

Despite Season's Heat, Drought, Turkey Producers Fortunate

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scaping on the side for about 10 years while helping his father run the dairy.

One day in 1987, he ran across an advertisement announcing a meeting for Round Hill turkey growers at the New Oxford Fire Hall. He spoke with Round Hill representatives and, that same year, the first house was constructed. (Wampler Foods, Hinton, Va., purchased the Round Hill business in 1993.)

That house, measuring 50 by 632 feet, includes a brooder house and a growout area separated by bird age, one from 6-7 weeks and the other takes the birds up to 19 weeks.

That same year, Keller constructed a truck tire disinfection station, cleaning the wheels, wheel wells, and tires of all trucks before they are allowed to enter the farm. Those first steps at biosecurity proved useful in warding off many poultry diseases which can infect birds.

David farms with wife Karen and daughter Janel, 14, and Jason, 16, who help with fieldwork and feeding the small birds.

In 1992, the second house was built, measuring 50 by 625 feet. The houses include power ventilated fans. In all, both facilities house 26,000 toms, grown in 19-19½ weeks to about 34-36 pounds under the Wampler contract. The Kellers finish four cycles of birds a year, although sometimes they finish only three cycles.

The poults are delivered at a day to a day and a half old, weighing about 55 grams, from Cuddy Farms hatchery in North Carolina. Most are the British United Turkey (BUT) poults, or hybrids. Some are Nicholas.

About 13,000 poults arrive on

one trailer, many from 2-3 different farms. About 100 each are housed in individual crates, which are dumped into rings at the farm.

The poults have been beak-trimmed and toe-trimmed. They are fed "crumbles" or pebbles of feed by hand the first week. The nutritionist determines the feed makeup of the crumbles, which includes corn, soybean meal, and vitamins.

In four weeks the poults are switched to a pelletized feed until they finish in about 19 weeks at 34-36 pounds.

After they are shipped, the houses are cleaned and disinfected and made ready for another flock.

Two houses care for 6,500 birds per house.

Keller noted that, despite the change in corporate names, Wampler involves dealing with the same people as Round Hill. Wampler sells turkeys to 41 different countries.

Birds are moved off the farm 72 cages on a side, six cages high. There are 144 cages on the trailer.

About a week before Thanksgiving, a trailer arrived and transported the birds to Wampler in time for the holiday.

For the Kellers, the biggest challenge, according to David, was keeping the birds cool when things got "real hot out." Humidity levels sour and the health of the birds is challenged.

What proves particularly irritating is humidity, which is nearly impossible to control. In the summer, birds use about 3,000 gallons of water per day — so the challenge involves keeping the birds sated and, for the smaller birds at least, with higher demands for food.

Also, disease "is a very big concern in the poultry business," Keller noted. "So far we've been lucky."

The first years in business, Kell-



The Kellers farm 20 acres (about 10 acres are tilled) on their turkey farm near Gettysburg. The farm was parceled out from David's father, Joseph's, dairy farm across the road. They stand next to house built in 1987. At right is the house built in 1992.

er faced a real threat from MG, which prompted him to install the disinfection station to get rid of the disease before it came to his farm. The station was installed in 1988.

Of course other challenges the Kellers face are cholera, avian influenza (A.I.), Newcastle, and others. A big concern this past year was with A.I., which hit flocks in the previously quarantined section of northern Lancaster County.

Another challenge is dealing with the amount of poultry manure generated at the farm. Fortunately, the Kellers rely on Richard Flickinger, located nearby, to handle the manure.

The decision to go into the turkey business has proven fruitful for Keller, since he reached one of his objectives: more time with his family.

"At the time, I was tired of working away and I wanted to be home more," he said. This way, he noted, he can take care of things around the house while keeping a close eye on the day-to-day operations of the farm.



David, right, farms with wife Karen, left, at their farm near Gettysburg. David, who grew up on the dairy farm, worked in a machine shop for a few years. After work with the machine shop, Keller did landscaping on the side for about 10 years while helping his father run the dairy.

Bionic Daughter Wins Gold Futurity

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio — On Nov. 10, the 1997 National Guernsey Gold Futurity entries were being announced as they paraded into Freedom Hall in Louisville, Kentucky. The stakes were high as the total pot of the 1997 Guernsey Gold Futurity was \$2,400.

The winning entry was bred and owned by Clark and Joy Vilter of Hartland, Wisconsin. Four Winds ADM B Silk-ET was selected by Judge Brian Garrison of Plain City, Ohio, to receive the first place Futurity banner sponsored by E.R. Berousek of Yukon, Oklahoma.

This Excellent-90 Laeschland Choice ADM Bionic daughter has production records to 17,206M 3.8% 663F 3.3% 567P at 2-03 in 365 days.

In addition to the banner, "Silk" received the Shirley Wright Memorial Award, a silver champagne cooler sponsored by Leroy and Nita Lindley and Ralph and Martha Turley of Ohio.

