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## Mother And Son Operate Civil War Farm

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York/Adams Counties

**BARLOW (Adams Co.)** — An Adams County Dairy Farm, owned and operated today by a mother and son, has its origins in the Civil War Era and was witness to the Battle of Gettysburg.

Carolyn Durboraw, who along with son, Todd Durboraw, 31, run the 70-head, 200-plus acre dairy farm, located near the village of Barlow almost on the Mason-Dixon Line, complement each other in the daily routines needed to keep such a complex productive and moving forward.

"I'm fortunate to have Todd. He always did want to farm. It's not like he was forced into it when his dad died," Carolyn said.

Her husband, Melvin Durboraw, died in his early 50s in 1991 after suffering from cancer. In an aside, when Todd is off bringing the registered Holstein herd in from the pasture, she says of her son, "He eats, sleeps, and lives this farm."

Earlier Todd had said it was necessary to learn fast when his father's illness struck. "That made a big difference, we had to learn a lot quick ... I guess there were things he was trying to teach me quick," he said.

He also credits his father with another reason that he and his mother have been successful on the farm. He admits that when he graduated from Gettysburg High School, the last thing he wanted to do was go to another school. But his dad encouraged him to try a one-year course for dairy herdsmen management at Williamsport Community College.

"Today, looking back, it's the best thing I ever did," Todd said.

Working the Century Farm that has seen four generations live in its houses and plow its fields is satisfying to the two. Todd lives in the tenant house and Carolyn lives in the main house.

Todd explains that his great-grandfather, William Durboraw, moved to the farm in 1894. Then in 1941 his grandfather, Russell Durboraw bought the farm from the elder Durboraw, and in 1980 it was purchased by his parents.

He said he remembers his grandfather tell of people who remembered when the house was being built and how "it was just up to the eaves and they would come and sit on the walls and watch the

campfires of the soldiers to the north" during the Battle of Gettysburg.

Returning to today, Todd explains that his mother's role in the farm is significant because she does "a lot of the book work and feeds the calves and relief milks every other Saturday when our hired man was off."

She adds with smile that she takes care of all of the yard work and the swimming pool, runs errands, "and I feed them (Todd and hired man), which is a big job."

They both commend hired man, Doug Wherley, with making life easier for them "I can never understand how people can talk about running their farm and not give credit to their hired people," Carolyn adds.

"With the three of us we pretty much do everything, but often time when we make improvements we'd like Dad to see it," the young farmer said wistfully.

"Last year — in 1996 — we built a milking parlor which amounts to saving two hours a day, and that's per person, so actually it's four man hours. Now I do all of the milking and Doug usually does all of the feeding and scraping the free stalls and Mom does the calves," which has been up to 15 at a time," he said. They milk at 3:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

He's very pleased with the new parlor explaining that the cows don't have to wait as long to be milked and the ventilation's greatly improved — and so has the milk production.

They ship their milk to Maryland and Virginia milk producers based in Preston, Va. In a recent pickup they had 80 pounds of milk per day per cow.

Todd said, "We're usually anywhere from 130,000 to 150,000 pounds a month. We've been below 100,000 pounds in the last year, but we're improving ourselves. The parlor is one thing,

and we started using BST (Posilac) last September."

He was cautious about using the hormone that occurs naturally in cows before using it, waiting to hear what others had to say before jumping in.

But he adds its increased milk production from one cow by about 10 pounds a day, and Carolyn adds, "So some say you can hardly afford not to use it."

He explained that the idea for building the milking parlor was to increase the number of cows in their herd by keeping the females that are born on the farm instead of going out and buying other animals, but that hasn't happened yet. However he expects by fall to get the herd numbers up by 10 to 15 head from his own stock.

The farm will have no trouble handling the additional cows. He said, "We had everything else ready before we built the parlor, because that was the biggest investment. Everything will be OK for that number. If we went any larger we'd need to make changes."

He is also wary about adding too many cows to the herd, afraid that would defeat the purpose should the numbers become too great to be cared for properly.

Carolyn and Melvin had added about 50 acres to the farm since they bought it bringing the total acreage up to 200. But, Todd said, today they also rent additional acreage.

Raising crops to feed their animals has proved productive and last year they had good success with high moisture corn, which is shelled corn packed into a long white 150-foot plastic bag called an ag bag. He credits it with helping increase milk production too and plans on doing it again this year if there is enough rain. "Right now it's dry," Todd said. "It's no big investment," Carolyn said, of the bag.

They raise corn, alfalfa, soy-



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beans, wheat, and some timothy for hay.

At one time the farm didn't have capacity to store the grain crops, but another silo in 1992 means enough storage and a savings to the Durboraws. Todd explained, "you always sold when the prices were low and bought when they were high" when facilities were not available for storage.

The two also credit Don Lloyd, a feed salesman for White Oak Mills, Lancaster County with providing good nutrition services for their animals, and add that they have a lot of confidence in their veterinarian, Dr. Donald Yorlats. They also rely on crop specialists.

"You have to rely on outside help — the feedman and the veterinarian — and reading your dairy magazines. Even in college they said you had to always keep read-

ing and updating yourself on the new changes. I read a lot of different papers," Todd said.

He notes that on some dairy farms where several brothers might be involved, each one will specialize in a particular area of the business, but his mother injects "Todd's kind of stuck."

He said while it's interesting working this way, he thinks that maybe he doesn't have time to do as good a job at one thing.

He would like to work another 20 years on the farm and then be able to spend some time traveling. "You work the hours and days we work until you're 50 you already put in as much time as people (who work) til they're 65."

Of course, he notes, finances will make that decision.

# HOMESTEAD NOTES

