

HOOVER FARMS



Located along Route 241, southwest of the city of Lebanon, the 120-acre Hoover Farms is owned by Reid and Diane Hoover. With white-painted buildings and regularly maintained lawn care, the farm presents an image of attractive functionality. The couple has four children, three boys and a girl, who help with their 140-head registered Holstein milking string, and about the same number of young stock. The two oldest boys — Bradley, 14, and Aaron, 12 — help more around the farm, while Brenden, 10, and Audrey, 7, also pitch in where and when needed. Two years ago, Bradley won a 4-H club chain heifer calf at the Lebanon Area Fair, a donation by Nelson Ebersole, a local auctioneer and real estate agent supportive of the county 4-H dairy program. At the recent Southeast District Youth Show in Lebanon, Bradley took first place in his class with the now milking 2-year-old. The dairy operation uses a tie-stall barn and loose housing for its a herd, and splits the milking group into two

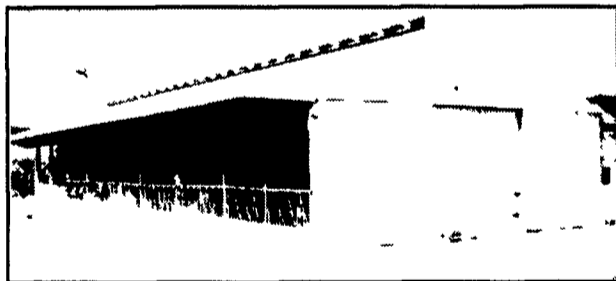
groups, both milked in the tie-stalls. The rolling herd average is about 24,000 pounds milk and the Hoovers use modern mainstream technologies, such as totally mixed rations. Reid and his brother Dale, who also dairy farms, work in partnership to plant and harvest their respective crops. Including rented land, together the Hoovers crop about 500 acres, with everything raised going to feed dairy cattle. Working in cooperation, the brothers have been able to purchase their own equipment and machinery, as well as obtain bulk purchase discounts on inputs. Reid said that while he doesn't consider his farm or operation fancy, that he does concern himself with details. He said that, to him, a successful dairy farmer keeps up with the day-to-day activities, the small details, whether it's paying close attention to cattle during calving or staying on top of the condition of the crops in order to harvest for maximum feed value. "It all adds up to help do a better job to make the operation successful," Reid said.

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