a site, because the area in general has received "considerable development pressure," it was difficult to find property that could be bought for a price consistent with agricultural use.

Also on the site is a barn and two silos, which are rented out, along with the cropland to an area dairyman who keeps dry cows and bred heifers there.

The name of the farm is because of the view from the ridge top, in an area with surrounding farms. The Blue Mountain is visible along the northern horizon, especially on clear days.

According to Grober officials, the close proximity of the farm to the headquarters will allow the 20 employees at the Lehigh plant to all get an opportunity to help with operations at the Blue Mountain View Farm, so that they get a better appreciation for what the operators have to consider.

The facility itself is to be managed by a young couple originally from Bradford County, Kyle and Suzanne Robinson. The two are to live in the renovated farm house and Kyle is to manage, feed and care for the calves. Suzanne is a dental hygienist.

Kyle said he has fed veal calves previously for different operators. This place, which he helped construct, is very different.

In the feed room are two large feed bins, where the milk replacer dry formulations are kept. Through sensors, the computer "knows" how much of either the starter or finisher formulation is in the bin and when more should be brought to the farm. It notifies headquarters automatically to bring feed.

Under computer control, the dry matter is emptied by auger into a mixing container, like a large mixing bowl. A large hot water heater provides the water and the mixed formula is pumped to a second holding container, also with a mixing rod to maintain consistency.

From this second container, the fluid milk replacer is pumped and through pipelines is fed out to each of the veal raising rooms.

To feed the veal calves, Kyle has to tap into a valve in each of the calve rooms and feed each one.

To set the ration, the computer receives the ratio of starter to finisher, set according to the stage of growth of the calves, and creates the mixture on site.

After each feeding, the lines have to be cleaned out.

Chris Lines, editor and publisher of a veal industry newspaper, The Producer's Connection, said the Blue Mountain View Farm

is the most modern of all facilities of which she is aware, and only one of two in the United States, the other being located in Wisconsin.

Richard "Smokey" Burgess, a cattle supplier, said he was very impressed with the facility. "That loading dock is really nice. If people were used to loading and unloading they would see how easy this is."

Burgess is an independent cattle supplier who does a lot of work for Grober and the company's contract growers. He buys calves from 36 livestock auctions in four states.

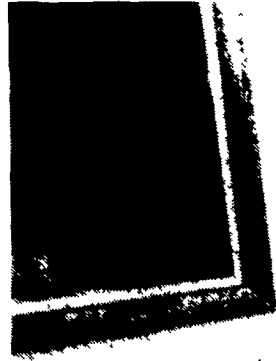
And, in fact, while some have lamented the apparent diminishment in use of local livestock auctions, because of contract farming, Burgess said that the auctions are very necessary to provide the bull calves for these operations.

He said that demand from operations like Grober will continue to add to the demand for dairy bull calves at auction.

Guy Tober, president of Grober Inc., and board member of the American Veal Association, said that one of the additional goals in building the facility was to increase interest in veal facilities, but still the company does most of its veal raising through contract raising.

According to Tober, farmers looking to augment income, or start out, can expect to earn about \$50 per head, with more possible through a bonus program that rewards top management.

Burgess, while not in the veal raising business per se, said it has been his experience that dairymen considering contracting should be



Kyle Robinson sits at the computer desk which is the "brain" and heart of the modern veal raising facility. The computer controls the inside climate, mixes rations automatically according to desired ingredient ratios, notifies headquarters when more feed is needed, and can automatically call for help, if programming develops a glitch.

aware that raising veal calves is intensive and more management is needed than typically used to raise calves. He said that dairymen should consider their time available and resources before committing themselves.

Tober said he is always looking for farmers willing to do contract raising, and that those interested should call the company for more information.

He said the market for veal calves in the immediate area is in New York and Philadelphia and

that market demand is good, but should get better.


Promotion efforts funded

through checkoff dollars have helped and he said he expects it to continue.

## Truck Theft Reported

Henry Stoltzfus called to say that his driver on construction jobs, Roy McGallisher, had his truck taken last week from a parking lot near the Best Western Motel in Intercourse. The truck was a white, 1979 4x4 Plymouth Trailduster with tinted windows. The truck has both an ignition key and a pushbutton starter. Anyone who may know about this theft may call (717) 768-3387. A reward is offered.


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