

Maryland, Virginia Milk Producers Honor Young Cooperators

RESTON, Va. — Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association recently sponsored its annual Young Cooperator Program in College Park, Maryland at the Holiday Inn. The Association served as host to 12 Young Cooperator participants from across its membership area. They are listed here in alphabetical order:

John S. Burket, East Freedom, Pa.; Gary M. and Crystal A. Dell, Westminster, Md.; William D. and Anne L. French, Mauretown, Va.; Dale N. and Diane R. Lehman, Chambersburg, Pa.; Wade D. Louthan, Rippon, W. Va.; Melvin G. and Barbara L. Marks, Airville, Pa.; Danny C. Moser, Middletown, Md.; John M. and Susan W. Myers, Union Bridge, Md.; Thurman E. Nesbitt III, McConnellsburg, Pa.; James J. and Terrie S. Stup, Walkersville, Md.; Paul E. and Carla E. Witter, Shippensburg, Pa.; and Mark E. and Lois Yoder, Imler, Pa.

Maryland and Virginia's Program is held in conjunction with a similar program sponsored by Atlantic Dairy Cooperative, Southampton, Pennsylvania under the umbrella organization of the Pennmarva Dairyman's Federation. The Association's program is open to anyone affiliated with any of its member farms between the ages of 21 and 35.

Each applicant in the Association's program is asked to fill out a four-page application which details personal data about the applicant's farming information about their individual dairy operation and an essay on "Cooperative Marketing of Milk."

At the program each applicant is interviewed by the Association's panel of judges for a period of 13 minutes and is then given an opportunity to answer one question, after a Roundtable Discussion, pertaining to current dairy issues before staff, directors, judges and other guests of the Association. Each applicant is then scored based on information given in the application, the interview, and the applicant's response during the question and answer session for a possible 100 points. The degree of progress in the applicant's career through individual initiative and resourcefulness is given 40 points; their cooperative knowledge, understanding and belief is given 20 points, the informal interview period with the judges is given 15 points; the formal Question and Answer Session before judges and guests is given 15 points; and the significance of contributions made to the well being of the community as in individual through leadership in various organizations is given 10 points.

A total of four couples was selected to represent the Association at various local and national programs in the coming year, they are as follows:

Melvin G. and Barbara L. Marks - Outstanding Young Cooperator 1995-96; John M. and Susan W. Myers - First Runner Up; John Burket - Second Runner Up; and Dale N. and Diane R. Lehman - Third Runner Up.

The Markses will represent Maryland and Virginia at the National Institute on Cooperative Education (NICE) Conference to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 31 thru August 3, and attend the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, November, 27-30. At the NMPF

Meeting the Markses will be attending the Young Cooperator portion of the program and have an opportunity to be selected to serve on its Young Cooperator Advisory Committee. They will also be given an opportunity to attend the Association's Board of Directors meetings for the next 12 months, and be members of its Young Cooperator Committee.

The Myers' and John Burket will also have an opportunity to attend the NICE Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota and will attend the May Young Cooperator Committee Meeting at our Reston Office to help critique the Association's Young Cooperator Program. The Lehmans will serve as an alternate in case one of the other couples cannot fulfill its obligations.

The judges for this year's program were Hershel Gardner, a dairy farmer from Mt. Solon, Virginia; Jan Stanton, Executive Director, Dairy Council, Inc. in Southampton, Pennsylvania; John Thompson, a retired vocational agriculture and industrial teacher and a school administrator from Frederick, Maryland.

Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers is a Cooperative with a membership of approximately 1,200 farms in the states of Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia marketing approximately two billion pounds of milk per year.

Profiles of the winners are as follows:

Melvin G. and Barbara L. Marks

Melvin and Barbara live in Airville, Pennsylvania with their three children, Erin age 11, Nicole age 9, and Trisha age 7. The Markses are the owners and operators of their dairy operation. Their farm consists of 80 acres of which 50 are in alfalfa and 30 in improved pasture. Their milking herd consists of 53 registered Holstein cows, 35 heifers, and 21 calves. Their DHIA rolling herd average is 17,069 pounds of milk, 634 pounds of fat, and 566 pounds of protein.

When asked what their future goals for their dairy operation would be the Markses replied, "We would like to continue to use and improve our rotational grazing, while maintaining milk production, and use the least purchased feed as possible."

When asked about their ideas on "Cooperative Marketing of Milk," the Markses replied, "We believe that marketing milk through a cooperative is truly the most practical way to distribute milk. We know that our cooperative is run by farmers, for farmers, which means that the cooperative will always be looking out for our best interest."

The Markses are members of Sire Power, Atlantic Breeders Cooperative, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Pennsylvania and National Forage and Grassland Council, York County Holstein Club, Pennsylvania and National Holstein Association, and the York County DHIA. They are active in many 4-H and FFA activities. Melvin and Barbara belong to Chanceford Presbyterian Church and Sunday School, where they are both Sunday School teachers.

John M. and Susan W. Myers
John and Susan live in Union Bridge, Maryland with their two children Jenna age 5 and Nikki almost 4 years old. They are share owners with John's father and farm 350 acres of which 105 acres



Winners of the Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association young cooperator awards are from left, Melvin and Barbara Marks; John and Susan Myers; John Burket; and Dale and Diane Lehman.

are in corn, 65 acres are in soybeans, 40 acres are in alfalfa, 18 acres in barley, 15 acres in timothy and the remaining is pasture. They have Holstein cows of which 80 percent are registered and they have a rolling herd average of 21,035 pounds of milk, 767 pounds of fat and 654 pounds of protein.

