

This Dairyman Has Youthful Enthusiasm With Pencil-Pushing Practicality

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enters the TMR mixer. Costs for roughages are set on a yearly basis, and grain costs are figured each month according to the market price.

While the herd average is over 24,000m, Daniel is more interested in milk per person produced in a year. Last year's production of two million pounds is about where he thinks they should be, but he has his sights set on a little more production per person because they spend all their time with the cows.

Last winter they milked 3x, but the loss of hired help over summer has them back to 2x right now. Brenda likes to help with the physical labor of caring for the cows too. But their four small children take her time now. She still keeps the books and helps make the management decisions.

There are three cows classified Excellent and 25 Very Good in the herd. Individual records go up to 35,836m 1188f 1109p. Daniel breeds his cows to bulls with 90 percent reliability with proofs of plus 2,000m and plus 2 type points. Longevity is his greatest desire in

breeding dairy cows. He is not a fan of index numbers which tend to weight preferences toward high producing two year-olds with little regard for the value of aged cows with good lifetime production.

"Our goal is to sell half of our heifer crop each year, so that means we need to keep the necessity for culling our cows at a low rate," Daniel said. "It costs \$1,300 to \$1,500 to raise a heifer to first freshening. If you can sell the heifer rather than replace a cull cow, you have a cash income increase rather than a replacement cost expense. I would rather keep the old cows even if it takes a little longer to get them bred."

Last year the cull rate in the herd was 13 percent. There are quite a few cows in the herd over 10 years-old. While part of the success for long-lasting cows comes from genetics, environment plays an important part too. Daniel credits his cow mattresses, tunnel ventilation, and extra box stalls, as reasons why the cows would rather be in the barn than out on pasture. When you walk into the barn, you

can see and feel that these cows are comfortable.

BST is used according to body condition later in lactation after they are bred back. "We don't use BST when they say we should," Daniel said. "We use it only when body condition merits it. We have found that it helps production, and I have seen a profit increase from using it the way we do. I don't like it, but if you are going to compete, it's another management tool. It would have been better if we had never seen BST, but it's out there, so we use it."

"I haven't seen any herd health problems related to BST. In fact, our herd health has been better since we started to use it. Some cows are naturally thick, and you can give them BST and keep their body weight down. If you have a frail dairy kind of cow, you would not use BST on her. BST actually benefits a small herd more because you can manage it better. We do body scores each month, and if the cow is in good flesh and bred back, we use it."

"With BST we are not quite as

worried about getting the cows bred back as fast as we once were, especially the two year-olds. Our calving intervals have been extended to between 13 and 14 months since we have increased the higher production levels in the lactation a little longer with BST."

Daniel believes there is a real future in the dairy business for those who "push the pencil" and specialize in what they are doing. Each farm is different, and it is never good to compare your farm with another situation. Each individual must assess his or her own situation. For example, the grazers have little investment so their situation may work on their farm. For the Rices, caring for the cows and having no field work works for them. But Daniel's main caution is to find a situation where you can manage your debt.

"In the future, I see that dairy farmers will need to be sharp pencil pushers," Daniel said. "We are gearing up to increase our size and become even more specialized. With our smaller investment, we always have the option to get out without much trouble. If we see it's just not working, and the dairy bus-

iness goes sour, we can have a cow jockey in here tomorrow and be out of the business by Saturday.

"But to be successful, you need to gear up to be big enough to buy in bulk and specialize unless you want to have a lot of employees."

"I got out of college and went into a management development program for a large organization. But the guys who trained me never saw their families. They worked from five in the morning to eight at night six days a week. That's why I left the program. If I'm going to put in that kind of time, I might as well work for myself and see my family at the same time."

"I like business, dairy or otherwise, and I have looked at other opportunities. But always, if you are the manager or the owner, you put in a lot of time."

"It's a long hard road getting started in dairy farming," Daniel said. "And we are not out of that hard road yet, but with half decent milk prices and grain prices setting down a bit, I think the dairy business is going to be good for the next several years. Maybe after that it will tighten up a little again, but I'm looking forward to it."

