

A Tradition Of Dairying

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Before the construction crews are commissioned to add additional stalls to increase the size of the herd, however, the Nobles will strive to increase their production per cow.

"We'll remodel and get bigger stalls, or we'll be out of business. The cows are banging themselves up too bad," Stuart said. "But we'll increase production before we increase the numbers."

To get their production up from their current DHR averages of 12,600 pounds of milk, 3.1 percent protein and 4.97 percent fat, the Nobles will concentrate first on fine tuning their feeding program. Breeding decisions also play a major role in increasing production.

"We try to get a good, sound type animal and the production will come," said Stuart. "If you've got a cow that has good feet and

legs on her with good capacity, that will go out and eat, production will come. If you've got a cow that starts out with a lot of milk, she might not have the feet and legs to survive a few years. The rest is luck."

Stuart continued, "We try to cross it up. We might have a real milky cow and cross it up with a strong type bull."

Longevity is important, too, in the completely homebred herd. The oldest cow in the barn is over 15 years old, with many others reaching over the six-year-old mark. Eight of the animals in the herd are Excellent with three scoring 91 and the other five scoring 90 points. The average classification on 72 head is Very Good — 82.

The ultimate decision maker in the herd however is income over feed cost.

"We can talk about herd average

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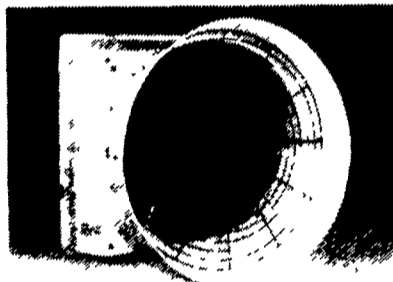
Shirley Noble, center, loves spending time with her grandchildren on the farm. Shown with her are, from left, Stephanie, Maria Jo and Michelle. Not pictured are two boys, Adam and Tommy, two more girls, Jessica and Jennifer, and a new addition to be introduced to the family in September.

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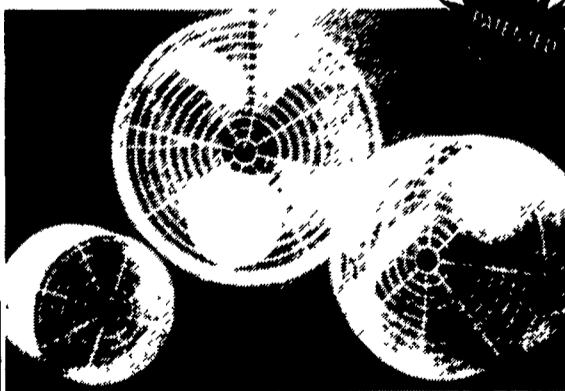


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