Lancaster Farming

Vol. 40 No. 3 | 60¢ Per Copy | Lancaster Farming, Saturday, November 26, 1994 | Four Sections | $21.00 Per Year

# Beavers Receive Century Farm Award

Ted Hoover of the regional office of Pennsylvania Dept. of Agriculture presents the Century Farm Award to J. Roy and Mabel Beaver. Included in the photo are Roy and Mabel, Roy's brother Bill, Roy and Mabel's son, Michael, and his wife, Marlene, holding niece, Carrie Madden.

MIRIAM WERT
Juniata Co. Correspondent

ACADEMIA (Juniata Co.) — J. Roy and Mabel Beaver are the third generation of a four-generation family on the same farm. It makes one realize that they are, indeed, "busy Beavers" and that the good work habits have been passed down to them from the two previous generations.

In turn, they have had the satisfaction of seeing this same quality become a part of the lives of their son Michael and his wife Marlene as they have become fourth generation farmers on the family farm.

To Roy and Mabel, the occasion of being presented with the Century Farm Award was a family affair. So, when it was time to have a photo taken of the presentation, Roy and Mabel wanted Mike and Marlene in it, as well as Roy's brother Bill who grew up on the farm with Roy.

Daughter Barb Madden and husband live in Walnut and could not get off work the day of the presentation. Mabel often babysits Carrie, their daughter, and so it was fitting that the granddaughter be in the photo since her mother could not be there.

In speaking with Roy and Mabel, it is easy to discern that family is quite important to them. They are pleased that Bill often spends the day with them, helping with the garden or with processing of the food.

His most important task, however, seems to be that of handyman. He can repair anything and also build new things such as his recently completed "calf condo."

Then there is son Mike who took over the farm operation in 1991, and his wife Marlene, who works for Annlick Farm Supply but came home just for the photo.

(Turn to Page A25)

*Part 1 Of Sinkhole Series*

# *Sinkholes — Potential Environmental Threats — Strain Farmers' Patience, Money*

**Editor's Note: This series examines the difficulties when discovering and repairing sinkholes, and some of the long-term problems sinkholes can have on the farm and home environment. In the first part of this series, *Lancaster Farming* interviews those who, at one time, had to deal with sinkholes.**

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — These are true stories:

• Years ago, a Rapho Township farmer discovered a sinkhole on his farm. He began using the sinkhole as a dump site. He told friends that the sinkhole was a gift from God.

• A farmer in the eastern part of the county found a sinkhole which opened up near enough to his barn. For years, he used the site to dump dead pigs. Groundwater was contaminated with huge amounts of bacteria and nitrates.

• A Clinton County farmer used a sinkhole that formed in a diversion ditch to allow neighbors to dump all sorts of trash, from old appliances to beaten up pieces of furniture, during a span of 10 years.

• A Soil Conservation Service (SCS) geologist remembers having to use a ladder to rescue his 8-year-old son, after playing with a friend, from a sinkhole.

What is a sinkhole, and what causes it?

There are many types of sinkholes in Pennsylvania. These areas are karst, or regions with a great deal of limestone as bedrock. Sinkhole problems are inherent in limestone areas.

Simply put, sinkholes occur when rainfall, which is acidic, makes it way down through openings in the soil and erodes away the limestone bedrock. Over many years, the erosion of the limestone gradually creates "caverns" of different sizes and shapes. The weight of overyling soil causes a collapse into cavities, creating a cave-in — this caving-in creates a sinkhole.

One night about five years ago, as a farmer in northeastern Lancaster County was harvesting corn, part of the header got caught in a rut. The farmer got out of the cab and looked to see what was wrong — and noticed a "really huge, really large" sinkhole, he said.

The farmer, who wishes to remain unidentified, said the sinkhole measured about five to six feet in diameter and about 15 feet deep. "If someone would have fallen in, there would be no way to get them out without a ladder," he told *Lancaster Farming*. He quickly roped off the area and, as soon as he was able, called for help from the county's Soil Conservation Service.

The farmer, who grows corn and other crops on about 70 acres, believes the sinkhole, which opened in the center of a diversion drainage area, was caused by the excessive rains of the year.

The SCS representatives were out "right away," said the farmer, "to clear out the sinkhole. They pushed a lot of topsoil away, to about a 25-50 foot circle. Then they used small stones and packed it in. They also used a plastic sheet on top, then sealed off the rest with topsoil."

Steps involved in the repair of the sinkhole were taken from the

(Turn to Page A22)

# Lancaster DHIA Laboratory Running Well

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Managing Editor

MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) — This chicken house no longer houses chickens. When you drive up to the new-looking building at the home of Jay Mylin, Lancaster DHIA manager, you park on what was the old concrete chicken house floor. The building you are about to enter has a brick front and a modern office entrance.

Actually, you are ready to visit the new milk sample testing laboratory set up to accommodate the 1,100 dairy herds in Lancaster County. There are offices inside the door and a meeting room for staff and nutritionists to meet. What you came to see, the new testing equipment and computers, are housed in a spacious room designed for easy access to the equipment and other work areas.

At the heart of the testing operation is a Bently 2,000 unit to determine fat and protein, and a Bently Sonacount 500 for somatic cell count reading, about a $150,000 investment. Both machines are operated together, pulling milk from the sample simultaneously and feeding the results into the master computers.

The system has checks and balances that insure almost complete accuracy to national standards. Regular calibration tests are made, even hourly. About 400 samples can be tested per hour and at present, the lab processes 50,000

(Turn to Page A21)

Jay Mylin, Lancaster DHIA manager, left, and Jere High, lab manager, show the new milk sample testing equipment and master computers that serve the 1,100 local members.