

Phoenix Hereford Earns Dam Of Distinction

GAIL STROCK
Mifflin Co.
Correspondent

MCVEYTOWN (Mifflin Co.) — Frank Phoenix of Twin Ponds Farm near McVeytown, Mifflin County, owns a Hereford cow by which all other Hereford cows can be compared. FSL Victoria 15G 66A is an unlikely name for a cow with such honors. But because of Victoria's exceptional performance and Frank's well-kept records, she's earned the right to be named the best name of all - Dam of Distinction.

The American Hereford Association (AHA) recently elevated Frank's cow to the level of Dam of Distinction, a position reserved for only 3,646 cows from 941 performance herds in 45 states.

According to AHA standards, an ideal Hereford Cow will calve as a 2-year-old, will produce a healthy, growthy calf every year, and will be problem-free for its owner. Specifically, a Dam of Distinction will calve at 30 months of age or sooner, will have produced at least three calves, and will have had an interval of no greater than 400 days between the first and second calves and no greater than 370 days after her second calf. Cows must have a progeny average 205-day adjusted

weaning weight ration of at least 105, and weaning records must be submitted to the Hereford Performance Program.

Looking out across the Twin Ponds pasture, all of the fuzzy, winter-coated, white-faced Herefords look the same. But Frank sees a difference. He believes the Dam of Distinction status will translate into a higher demand and price for his breeding stock. He's spent the past few years building his herd of 20-some animals. Now the marketing begins!

"I've already sold bulls to different breeders in Maryland," Frank said. "I believe in buying good stock. I bought one of the best cows at the Beef Expo several years ago at the Ag Arena at Penn State. And I've been artificially inseminating with semen from a former national champion bull."

Two of Frank's bulls have come under close scrutiny during the Bull Testing Program at the Pennsylvania Meat Animal Evaluation Center near Penn State. Eligible bulls arrive at the evaluation center in mid October for 112 days of testing. They're carefully monitored for weight gain, fat thickness, muscle, feed efficiency, breeding soundness, and more. All winter test bulls must have been born between Jan. 1 and April 15. Most of these bulls

are sold at the sale the end of March.

For better breeding performance, Frank enlists A-1 help from neighbor Gordon McKee. Frank tries to plan for January or February calving.

"It helps. The calves are a lot bigger in the fall. And a January or February calf will do better in the Bull Testing Program. Better fat, yearly weight gain, and average weight gain determines the sale order. When I call Gordon, he pretty much comes over right away to breed a cow. I have very few repeats."

Frank purchased his Dam of Distinction at a sale in Gettysburg from the owners of Flat Stone Lick Farm located near Marianna. He has three daughters from her in his herd.

Frank and his wife Kathy own several businesses and rental properties in Lewistown. They met when Frank began working on Kathy's home dairy farm in Clinton County. Their 25-year-old son Spencer was graduated from Penn State and is employed by a State College bank. Frank and Kathy are also putting the final touches on their Garden Treasures shop, located on their farm. Grand opening is scheduled for May.



This farm sign announces the home where Frank and Kathy Phoenix live. This spring, it will also announce the opening of their Garden Treasures shop.



This daughter of Frank Phoenix's Dam of Distinction is only slightly curious about visitors at Twin Ponds Farm near McVeytown, Mifflin County.

Jersey Production Hits Record High

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio — The average milk production for Jerseys has climbed to 16,374 pounds nationally, setting another record year for the breed.

With the increased emphasis on protein, Jersey producers are also excelling in keeping up in the market place by increasing protein production by 11 pounds, or 1.9 percent over the 1996 totals.

During 1997, 592 Jersey herds were enrolled in Dairy Herd Improvement Registry and averaged 16,374 pounds milk, 750 pounds fat, and 602 pounds protein.

These mature equivalent (m.e.) averages are based on a total of 52,819 records. This production shows an increase of 2 percent for milk, 1.9 percent for protein and 1.8 percent for fat over the 1996 breed average.

The average actual production

for these animals was 14,443 pounds milk, 671 pounds fat and 539 pounds protein. This is an increase of 274 pounds milk, 11 pounds fat, and 10 pounds protein actual, over the 1996 figures.

In addition to a record high average for the Jersey breed, the 1997 DHIR m.e. averages brought good news for individual herds.

Charles Price, owner of Priceland Jerseys, Menomonie, Wis., topped the protein list, with 877 pounds protein on 38 records. Price's herd ranked second for milk and fat with 23,429 pounds milk and 1,087 pounds fat.

Holding the number one position for milk and fat is Sunny Day Farm, Chester, S.C., owned by Herbert, Betty, and Herby D. Lutz. Their 67 Jerseys averaged 24,075 pounds milk, 1,100 pounds fat, and 830 pounds protein.



In addition to raising Herefords, Frank and Kathy Phoenix will open their garden and gift shop this May. It's located on their Twin Ponds Farm near McVeytown, Mifflin County.



Twin Ponds Farm is home to a Dam of Distinction Hereford and her offspring. After several years of building a herd, Frank Phoenix will start marketing his Herefords this spring.