

# Farm, For Hershbergers, Is Good Family Life

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—“Farming has a good future for those who can persevere,” said Charles Hershberger.

Farm life in the Hershberger family dates back to the 1700s, when the family moved to Snake Spring Valley. The original Hershberger farm is still in the family.

Charles and his wife Dolores moved to their Dairy of Distinction Award-winning farm on April 16, 1957.

In the early spring, bright tulips and a rail fence lend a calendar picture quality to the farm. Calves chew contentedly in their new shed located behind the house where apple trees are in full blossom.

Charles' hobby, Morgan horses, is also housed in the calf barn. It's a hobby he's looking forward to enjoying more when he and Dolores retire in a few years.

“But we won't leave the farm,” he said. “I'll still be here for advice and to help when I can.”

“We came here with 20 cows,” Dolores said. “That first year, hurricane rains swept through this area. The wind blew open the door into the feed room and several cows got into the chop and foundered.”

“That was rough,” Charles said. “But we never thought of bailing out. I've always said, when you get to the end of your rope, just tie a knot and hang on.”

Farming Hershbergers include Charles, Dolores, son, Ross and his wife, Yvonne. Daughter, Christine Ebersole lives nearby and sometimes lends a hand.

Another daughter, Ellen Stuckey, was a former Bedford County dairy princess and another son, David, has a farm in Shippensburg.

Hershberger grandchildren total 14.

The Martinsburg farm, located near the borderline of Bedford and

Blair counties, has 500 tillable acres. Ross is herdsman of 185 milking Holsteins, 95 percent of which are registered. He also does the breeding, always looking for good feet, legs, and udders when choosing bulls.

The cows are housed in a free-stall barn with side curtains and 160 stalls. A herringbone milking parlor was a welcome addition during remodeling in 1992.

Dry cows are separated from milk cows. All cows, regardless of milk output, are kept in one group. Latest milk production records show 20,261 pounds milk; with 762 fat and 649 protein.

Dad oversees the fieldwork. Almost all feed is raised on the farm and stored in three upright and three trench silos. There are two others that self-feed the 70 to 80 young cattle heifers. A TMR mixer is added to the diet.

“And,” Ross said, “we are definitely anti-BST farmers which, I think, puts us with the majority.”

Dolores is in charge of the 120 to 130 replacement heifers. And despite some arthritis in her hands, she helps with the milking until a school boy arrives about 4 p.m. to take over. Milk is shipped to Maryland and Virginia.

While growing up, all of the Hershbergers participated in 4-H shows. These days, time is limited with dairying production taking a precedent over shows.

However, there was time to win the central Pennsylvania championship last year with Rocky-Side Maverick Mae, “An excellent cow,” said Charles. “We bought her at Carl Yoder's sale.”

Two years ago, the Hershbergers also “cleaned up” at the Holstein show at Martinsburg, capturing the supreme champion and premier exhibitor awards.

Wise management allows for all to be community minded citizens. Ross serves on the park board at Martinsburg. Charles has served on the northern Bedford County school board for 34 years.



The Hershberger family with Charles and Dolores in the drivers' seat, Christine and grandchildren, Carlissa, Vanessa, and Caleb Ebersole, and Ross Heath Hershberger. Leah is being held by her mother, Yvonne, standing with her husband, Ross.



In front, Carlissa, left and Vanessa with, in back, Christine, Charles, Ross Heath, and Ross with one of the Morgan Horses.



Ross, Charles, and their prize winning cow, Rocky-Side Maverick Mae.

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Linda Williams continues to be the Bedford/Blair County correspondent.

“Not much has changed,” she said. “I've been writing for *Lancaster Farming* for nearly seven years and enjoy it very much. Doing the article on the Hershberger family was quite enjoy-

able, as I grew up with Charles' brother, Jerry.”

Still an agent with DeArment Insurance in Bedford, Linda also loves to bike on her new Cannondale bicycle (made in Bedford), and enjoys reading about the Civil War.

He also is on the Dairy of Distinction Committee, is a member of the Pennsylvania Farmer Bureau, and the state Holstein association.

The family is active in the Faith

Assembly of God Church at Roaring Spring, where Ross is the organist.

The younger Hershberger women have all enjoyed separate careers. Ellen is a music teacher,

Yvonne taught special ed prior to the birth of her two children, and Christine is a registered nurse.

“Farming is a good family life,” Dolores said, “It's hard work, but it's all worth it.”

## USDA Announces First Wetlands Reserve Program Signup

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)—Pennsylvania farmers will be able to sign up for the federal Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) May 30 through June 30 for the first time, said Janet L. Oertly, state conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

“This is a great opportunity for farmers to receive financial incentives to maintain eligible areas as permanent wetland,” Oertly said.

Under the voluntary program, USDA pays landowners for 30 year or permanent easements and cost-shares wetland restoration.

USDA will also reimburse voluntarily participating landowners for fees associated with filing the easement, including surveying the boundaries. Landowners agree to accept an easement price based on current agricultural land prices.

Eligible lands include all agricultural lands which can be restored to wetlands together with adjacent lands on which the wet-

lands are functionally dependent.

Other eligible land may include riparian areas that link wetlands protected by an easement or similar agreement, wetlands covered by an existing Conservation Reserve Program contract, or existing wetlands which may not otherwise be eligible.

During the signup, landowners register with the local NRCS office. Landowners retain ownership of the land and control access to it. Uses for eligible land include hunting, recreation, timber or firewood.

“The Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service will assist NRCS in determining the eligibility and environmental quality of the acres offered by landowners,” Oertly said.

A state technical committee, which involves other federal and state agencies, will provide advice on such matters as easement values, rating criteria, cost-share levels, and eligible practices.

WRP, designed to protect and restore habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, helps purify water supplies, and helps absorb flood waters.

About \$92 million was allocated to enroll an estimated 118,000 acres into the program in fiscal year 1995.

“States will be given much discretion in selecting wetlands that meet specific state environmental goals, such as water quality, migratory birds and wildlife habitat benefits,” Oertly said.

There are several changes in the program this year. For the first time, all 50 states will participate.

In addition, NRCS, formerly known as Soil Conservation Service, will administer the program for the first time.

For more information on the Wetland Reserve Program contact a local Natural Resource Conservation Service Office.