

Climate At 'Winterset' Is One Of Family Closeness

LORETTA GOLDEN
Cambria Co. Correspondent
EBENSBURG (Cambria Co.)
— Nestled among the rolling hills between Ebensburg and Loretto lies Winterset Farms, home of the Sherry families.

"The name 'Winterset' aptly describes the climate of Cambria County," noted Marty Sherry, owner and operator.

The entire farm is composed of 625 acres, 450 of which are in crop production to sustain the dairy operation. The primary crops are corn and alfalfa along with a few acres of small grain.

Modestus Sherry, Marty's dad, was born and raised on a farm between Gallitzin and Ashville in Cambria County. His thorough enjoyment of farming prompted a search for a farm of his own.

In 1952, Modestus, who prefers being called M.P., and his wife June, purchased Winterset Farms. At that time it was comprised of 168 acres and one building. Over the years M.P. was able to purchase five additional farms to bring the acreage total to the present 625 acres. His skills as a carpenter were utilized in constructing many additional buildings and silos as they were needed.

The Sherrys raised three sons and four daughters at Winterset Farms with everyone helping out at one time or another. The dairy operation remains a family affair. For a number of years, M.P. and his son, Marty, were partners in the business while June handled most of the clerical duties. Marty and his wife Sue are in the process of purchasing the farm from the elder Sherrys.

Sue, a native of Montgomery, Ala. had only ever been on a farm once in her life before she met Marty. She holds a license to teach cosmetology but at this time does not have on off-the-farm job. She keeps quite busy with farm recordkeeping and helping out in

other areas of the business as she is needed. Another of her farm duties involves caring for the calves each morning.

Marty and Sue are the parents of two sons — Christopher, 16, and Benjamin, 14. Chris is a student at Bishop Carroll High School in Ebensburg and Ben attends St. Michael Elementary School in Loretto. Both boys enjoy outdoor activities and are also quite active in the local 4-H dairy organization. They are a big help with chores around the barns and are especially useful during the haying season.

When M.P. began in the dairy business in 1952, he started with seven cows which were milked by hand. Today there are 90 milking Holsteins and approximately 85 young stock. The latest DHIA report shows a 21,000-pound herd average with 688 pounds of protein. Milk from Winterset Farms has always been and continues to be shipped to Sani-Dairy in Johnstown.

Winterset Farms has one full-time and one part-time employee. Marty, M.P., and the hired help handle all of the milking chores with Sue, Chris, and Ben helping out when they are needed. They are on a 2X schedule. Because their operation is so labor intensive, the Sherrys are satisfied with this milking schedule. The two times per day milking gives them some flexibility and enables time for other activities.

An automated feeding cart is used in the tiestall barn. Milking equipment of the production of each cow. In 1984, a Virginia-style heifer barn was built and M.P. believes that this was one of the better things done at Winterset Farms. At that time, the design was very innovative. Because it is open-air, the animals stay healthier.

Winterset Farms grows all of its own corn and hay. The only feed



Marty feeds with a skid loader at the heifer barn.

which is purchased is a protein supplement. Even though Cambria County was hit hard by the drought during last year's growing season, Marty and M.P. comment that they had a fairly good year.

Both of the Sherrys believe that some of the success of their dairy operation is due to the fact that they use a crop service. This service soil tests the fields and helps make a determination as to the amount of manure and fertilizer to be used. The crop service also scouts for pests and weeds and then helps to develop a plan of control, if necessary, for the next year.

Concerning equipment, the Sherrys are not really partial to one brand or another. M.P. notes that "the colors of the equipment don't all match but we try to buy the best piece of equipment for the least amount of money."

M.P. and Marty agree that their operation has been successful in part due to the fact that the bills are always paid on time. Time

must be set aside each week for bookkeeping. This is done by Marty and Sue with the help of a computer. Neither have had formal training with computers but insist that the "user-friendly" software make the bookkeeping a lot less tedious than it had been. This recordkeeping is an essential tool in the constant reevaluation which must be done in any business.

Marty is a member of the Allied Milk Producers, the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Agway, and Genex. For recreation he enjoys hunting but admits that one of the biggest drawbacks of his work is not having enough time off. Whatever leisure time there is he enjoys spending with his family. Despite the drawbacks, one real benefit that

Marty finds, as do most folks who live in the country, "it's the best place to raise kids."

M.P. and Marty enjoy a close relationship. Marty is grateful for his dad's experience even though he does admit that "I hear what he says but I may not always listen." Pointing to his head he added, "I always store his advice for future use."

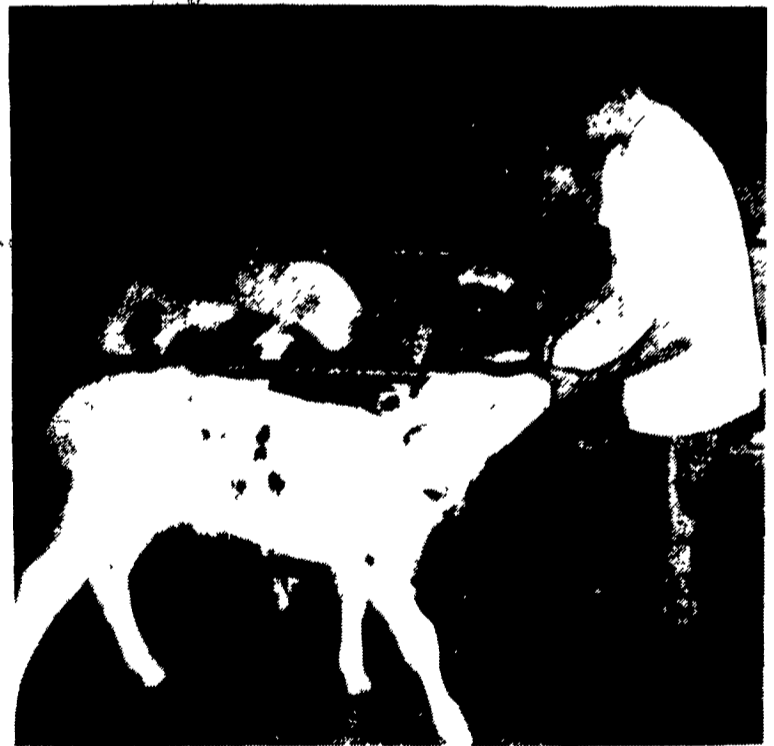
With some advice to young farmers, both Sherrys agree that a big secret to a successful dairy operation is "to do the job right the first time and continually look and see where improvements can be made."

This summer will be a little dif-

(Turn to Page A20)



Members of the multigeneration Sherry family include Modestus, June, Chris, Susan, Marty, and Ben.



Ben feeds a calf at Winterset Farms.



Sue with one of Winterset Farms calves, which is only two days old. One of Sue's on-the-farm duties involves caring for the calves each morning.