

Len-Lyn Farms Switch From Holsteins To Bedding

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STEVENS (Lancaster Co.) — For four generations the red and white striped barns on the edge of Stevens have been more than an eye-catcher for passerbys.

The striped barns housed the show winning Len-Lyn Holsteins of the Crouse family. Embryo transplants were commonplace. But in January of this year, the registered dairy herd was sold.

It was no easy decision for Phil Crouse who took over the dairy in 1992. At that time, his dad Galen wanted more time to concentrate on his trucking business.

When Phil wasn't milking or doing the field work, he helped out his dad by delivering wood shavings to local dairy and poultry farmers. Trucking and farming seemed compatible.

In the last few years, the trucking business, which also delivers mulch, boomed while dairy prices have spiraled downward.

Crouse sold the 80 milking cows but continues to raise 50 heifers and 50 dairy bulls and crop farm 130-acres with corn, soybeans, and alfalfa.

Phil his brother Neil, and dad Galen formed a partnership to operate the trucking business called Len-Lyn Farms.

Many of the barns are now filled

with sawdust, which Crouse said farmers often prefer to use for bedding because it works well with liquid manure systems.

"It's cheaper than straw, easier to work with, and absorbs better than other bedding," Crouse said.

The partnership picks up shavings from logging businesses and stores the shavings on two sheds on the farm.

About nine years ago, the Crouses built a home on the land bordering the farm. To tend to the young stock, Crouse takes a short hike from his yard through a field to the farm buildings.

The Crouse children, Adriane, 8, and Lane, 11, attend Lititz Area Mennonite School.

With the upcoming benefit auction held for the school every year, the Crouse family wanted to help.

The give-what-you-have concept inspired Crouse to donate baled shavings and mulch from the Len-Lyn Farms.

The benefit auction will cover budgeted operating expenses. The auction is an annual event, but for Phil and Gail, raising school funds is an ongoing responsibility. Both serve on the school finance committee, which is overseeing a building expansion.

"Groundbreaking for the \$500,000 LAMS addition is scheduled for spring of 1998 if we have

80 percent of the projected cost on hand at that point," Gail said.

That means \$400,000 is needed. Presently about \$270,063 has been received or pledged. To help in the fund raising, Gail designed a brochure for the building project.

Because the community needs soccer fields, the Lititz Soccer Club has donated to the fundraiser for the opportunity to use the fields during off-school hours.

Since the Crouse no longer have the daily responsibility of milking

cows, they have more time to volunteer for causes they believe in. In January, the Crouses went on a 10-day mission trip to Western Africa. With a group of 27 from the Lancaster Christian Missionary Alliance Church, they put a roof on the African church and helped with school and community outreaches. Gail sang with a musical group. People live in open huts in the tropical hot and humid area, but the real surprise to the Crouses was that the villagers did not drink milk or use

any dairy products.

"They said Americans smell like spoiled milk," Gail said.

She agreed that the villagers do indeed emit a different odor than Americans.

Goats and water buffalo were prevalent for meat. The village women seem to do all the manual labor while the men sat around in the market place and sewed.

Music plays a large role in Gail's life. She teaches piano lessons, and

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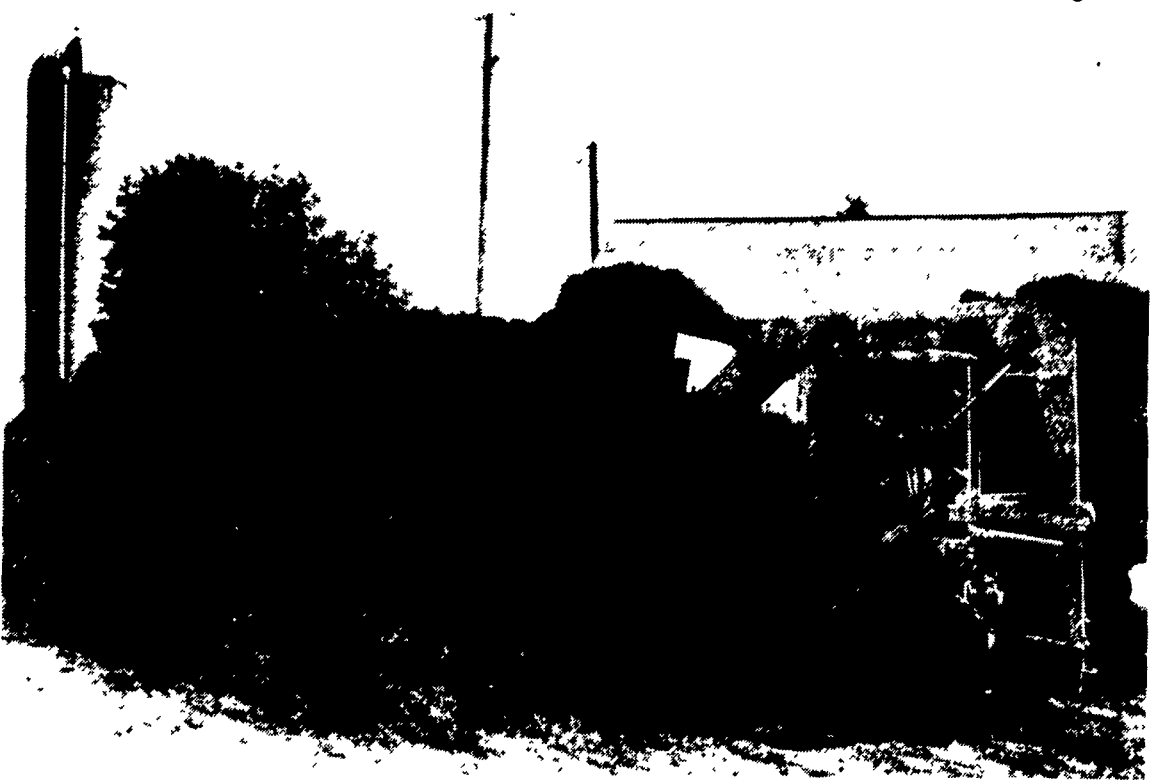
Adriane and Lane enjoy playing in the wood shavings. The wood shavings will be baled and sold at the Lititz Area Mennonite School Auction held June 27-28. Innovative ideas for raising money for organizations continue to crop up, but baled shavings for bedding is one of the more unusual items to be sold at the benefit auction.



Music plays a big role in Gail's life. She teaches piano and assists in school and church musical programs.



For many years the red and white striped barns housed Len-Lyn Holsteins, known for show cattle and embryo transplanting. Now many of the buildings are storage for wood shavings that the Crouse family delivers to farmers to use for livestock bedding.



Phil Crouse loads some mulch for delivery that is in demand this season.



Phil and Gail Crouse with children, Adriane, 8, and Lane Crouse raises about 50 head of heifers and bull calves on the farm.

HOMESTEAD NOTES