

Father And Son Make Farming A Family Affair

LINDA WILLIAMS

Bedford Co. Correspondent
NEW ENTERPRISE (Bedford Co.) — Donald Replogle is farming the same Morrison's Cove ground on which he grew up.

"I don't know when I decided to be a farmer," he jokes, "It just happened. I guess there are still times when I don't know what I want to be when I grow up." Don began farming officially in 1959.

The original home place is just a part of the more than 700 acres of land being farmed by Don and his son, Steve with whom he formed a partnership in 1971.

Even on a chill and cloudless spring day, the Replogle farm is pleasant with a wide porch welcoming visitors to the big farm house owned by Don and his wife, Dorothy. Steve and his family live in the old homeplace about two miles from the newer farm.

Steve, the only one of three brothers to choose farming for his livelihood, feels much the same as his father. "I've just always been farming," he says. "Never thought of doing anything else."

The Replogle farm is strictly a family affair with Dorothy and Steve's wife, Cindy, helping with milking more than 120 Holstein cows, driving tractor or running errands.

Steve and Cindy's daughter, Mandy, is a freshman at California State University while Cassie, 15, enjoys the farm and gets her own paycheck.

Cindy's adaptability to farm life is remarkable, Steve admits. She was a "city girl" before marrying into the Replogle family. "Never even saw a cow up close before," says Steve, "but now she milks regularly."

"Yes," she's quite a girl," says her mother-in-law. "She gets up early to help with the milking, goes to work at the Northern Bedford High School cafeteria, and returns home to milk again."

"She likes animals but doesn't want any part of the machinery or field work," says Steve who claims this area as his own expertise.

"Steve started competing in tractor driving when he was five years old," laughs Donald. "Of course, it was a pedal tractor. The prize was a toy Massey Harris metal tractor and Steve easily pedaled over the finish line in first place to claim it."

Later, as an extra reward, the family stopped for ice cream and Steve let his new toy which caused a panicky return trip to reclaim it.

As the years passed, Steve earned numerous blue ribbons and first place awards for his tractor driving abilities. Machinery has continued to be his first farm love.

Several years ago, he decided they just didn't make a corn wagon large enough to haul all of the corn necessary to feed more than 240 head of dairy cattle. Steve designed and created his own.

The wagon was made from plywood on a flat truck bed and the entire family nailed and painted to get it finished for corn season.

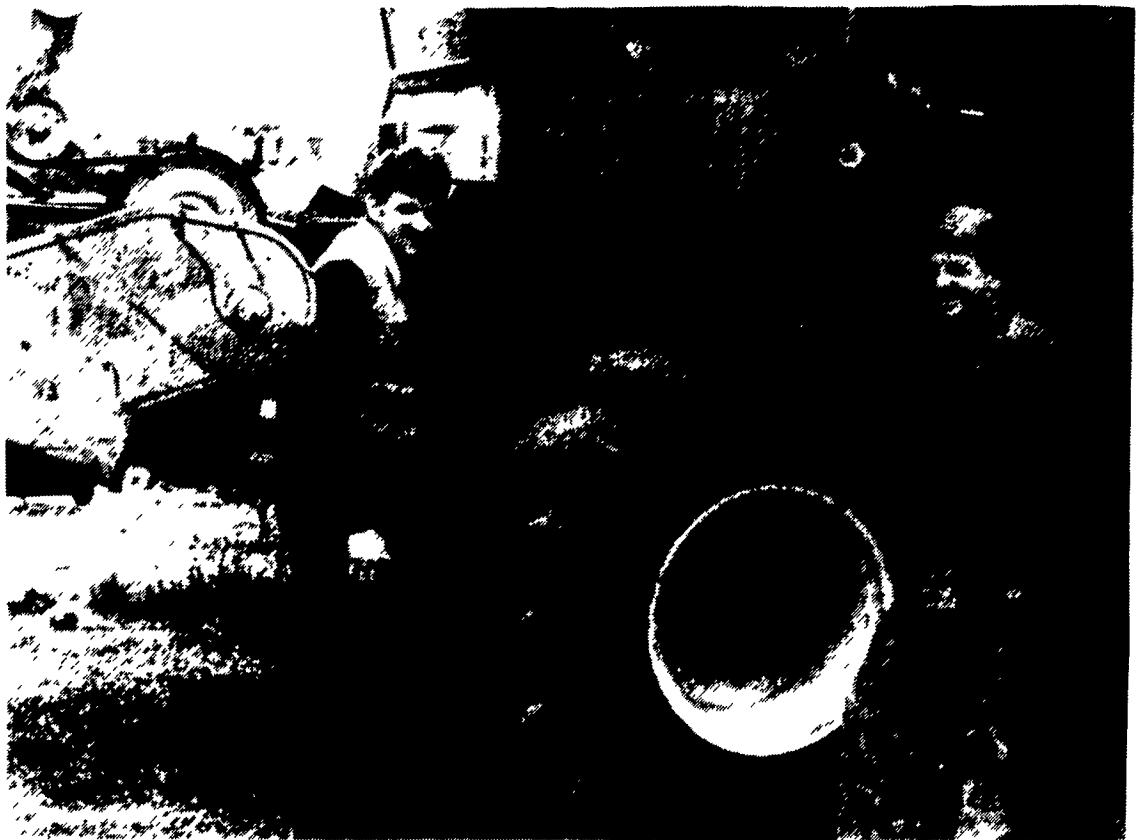
Another wagon made of aluminum was constructed the next year. Now neighbors sometimes rent one of the rigs for use in their own corn fields.

