



The Lusby family from left, Jessie, Joey, Joe, Sandy, and Rachel keep busy at Swampy Hollow Farm in Atglen.

Cows And Caring Thrive At Swampy Hollow Farm

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ATGLEN (Chester Co.) — The wraparound porch on Joe and Sandy Lusby's farm is the perfect spot to regain equilibrium after a harried day.

The chirping sounds of birds of many varieties intermingle with the distant honk of the geese nest-

ing in the meadow pond. A soft breeze ripples through the green meadow grasses and skips over the contoured fields that stretch toward Rt. 41. Aromatic whiffs from full-blossomed trees camouflage barn smells.

But all the evidence of a busy farm life remains.

A tractor parked next to two

silos jutting toward the sky gives evidence of a hasty retreat. A contented moo escapes from the herd

for the Swampy Hollow Sweet Cow.

"Growing up I was so proud of

"But I think it's important for our children to see us giving time in volunteer positions. I hope our children pick up the joy of doing things for others."

in the adjacent stone barn.

Bikes of all sizes, fishing gear, and window screens scattered across the porch seem surprisingly in place. The beginnings of a tree house and a trampoline confirm that this is a family-oriented home.

"I'm sorry I'm late," Sandy Lusby announces, "but I had to go for parts."

Sandy is a farm wife doing a busy job that allows her little time to relax on her porch with its magnificent panoramic view.

"Farm wife is an excellent description for people like me," Sandy says. "We're married to the farm."

With 140 acres and 60 Holsteins to milk in addition to caring for a husband and three children, life can become a bit hectic despite Sandy's cheery, trim, and unruffled composure.

The Lusbys own the farm that Sandy's parents had farmed.

Her dad, John Umble, was well known for show cows, especially

my dad. It was really special to accompany him to a show," Sandy said.

Times have changed. Requirements for top cows have changed. With some reluctance, the priorities at Swampy Hollow Farm has changed.

"Some people think you need a full 12 hours between milkings, but I guess I like my time off too much."

The family seldom shows cows today because of the work and time demand involved. But top producing cows are still a priority. At last year's end, the herd's milk production averaged 22,535 pounds milk, 878 pounds fat, and 729 pounds protein.

Lusby said the farm had a complete dispersal in 1983, although Swampy Hollow is still considered to have one of the oldest herds on test in the county.

"I bought back some of the cows and kept some that I had started on my own," he said. For dairy goers, the '83 dispersal is remembered as the sale that topped prices everywhere in Pennsylvania.

Joe wasn't raised on a farm. He was 15 years old when he began working as a hired man for a neighboring farmer.

After Joe and Sandy married, Joe worked for an equipment company before farming with Sandy's dad. For awhile there was a three-way partnership with John Umble, his son, and Joe.

After the dispersal, Joe took over the farm.

"Sometimes we wonder if our son will be able to farm even

though he wants to," Sandy said.

Fifteen-year-old Joey prefers farmwork over schooling at LMH, where he is a sophomore. After getting up a 4 a.m. to milk cows and splitting and stacking wood all day, Joey said, "I love the feeling of working hard after a long day."

He arises about 4:30 a.m. to help Sandy with morning milking about three times a week.

"In the evening we try to be out of the barn by 5:30. Some people think you need a full 12 hours between milkings, but I guess I like my time off too much. We haven't noticed any drop in volume and it sure suits our schedules better," Joe said.

The family believes it's important to have activities other than farming. Because Jessie, 12, and Rachel, 8, both attend West Fallowfield Christian Day School, the Lusbys are involved in several volunteer jobs at the school.

Joe is a school board member and Sandy chairperson of the hot lunch committee. She also is a committee member for the

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Most of Sandy's quilting is done for the church Sewing Circle, but she finds some time to do some for herself and friends.



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