

# Zahnbach Farms Prepares For Next Generation

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cycle of life keeps turning.

As the head of a family farm business, Robert said things are a lot different now than when he and Jane had a younger, growing family. It's not bad, just different.

They are not alone.

They are close to the average age of farmers, and they share the same concerns — what is to happen to the farm?

In that question lies many more, and the answers to those other questions may be more deciding about what happens to the farm than what choices the Sattazahns or their children make.

Described by himself and his wife as a "people person," Robert has been involved in many organizations for many years, a habit and interest that started when he was young and was involved as a initial member of the Marion Subordinate Junior Grange. The Marion Subordinate Grange celebrated its 75th year in 1995.

He didn't really disclose a personal philosophy, though it seemed that his actions and involvements over the years tell of

a man who has conducted himself with a sense that there are choices to be made and only through effort are the best choices made.

As it is they don't have to make a choice immediately, though they know that time won't be far away. If possible, they said that perhaps one of their sons will want to take over the farm, though they don't want any of them to feel pressured.

The seriousness of the dairy industry situation for the family farmers is not far from Robert's mind, though it is belied by a friendly, casual demeanor.

He is "one of the Sattazahn boys" he said, adding that is true because his father Ray M. Sattazahn, 88, is living at the home farm in Stouchsburg.

The oldest son, Ray R. Sattazahn, is retired from farming though he still does custom corn planting.

Robert's next sibling is brother Clarence C. Sattazahn, who farms on a neighboring farm. His sister Mary is retired after 24 years as a Navy nurse and now heads a nursing staff at a nursing home.

His younger brother Dennis G.

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Robert and Jane Sattazahn roundup some of the low-production group of cows from an exercise lot. Though difficult to see, an electric wire keeps cows from the conveyor and feed preparation area behind them. Robert said the development of the totally mixed ration is one of the best improvements to dairying that he's seen over the years.



Robert Sattazahn holds an aerial photograph of Zahnbach Farms where, at the peak of operation, he, his wife Jane and their four children operated one of the largest herds in Berks County and milked them three times per day.



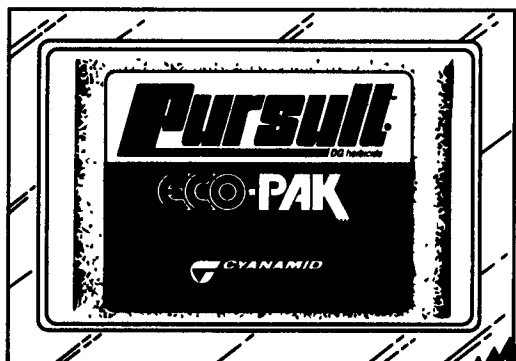
Jane Sattazahn was a "city girl" from Myerstown when she met Robert, the son of a dairy farmer, in high school. They married in 1954 and started farming in 1955 in Myerstown. Here, Jane pre-treats the teats on the low group of the 75-cow milking string in the farm's double-six herringbone milking parlor. Built in 1967, the parlor has become a very familiar place.

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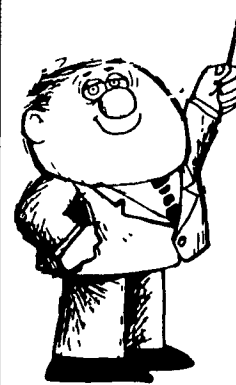


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