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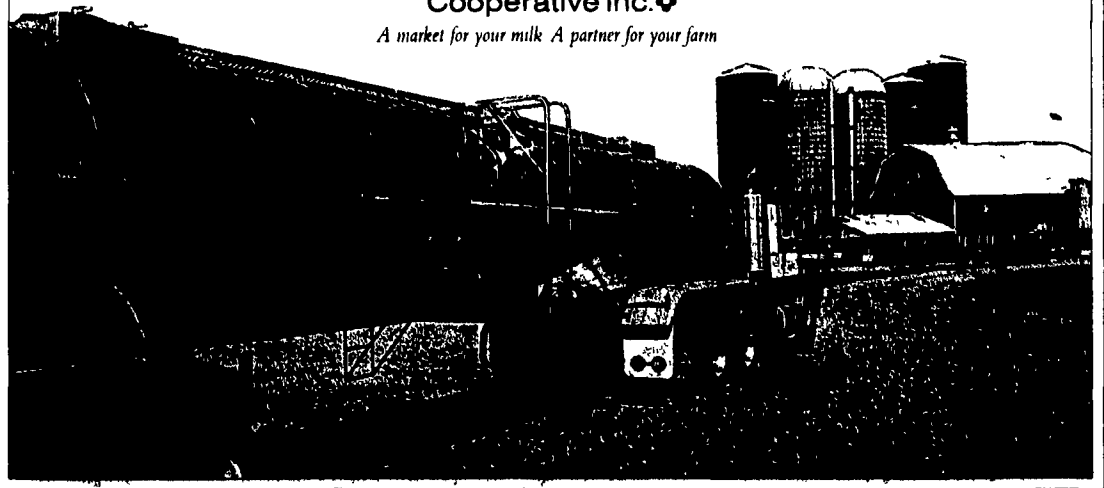
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Pennsylvania Dairy Of Distinction Farms Named

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maintaining the appearance of the farm as well," says Branda Beltram, Communications Director for ADADC. "Every time a consumer drives by a dairy farm and thinks of it as a beautiful, wholesome place, that's good publicity for milk."

Created in 1983, the Dairy of Distinction Program, is designed to highlight those farms that help to create a positive image for milk. Applicants for the Dairy of Distinction award are judged by committees who evaluate the farms' roadside appearance, as well as the cleanliness of the grounds and buildings.

Winning farms receive official 18x24 "Dairy of Distinction" signs which are mounted at the roadside for all to see. Award winning farms are also visited annually by the judging committee to ensure that they continue to meet the standards of excellence set by the program.

For further information about the Dairy of Distinction program, contact ADADC at (717) 283-2204.

Editor's Note: Attached is a list of the 1996 Pennsylvania Dairy of Distinction winners by district.

District 11: Ronald L. Burchfield, Conneaut Lake.

District 12: Dale & Paula Wack, Harmony; Wesley R. Diehl, Beaver Falls; Marge Wear-

ing, Evans City.

District 13: Kent Kenyon, Couersport; Randy L. Whitman, Cocrant; Jay H. Houser, Spring Mills.

District 14: David Lemmon, Markleton; Edward W. and Todd E. O'Brein, Somerset; Brian W. and Blake L. Beeghly, Somerset; Richard D. and Maynard L. Saylor, Rockwood; Curtis & Donna Brant, Harrisonville; Earl J. & Carol S. Hendershot, Warfordsburg; Ted, Roger W. and David Latch, Rockwood; Don Stonerook, Martinsburg; Sollenberger Farms, Curryville.

District 16: John W. Rishel, Mifflinburg; Marlin Leshner, Pitman.

District 17: Michael & Nadine Molyneux, Forksville; Daryl & Susie Krotzer, Liberty.

District 18: Lloyd & Denise Pease, Susquehanna; Mark Tompkins, Montrose; Sandra & Edward Kelley, Montrose.

District 19: Nevin S. Horning, Lititz; D.G. Kauffman/J.E. Kreider, Lancaster; Samuel E. Beiler, Gordonville; Marvin R. or Ruth Stoltzfus, Leola; Johnathan or Miriam Stoltzfus, Jr., Ronks.

District 20: Larry K. Bauscher, Lenhartsville; Dan Rice, Kempton; Kenneth Sanner, Kutztown; Karl Herr, Oxford; Eugene Martin, Lebanon; John B. Kline, Myerstown; Raymond Kleintop, Jr., Danielsville.

