



Jay and Eyvonne Shaffer, Somerset RD 5, pose on a big tractor inside the garage of the Somerset Farm Equipment Company, which they own. Besides being a dairy farmer and overseeing the 800-acre Loyetta Farms, Jay is an ordained minister. Much sermon preparation occurs when he is driving tractor or milking the 100 head of Holstein cows.

## Farming Helps Dairyman Become Better Minister

**GAY BROWNLEE**  
Somerset Co. Correspondent  
SOMERSET (Somerset Co.)—  
A few weeks ago the Reverend Jay Shaffer was ordained to the ministry by the Somerset Association, Penn West Conference, United Church of Christ.

After commuting from his farm here to the Lancaster Theological Seminary where he received his master of divinity degree on May 13, the pastor nullified the early predictions of those who told him, "You can't be a full-time student and a farmer at the same time."

"I wanted to be a minister from when I was 13," recalls Jay, who milks the 100 Loyetta Farm Holsteins weekday mornings and on alternate Sunday mornings.

His supportive wife, Eyvonne, said the subject of Jay's becoming a minister used to come up during their courting days so she accepted it quite naturally.

The Reverend firmly believes that his occupation greatly enhances his part-time vocation of preaching.

"Farming helps me be a better minister," he states. "I'm involved in the same work as the people in the church. It gives me a better understanding of their problems and their frustrations," he says.

"I use the time I spend milking and driving the tractor for thinking and meditating on what I've been reading or reflecting." So Loyetta's 800 acres harvest more for the Lord than mere grain and edibles

for the livestock. For Jay it's a knitting of the soil and the soul.

He wants the people to find in him their equal. "Ministers are called to serve, not to be served," is the belief by which he strives to live.

"I'm blessed that I have time to contemplate and think," the pastor said.

Jay was raised on the farm that's still his home and where he and his dad, Lloyd Shaffer, became partners on April 1, 1973. By that time the older Shaffers (Ethel is his mother) had given the place its distinctive title by combining their first names.

That year Jay graduated from Penn State on March 24 and married Eyvonne the next day, March 25.

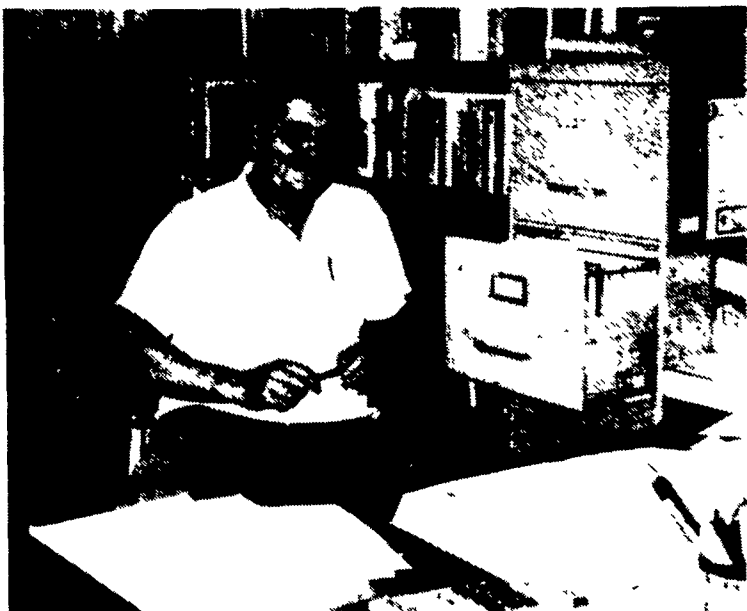
He thought he would teach high school ag. In fact, his year of student teaching was done under ag teacher Doyle Paul, at the Berlin-Brothersvalley High School.

By 1986, Lloyd retired and the partnership fluctuated from two to four, and then to three persons where it is now, because Lloyd had also launched a second business called Somerset Barn Equipment Company, which took looking after.

"We have more workers around here than a normal farm because of the equipment business," interjected Eyvonne.

Jay's philosophy of farming was a bit different from that of his dad. He opted to concentrate on the dairy and marketing the milk, rather than on the registered cows which had comprised some two-thirds of the entire herd.

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Farmer and preacher Jay Shaffer of Somerset RD 5, has two computer centers in his office, one for the farm and one for the church. Jay has a Greek textbook and an eight-translation Bible to enhance his studies.

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