When asked what their future goals for their dairy operation would be the Myerses replied, "Survival is the first, foremost and most realistic goal. Our dream is to build another loafing barn for cows, a heifer barn and a parlor over the six to eight years. This would double our herd and make us more labor efficient."

When asked about their ideas on "Cooperative Marketing of Milk" Myers replied, "We all play equally important roles in the success of our association. We, as producers, have the responsibility of shipping the highest quality milk possible. The field reps. and quality control people assist us to do so. Traffic control makes sure the milk gets hauled where needed and the processing plants efficiently process it for the consumer. Our board of directors, management staff and office personnel make decisions and handle the business of the cooperative. GATT and NAFTA will slowly change and expand our business into the global market. We think the combination of our new general manager, Mr. Walgrove, diplomacy skills and the sound business sense of our Board puts MDVA in an excellent position to aggressively meet the future."

The Myerses are involved in the Southern States Cooperative, Progressive Farms Clubs, DHIA, Farm Bureau, Farm Bureau of Women and the Carroll County Holstein Club. Their family attends the Lindwood Brethren Church.

John S. Burket

John lives in East Freedom, Pennsylvania where he is involved in the family dairy operation. John's primary responsibility is herdsman, however he works in all areas of their dairy. Their farm consists of 300 acres of which 115 are in corn, 120 are in alfalfa and 65 are in other crops. The dairy herd consists of Holsteins of which 105 are milking cows, 110 heifers and 30 calves. They average 21,368 pounds of milk, 844 pounds of fat and 693 pounds of

protein.

When asked about his future goals, John responded that his personal goal is to contribute to breeding and develop outstanding polled Holsteins.

When asked about the "Cooperative Marketing of Milk" John replied, "I believe the Co-ops can take an aggressive role in marketing, quality control, legislation and control the supply-demand scenario in order for us to receive the best price for our product."

John is a member of the Blair Co. Holstein Club, Pennsylvania Holstein Association, Holstein Association of America, Penn State Dairy Science Club, Penn State Dairy Judging Team, Youth Representative to Blair County Extension Service, Board Member Claysburg-Kimmel School District, Board Member Red and White Dairy Cattle Association, Morrisons Cove 4-H Dairy Club, Portage Blue Lodge No. 220, F. & A.M., Jaffa Temple of Altoona and attends the Grace United Church of Christ. John holds offices with many of these organizations.

Dale N. and Diane R. Lehman

Dale and Diane live in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania with their two children, Kendra age 5 and Spencer age 4. They were both raised in dairying and chose farming after they married. Their farm consists of 150 acres of which 30 are in corn, 25 in alfalfa and 95 in other crops. Their herd of Holstein

cows are divided by 52 milking cows, 38 heifers and 3 calves. Their DHIA rolling herd averages 19,061 pounds of milk, 709 pounds of fat and 615 pounds of protein.

When asked what their future goals for their dairy operation would be, the Lehmans replied, "Producing 1,000,000 pounds of milk per man, continue to breed our cows for longevity, to obtain the premium bonus each month, maintain a good monthly herd check, increase herd numbers to 75-100 over next three years and see that forages are harvested at their highest quality."

When asked about their ideas on "Cooperative Marketing of Milk," the Lehmans replied, "We should work hand in hand. Producers should work on producing a top quality product and the Cooperative should be processing and marketing for the top price possible and seek the best possible markets. As consumption increases we need to continue from a healthy standpoint. We still produce nature's perfect product."

The Lehmans are members of Young Farmer Chambersburg Charter, Franklin County Holstein Board, Franklin County Junior Holstein Club Advisor, PFB Advisor Council, Franklin County Society of Farm Women and Menno Haven Auxiliary. They have held various offices in these organizations. They attend Cedar Street Mennonite Church where Dale teaches Sunday School.

Pa. Farm Link To Hold Workshop

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — Hoping to reverse the decline in family farming in Pennsylvania and in turn contribute to the revitalization of our rural communities, the Pennsylvania Farm Link program is sponsoring a Beginning and Retiring Farmer Workshop at the Berks County Ag Center on Thursday, June 29.

The regional workshop, from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., will address farm transfer issues, business planning, farm loan resources, marketing ideas, startup strategies, goal setting, communication skills, and alternative agriculture.

According to Farm Link Coordinator Marian Bowlan, in spite of the decline in family farms in Pennsylvania and the obstacles that deter all but the most devoted, many Pennsylvanians are looking for ways to get into farming.

Participating agencies and individuals include Pennsylvania Farm Link, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Keystone Farm Credit, Berks County Rural Economic and Community Development Service (formerly Farmers Home Administration), and a panel of local farmers. The Ag Center is located on County Road, just off Route 83, north of the Reading Airport.

There is no cost to attend; however, pre-registration is necessary. Please call the Farm Link program at (800) 9PA-FARM by Monday, June 26, to make your reservations.

Pennsylvania Farm Link is a component of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, a research and policy development agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.