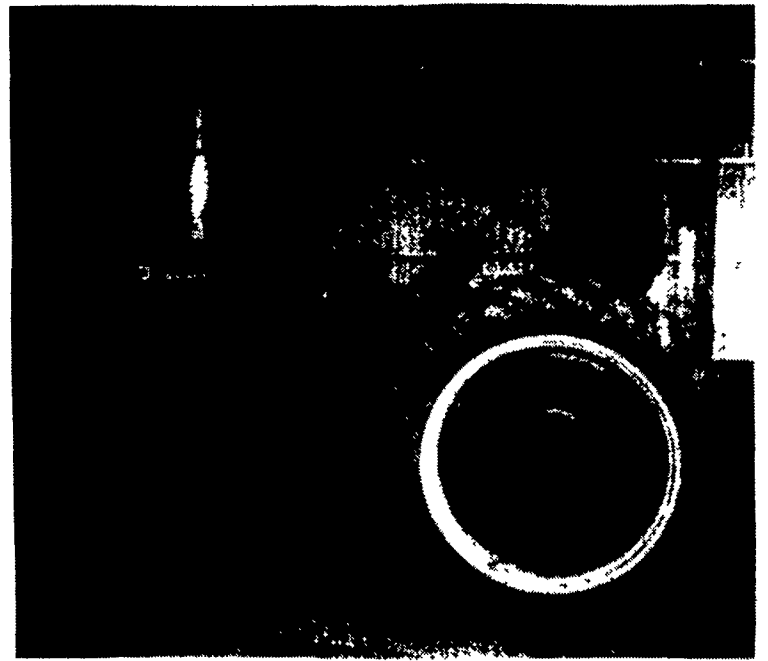


Mehrle has an extensive farm shop.



The first tractor Mehrle owned was this 1953 Farmall Super C. He plans to give it to his grandson, Jacob.

Dedication To Farming Pays Off At Brookfield Farms

(Continued from Page A1)

cows, a number they plan on maintaining. "We can't increase our herd size without making some major changes to the facilities, and I just don't see that happening," Ramsburg explained. Approximately 50 percent of the herd is purebred, he estimated.

When he took over the farm from his father in '61, milk production averaged 12,000 to 13,000 pounds. Now, with cows in a drylot situation being fed a TMR consisting of corn silage, alfalfa haylage, ground high moisture ear corn, brewer's grain, soybean, and mineral supplement, production hovers at around 19,000 pounds of milk with 700 of fat.

Heifers and dry cows are also fed in a drylot. Since he is not marketing cattle, Ramsburg's breeding program utilizes strictly young sires. Heat detectors are used, and calving interval on the farm averages 13 months.

While Mehrle manages the farm, his wife Thelma is responsible for all aspects of calf care. One daughter, Mary Jane Roop, helps milk and handles the payroll; two other daughters, Virginia Crist and Judy Ramsburg, are not currently involved in the farming operation. A fourth daughter, Barbara, passed away in 1991. The couple has 4 grandchildren: Whitney Diane Crist, and Julie Anna, Lauren, and Jacob Roop. The Ramsburgs also employ five full-time and 2 part-time helpers.

Cows are milked in a double eight herringbone parlor with automatic takeoffs. A 3-inch milkline takes the milk to a 3,000-gallon Dari-Kool bulk tank. It takes about three and one-half hours to milk the herd, which is split into a high and a low group. Cows are pre and post dipped. Somatic cell count for the Brookfield Farms cows ranges between 100,00-120,000. They have received the lowest SCC award for DHIA for the last two years, and quality premium awards for the last six years from MD-VA Milk Producers for low bacteria, PI count, SCC, and antibiotic levels, and for no additives to milk. Ramsburg credits these excellent numbers in part to his confinement facilities. "It's when the cows are out in the pasture lying around in manure when you run into trouble," the dairyman said. Freestalls are bedded with sand, which is added once a month, and raked daily.

Six trench silos, constructed between 1979 and 1990, store corn silage, grass haylage, and high moisture ground ear corn. The only commodity purchased is soybean as a supplement for the TMR. A manure pit was installed in 1979, providing storage for 200 cows for 60 days. "We spread it when we can, and we like to incorporate it right away," said Ramsburg.

The home farm consists of 275 acres, with another 500 rented. Ramsburg grows about 100 acres of alfalfa. For the last two years, he has gotten five cuttings off of it. There are 375 acres of corn (silage and ground high moisture ear corn), and 80 acres of barley double cropped into late corn. The balance of the acreage is in grass hay and pasture for the heifers.



We'll be there for poultry growers... generation after generation.

At Farm Credit, we know poultry operations. As a cooperative owned by the people who use us, Farm Credit has served the poultry needs of rural Americans for generations. In fact, for over 75 years we have been a dependable source of credit to agriculture.

We make loans at competitive interest rates for all kinds of purposes. So whether you want to increase the size of your current operation or begin a new operation from scratch, our loan officers can help tailor a financial package to fit your situation.

So, whether you are a commercial operator, a part-time farmer or simply like living in the country, we want to do business with you.

And we'll be there for future generations.



Farm Credit
A Customer Owned Business

Southeastern PA
Keystone Farm Credit
(800) 477-9947

Western PA
PennWest Farm Credit
(800) 998-5557

Northern PA
Northeastern Farm Credit
(800) 326-9507

South Central PA
York Farm Credit
(800) 503-8957