Steve also converted an old gasoline truck into a manure spreader and designed an agitator for stirring manure that works from a motor.

"He builds a new sprayer every year," laughs Don. "We always think this will be the sprayer that does everything but are never quite satisfied. So, Steve designs and builds a new one."

Like all farmers, the Replogles see constant changes on the farm. "We've most recently tried rotational grazing," Don says. "And have found it to be very satisfactory. Milk production went up al-

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Don and Steve confer over repairs to be made to the combine before the summer harvesting season arrives.



Surveying their new rotational grazing pastures, the Replogles are happy with the results.

Angora Rabbits Weave Profitable Business

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FREDERICK, Md. — When Judy Osborn, a data entry clerk, saw a demonstration on spinning with angora rabbit wool she quickly decided, "I could do that!"

Living in a suburban area with only 1/2 acre of ground, Judy and her husband, Phil, now have about 40 angora rabbits mostly of the German Great breed although some are cross bred with English Satin. With so much coming from so little land, the couple named their business, "Abundance Acres."

Most of their marketing is done through the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival held annually in May or at the Charlottesville Wool event in Virginia. This year, they have applied to the Rinebeck Festival in New York State.

"We love it," says the vivacious Judy. "We get to meet a lot of people as well as sell yarn, wood, and rabbits."

The cuddly bunnies quickly draw a crowd and the bunny on display is changed regularly as too much attention can be an aggravation.

Wool is extracted from the rabbits by clipping and plucking. "Plucking takes forever," Judy admits. "So we do more clipping. We never comb the rabbits."

Sometimes for demonstrations only, Judy will spin the wool directly from the rabbit seated comfortably on her lap. "Spinners

don't do that often," she notes, "Because it is quite hot for both the spinner and the rabbit."

Good rabbits, especially the giant varieties being raised by the Osborns, produce two to three pounds of wool per year. It sells for \$4 to \$6 per ounce. Or, one rabbit could produce about \$240 worth of wool per year.

Judy and Phil concentrate on the giant species of rabbits which range in weight from 10 to 15 pounds. These sell for about \$100 each.

"We allow the does to have two or three litters per year but no more," explains Judy. "Meat rabbit breeders can produce many more litters, but too much breeding would destroy the wool on our mothers." Litters average five or six bunnies with a max of eight settings at the dinner table.

"We also keep very strict breeding records to bring out the best genetic qualities in the offspring."

The Osborns keep their rabbits in a 10 x 20-foot barn located in their backyard. Rabbits are kept in cages.

"We have no problem with cold," Phil assures. "Cold is never a problem with these wooly rabbits."

Heat, on the other hand, is a different story. "They mind the heat a lot," Judy says. "And, we do we all we can to keep them comfortable. We even freeze water and use it for air conditioning."



Rabbit products offered at the festival.

Big Red Bunny Feed provides necessary nourishment with the addition of some daily hay. One day a week, however, the rabbits receive only hay and oats.

"This keeps the hairballs out of their stomachs," Judy explains. "A rabbit has a glandular stomach and, therefore, is not able to throw up a hairball. Cats, on the other hand have muscular stomachs, and have no trouble getting rid of their excess stomach hair."

Judy and Phil hope to keep ex-

panding their rabbit business. Meanwhile, the couple is having a lot of fun meeting new people and constantly learning more about the world of angora rabbits.

HOMESTEAD NOTES