

The Sinan Herd Wins Top State DHIA Management Award

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a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Between the milkings there are young cows to care for and 600 acres of cropland and acres of oats.

The Sinans don't just produce milk. They deliver it, too. Milos and sons Mevlan, 27, and Milos, Jr., 25, take turns driving two tank trucks that pick up milk from 45 other dairy farms in Indiana, Armstrong and Westmoreland counties. Collecting the milk and delivering it to Turner Dairy in suburban Pittsburgh can mean up to 300 miles of driving on some days.

Daughter Marlane, 24, also helps on the farm.

With the men busy in the fields and on the road so many hours each day, Sandy spends the most time with the cows, and she credits that attention with making them award-winners.

The cows receive veterinary visits twice monthly, mostly to check for pregnancy. Hoof trimming is performed every other month, and the herd's silage is evaluated frequently to adjust the nutritional levels of their rations.

The attention to details and extra care has paid off. According to DHIA, the Sinan cows produced an average of 29,910 pounds of milk each in the past year, a



The Sinan's 105 Holsteins have been handled in a stall barn, but a new free-stall barn and a new milking parlor add capacity and convenience to the existing facilities.

4,101-pound-per-cow improvement over the previous year. (The Indiana County average is 18,160 pounds of milk per cow per year.)

The Sinans' Holsteins also

topped the county's fat improvement list, recording a 154-pound-per-cow increase (1,062 lbs. per cow compared to a county average of 703 lbs. per cow), and also led

all Indiana County Holsteins in protein improvement, posting a 131-pound-per-cow gain (928 lbs. per cow compared to a county average of 588 lbs. per cow.)

The top 10 protein-producing Holsteins in Indiana County are in the Sinan herd, according to the DHIA statistics.

Several cows in the herd each produce more than 30,000 pounds of milk per year and the top cow is making nearly 39,000 pounds per year. Other cows are in the mid-20,000 range, Sandy said, but are kept in the herd because their high-protein content helps boost the herd average.

The most frequent reason for removing cows from the herd is failure to get bred, Milos said.

The Sinans now milk 305 cows, but plan to increase the milking string to more than 200 animals.

A 180-by-112-foot free-stall barn for the larger herd should be completed by Christmas. Cow comfort means increased milk production, so the 234-stall structure will have rubber-filled mattresses for the cows to lay on and sides made of heavy curtains that can be raised in summer to provide plenty of cool ventilation.

For the dairyman's comfort the

new building also has automated alley-scrappers built into the cement floor to pull manure away to a pipeline and pump it to a nearby storage system installed a few years ago.

"We're going for more cows, not more labor," Milos noted.

Efficiency is also the watchword in a new 42-by-115-foot milking parlor being built nearby. Two rows of 12 cows each will be milked simultaneously by a dairyman working from a level below the cows. A hydraulic floor can be raised or lowered to position the farmer at the most comfortable level to reach the cows.

Three people now handle the milking chores. Milos said when the improvements are completed two and sometimes only one person will do the milking.

"We expect to milk 200 in about the same amount of time" that it now takes to milk 105, he said.

The Sinans said the goal of all the changes on their farm wasn't to make their dairy operation bigger, but to make it better. And while getting better, they explained, it seemed logical to let it grow as well.



The Sinan family received the top state DHIA herd management award for 1995. In the cow barn, from left, Milos, Jr.; Milos; Sandy; and Mevlan.

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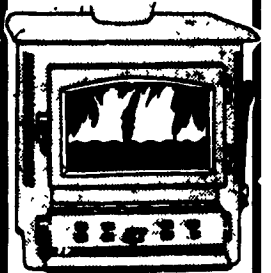
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