

Lancaster Farming

Dairy of Distinction Supplement to Lancaster Farming, Saturday, July 29, 1995



Bill and Peg Kline and their son Lynn are shown in the lawn of their new Dairy of Distinction farm located northeast of Elversor. In Berks County. The new milking parlor and the old small white bank barn on the left repre-

sent a span of 42 years of progressive improvements at the farm. Photo by Everett Newswanger, managing editor.

The Kline Family Progressively Improves Their Dairy Facilities

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Managing Editor

ELVERSON (Berks Co.) — It all started 42 years ago when newlyweds Bill and Peg Kline bought a farm that had an old log house built by the Indians in 1818 and a barn that was built in 1851, plus a few other out-buildings.

From this beginning when the elder Kline milked cows by hand, a bucket milker was added to the barn. Later, a pipeline was installed. Along the way, additional freestall buildings were erected to house the cows and heifers. And silos and manure storage systems were installed on the farmstead. Most recently, in 1993, a modern milking parlor was built that puts the farm in position to enter the

technological era of computers.

When they started to farm, Peg said they would only last 10 years. But their only son Lynn took an interest in farming and now he is the one who keeps improving the place.

Today the original house has additions, but a unique sandstone fireplace that was uncovered in the restoration process lends authenticity to the historic building. The old barn bank barn is still used, and the original silo is now used for grain.

A herd of between 110 and 120 Holsteins average 20,000 pound of milk. Additional rented land was added to the farming operation this year, bringing in the farming operation to 500 acres. This year minimum no-till practices were used, and the crops look good. But Lynn says they are still learning how to use these less costly methods for planting.

They strive to grow out the heifers so they can come into the milking string at 24 months. But more

attention is paid to the size of the heifer than to her age when making this management decision.

Personnel from the feed company, the breeding organization, and the veterinarian are used as consultants to the farming operation. "I depend on the people who provide the services to help me manage the farm," Lynn said. "The feed company provides the formulas, and we have come to trust their judgment. The artificial breeding technician knows the mating sys-

tem and what strengths our cows need better than I do. So we depend on them to make the proper matings for us. And we get a lot of advice from the veterinarian too."

The cows are kept in the barn when the weather is hot. It is cooler in the barn with the fans going, and the cows don't even want to go outside. The older cows mind the heat more than the younger ones.

Of course, the cows milk well. During one recent period of time

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Rocky Hollow Farms Is Fifth Generation Dairy

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff

CONFLUENCE (Somerset Co.) — A confluence is a place where two running waters meet and form a larger, stronger flow.

Rocky Hollow Farm is an 800-acre dairy farm located near the town of Confluence, a place where the Youghiogheny River and the Casselman River meet and become one.

The Dairy of Distinction is a family farm operated by the father-son "confluence" of Eldon and

Mark Sechler, respectively representing fourth and fifth generation family on the farm.

Formed in 1981, the father-son partnership owns 800 acres and rents additional ground to raise a total of about 150 acres alfalfa hay, 175 acres of corn, and about 75 acres of barley to feed their 115-head, closed milking string of registered and grade Holsteins.

Mark and Sandy have three children; Ryan, 12, Angela, 10, and Brandon, 5. Ryan and Angela show 4-H project animals. They live in

one house on the farm, while Eldon and Loretta live in another.

The farmstead itself sits along Rt. 281, a main Somerset thoroughfare that courses through the town of Confluence, where the two rivers meet.

Sitting in an area marked by deep, twisting cuts of the rivers and their narrow valleys, the farm was obviously named after the terrain.

Because of the terrain, the Sechlers have been using no-till practices on about two-thirds of the acreage planted to corn. Mark said

they have been doing the practice for about 17 years, because of the rolling hills and rock which would otherwise erode.

All additional farm acreage is used for pasture, especially since this past spring, when the Sechlers began working to integrate intensive grazing into their herd management.

With several streams on the property, grazing is made easier because ensuring adequate water in pasture without creating

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Dairy
of
Distinction

