

# Time Away From Chores

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harder and harder to be positive about farming. I think that's where a lot of dairy families are today, because it all leads back to the income that farmers are getting."

While doing all they can to cut costs, one item that has to remain is time away from the chores. To do so, a neighbor provides relief milking one weekend every month.

It is the conservation work that the Umbles completed during the years that ensured the well-being of the farm itself to future generations.

Ken and Marilyn Umble were honored recently by the Chester Conservation District for their work to install and maintain soil erosion control practices on their farm.

This is nothing new for the Umbles. Since the early 1950s, Ken's father, Harold, began put-

ting in contour strips, which continued throughout the years, until Harold signed with the district in 1967.

In the 1970s, waterways were installed at the farm. In 1981, Ken and Marilyn purchased the animals and equipment. That same year, the Umbles installed a 185,000-gallon underground manure pit.

In 1987, the Umbles purchased the farm itself. Not too long after, in 1992, the Umbles signed a Chesapeake Bay contract to cost-share the construction of a eight- by 60-foot circular concrete manure storage structure.

In the spring of 1994, three streambank crossings were installed. Ken used concrete slatted slabs, measuring four by 16 feet, on a bed of stones, as streambank protective crossings. The slabs were once used in a hog con-



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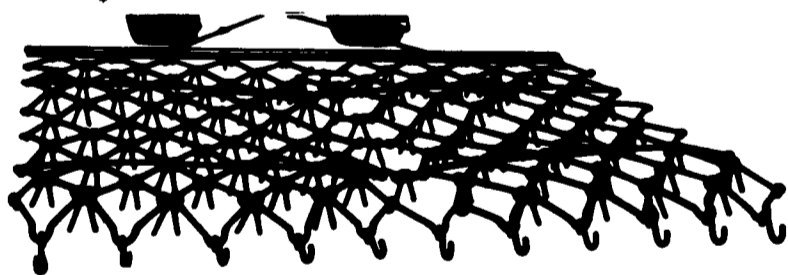
Marilyn spoke about some of the positive things about working on a farm, such as learning a deep sense of responsibility. She told them, "I know you feel like you have too much. We all do sometimes, but you really will be better off."



The Umbles manage a dairy composed of 175 animals, out of which they are milking 83, all registered Holsteins, on TMR. Their latest DHIA records include 22,768 pounds of milk, 821 pounds of fat, and 733 pounds of protein. For their TMR, they work with a Cochranville nutritionist.

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finement building.

That same year, Ken installed streambank fencing using regular single-strand, high tensile fence.

In all, many conservation improvements have been made to Glen Valley Farm, including 900 feet of grassed waterway, 32 acres of contour farming, 53 acres of contour strip cropping, and 58 acres of a planned grazing system. According to the district, 90 percent of the conservation plan is implemented.

Ken indicated that only 18 acres of contour strips are needed to be installed to complete the conservation plan.

Ken said he grows a total of 150 tillable acres, with 30 acres of no-till, some on rented ground. All told, he manages 85 acres of corn, 50 acres of alfalfa, and 30 acres of small grains double-cropped into soybeans.

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For Ken, it was important to get a good crop cover on soil with little residue, specifically acres devoted to corn silage. Also, contour and strip cropping has meant more planning and responsibility.

Some of those practices are time-consuming and often difficult, but Marilyn said that "we know in the long run it is the best thing to do. Money or not, it should be done," she said.

The purpose of conservation organizations is "not to make farming difficult, that's not why they're initiating some of these programs at all," she said. "It's to stop erosion and to keep your farm workable.

"It's for our children's benefit, too."

Ken admitted that many farmers would not be able to comply with the Bay Program unless money was available. Many dairies are too strapped financially to come up with extra money to install a manure structure or put in streambank crossings.

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