"Silk" won \$745 and was presented with the best udder award sponsored by Good-As-Gold Guernseys of Hilmar, California, and the Russell Wenger Memorial Award for the best bred and owned animal sponsored by Carlton Wenger of Goshen, Indiana.

Going home with the second place silver tiered tray sponsored by Dr. John O. Mozier and Family of Stanley, Kansas, was GR-Dix

Lee Smokey Whiskey. This 85-point Wampanoag Fayette Smokey daughter is bred and owned by Katie Dixon of Chestertown, Maryland, and has production records to 18,590M 3.0% 557F 3.3% 610P at 2-04 in 305 days. "Whiskey" won \$410 for her second place share of the pot and received the silver picture frame sponsored by Branstetter Dairy of Edmonton, Kentucky, for being the first place junior exhibitor.

OCS Dairy Dias Perfect Opal-ET, an 86-point Lily Lane Penny Perfecto-ET daughter, made a clean sweep of all the production awards.

Bred and owned by Oscar Clay Smith of Jefferson, Maryland, "Opal" has records to 25,340M 4.7% 1,188F* 3.4% 861P* at 2-07 in 305 days.

"Opal" received a silver milk pitcher for the high milk award sponsored by American Breeders Service in DeForest, Wisconsin; the high butterfat production silver tray sponsored by Marfred Farms of Saluda, South Carolina; and the high protein cheese tray sponsored by Tri-State Milk Cooperative of West Salem, Wisconsin. "Opal" also won the Betty Kessler Memorial Award sponsored by Bay Meadow Farms of Galt, California, for the high CPI cow award.

Show sponsors included the Bayer Company, Lavon Farms of Plano, Texas, sponsor of rosettes,

and John Marchezak of Bentleyville, Pennsylvania, who sponsored wooden neckties.

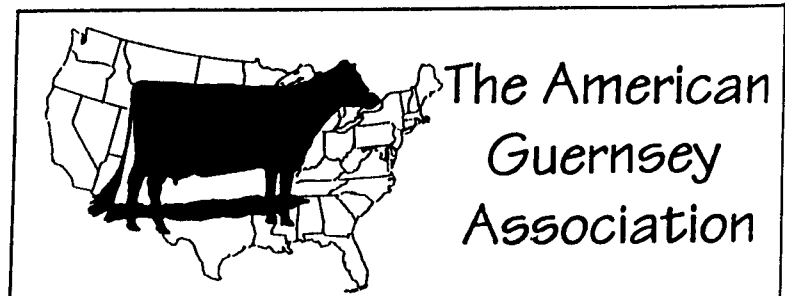
Guernsey Youth Participate

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio — Fifty-four Guernsey youth ventured into the showring on Nov. 8, in Louisville, Kentucky, to compete before Judge Lynn Lee in the 1997 National Guernsey showmanship contest.

Sara Herges of Livingston, Wisconsin, was the first champion of the day, competing with 19 other youth to receive the top award in the junior showmanship class for exhibitors 9 to 12 years of age. Sara was presented with a plaque and a \$100 savings bond for her efforts. Dan and Loretta Mithoefer of Silver Lake, Indiana, sponsors of all first place awards, made the presentation.

Theresa Kanable of Spring Green, Wisconsin, took the second place spot, receiving a \$50 savings bond and certificate donated by Fowler Branstetter and Family of Edmonton, Kentucky.

Rounding out the top three in the junior contest was Aaron Crosser of Marysville, Ohio, receiving a show halter also donated by Fowler Branstetter and Family.



Judge Lee then moved to the intermediate showmanship class where he had 16 well-polished exhibitors to choose from. The intermediate showmanship class is open to youth between the ages of 13 to 15 years old. Jessie Deckard of Spencer, Indiana, was chosen as the first place winner of the class. Jessie received a plaque and a \$100 savings bond from Dan and Loretta Mithoefer.

Jessica Eilers of Scotch Grove, Iowa, received a \$50 savings bond and a certificate for her second place efforts. Third place honors went to Amanda Derr of Carey, Ohio, who received a show halter for her achievements. The second

and third place awards were donated by Clark and Joy Vilter of Hartland Wisconsin.

Sixteen to 21-year-old junior exhibitors competed in the senior showmanship contest with Scott Weisensel of Marshall, Wisconsin, in first place. Scott received a plaque and a \$100 savings bond donated by Dan and Loretta Mithoefer.

Carrie Dillon of Jerome, Michigan, placed second, receiving a \$50 savings bond and certificate sponsored by Steve and Johnna Mills of Saluda, South Carolina.

Winning the third place show halter, also sponsored by Steve and Johnna Mills, was Beth Herges of Livingston, Wisconsin.

224 Entries In National

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio — There were 224 entries in the National Guernsey Show held Nov. 9-10, in Louisville, Ky.

Brian Garrison of Plain City, Ohio was judge.

In the end, grand champion

honors were bestowed on Peytons HF Andy Sky, the first place aged cow owned by James Berryman of Nicholasville, Kentucky. "Sky" is Very Good-89 and is sired by Hornback Farm

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