



Part of the milking herd at Coldsprings Farms. The Hoff's milk 570 cows at their farm near New Windsor.

## Coldsprings Farms To Host Maryland Holstein Picnic

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the years, you might want to attend this picnic. Marlin and Kathy Hoff, along with their sons Ian and Matt, and Matt's wife, Debbie, have graciously opened their farm up for tours during the early part of the day, and tour leaders will be on hand to take visitors around to see the operation up-close.

Marlin Hoff has contributed a great deal to the Holstein breed both through his breeding program and through his involvement with the breed Association. He has been classifying cows since 1957. His involvement with the Holstein Association has in the past led him to hold the presidency of the organization at both the county and state levels, and he was general chairman of the convention when Maryland hosted the national convention in Baltimore in the early 1980s. In 1989 he was elected to

the National Board, where he served an 8-year term that just recently ended. He is an honorary member of the Board of the state Association.

The Hoff's operation is unique because although they are relatively quite large for a dairy in this area, they have consistently maintained the kind of quality among their animals that could easily be sacrificed for sheer cow numbers. Mr. Hoff says maintaining the balance between quality and herd size is a challenge. "But we've managed to maintain pretty good quality even though the larger you get, the more difficult that becomes," he said. The farm's numbers speak for themselves in black and white that it is a challenge he is able to meet.

Mr. Hoff and his family have grown the herd of 80 cows and 80 heifers he purchased from his father in 1963 into an operation that

rivals many in terms of numbers of cows and quality of cows milked. With a herd of 670, with 570 milking right now, the farm's average is 24,128 pounds of milk, 898 of fat, and 769 of protein.

"From the beginning I had registered cows," he said, "and even though my herd has grown, we're still 90 percent registered." The grade cows and lower end registered cows are used primarily as recipients for the 200 or more embryos that Coldsprings Farms puts in each year. Approximately 40 cows are currently classified as excellent, and another 120 are classified very good, according to Mr. Hoff.

The herd expansion basically took place in 5 steps over the years, with each jump in cow numbers pretty much corresponding to the addition of a building. It starting with a doubling of the herd to 180 in 1966 when the

Hoffs added a loading barn, and wound up at the current herd size with the building 3 years ago of a 36,000-square-foot barn. "And basically, we don't plan to get any bigger, at least at this time," explained Mr. Hoff.

Cows are milked starting at 12:30, and it takes about 5 and 1/2 hours to get the herd through the double 20 parallel parlor. There are 6 groups of cows. "We have a rotation that we milk in, and the groups are numbered according to the way they're milked," explained Mr. Hoff. Group 1 is the fresh cows, and there are about 40 of them. Group 2 is the special cows, consisting of about 80-90 head. Group 3 is a group of about 140 2-year-olds. Group 4 is the high lot, with 164 head. Group 5 is the low lot, and it ranges from 120-150 head. The last group, group 6, is the sick lot. Although Mr. Hoff says he likes to have 0 in that group, he says realistically it ranges from 10-15 head. There are also 2 other groups: group 7 is the springer lot, which varies from 15-55 head, and group 8 are the dry cows, housed at another farm, that range from 20-80 head. Milk is picked up daily from a 5,000-gallon and a 1,500-gallon tank.

The herd is fed a TMR consisting of corn silage, haylage, alfalfa hay, distiller's grains, corn, barley, roasted soybeans, and minerals. "We basically raise all our own roughage and a fair amount of grain" on the farm's approximately 2,300 tillable acres, said Mr. Hoff, "I guess our goal is just basically to make sure we have enough roughage."

All manure is handled as a liquid. "We store it and haul it," said Mr. Hoff. They have the capacity to hold 2 million gallons. In a normal situation, that will last about 6 months. A stream runs through the farm, and the Hoff's have made a big effort to keep any runoff out of it by piping the stream through. "We have worked real hard at trying to keep anything from getting into the water supply," explained Mr. Hoff.

Another facet of the Hoff's operation is the bulls. "I've probably put at least 80 bulls into A.I.," estimates Mr. Hoff, "And probably a dozen to 15 have been well proven bulls that wound up having a lot of daughters."

Anyone who wants more information on the upcoming picnic can call Anita Hill at (301) 447-6473 or call the farm office at (410) 635-2181.

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