

'Winter Woes' Don't Distract Kile Turkey Farm

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But ongoing challenges to preserve the farm's water quality and to provide the best turkeys at table carving season continues at the farm.

Jeff, a 1976 graduate of Conestoga Valley High School, grew up working for the Levi Hertzog farm near Bareville. Jeff said he enjoyed doing a lot of different types of job for Hertzog, including fieldwork and other chores.

"I enjoyed growing up and spending time there," he said. "But I also enjoy being at home. I was always looking to do something like this."

Jeff began thinking about becoming a turkey farmer after delivering fuel to Nelson Fitz in York County. Then, after the decision was made, Jeff and Diane considered purchasing a farm in Port Royal, but turned it down because of the renovation work required. They then examined the work of the Junkins farm near Willow Hill, a tom turkey grower.

Not long after, land owned by Leon Fisher went for sale near New Providence. Jeff and Diane sold the house nearby (which Jeff built from scratch over a three-year period in the 1980s) to Jeff's parents, Bill and Eleanor. The

Kiles purchased the Fisher land upon which the farm stands.

Kile, who began growing turkeys in August 1994, manages 35 acres (which are rented out to local operators). The farm maintains 21,000 turkeys every nine weeks for a total of 120,000 per year for Wampler Foods, New Oxford.

There are two houses. Each house is composed of a brooder area, where the poults are brought in, and a finishing area. The areas are separated by a small maintenance room.

Recently turkeys were shipped for market during the holidays.

They receive BUTs or Hybrid poults that are about 24-36 hours old. The poults are obtained from Wampler or Cuddy Farms in Ohio or Virginia. Pine shavings are also brought in, spread out, and cardboard circles are made to keep the poults at the brooder stoves. Feed pans are placed in for the young birds.

The poults are fed crumbs, or mush, from Wenger's Feed. The feed consists of grain products, plant products, vitamins, minerals, and plant protein.

In the first two to three days, Jeff noted, he is out there every two to three hours checking up on the birds, ensuring they are healthy and have proper feed and water.



The Kile family prepares for the holiday season at their New Providence Farm. From left, LeAnne, Diane, Christine, and Jeff Kile. Photo by Andy Andrews

A new nitrate removal system was installed for the water supply recently. "There's nothing like good water," Jeff said.

After the fifth or sixth day, the cardboard circles are removed and the auto feeders are lowered. The birds remain on the autofeed equipment until about 5-6 weeks

and are moved to the back portion of the houses in an area measuring 400 feet long by 50 feet wide.

Wampler is concerned that the houses are biosecure. They are locked always. People movement is reduced. And dip buckets for boots are required.

Two-thirds of all the work done

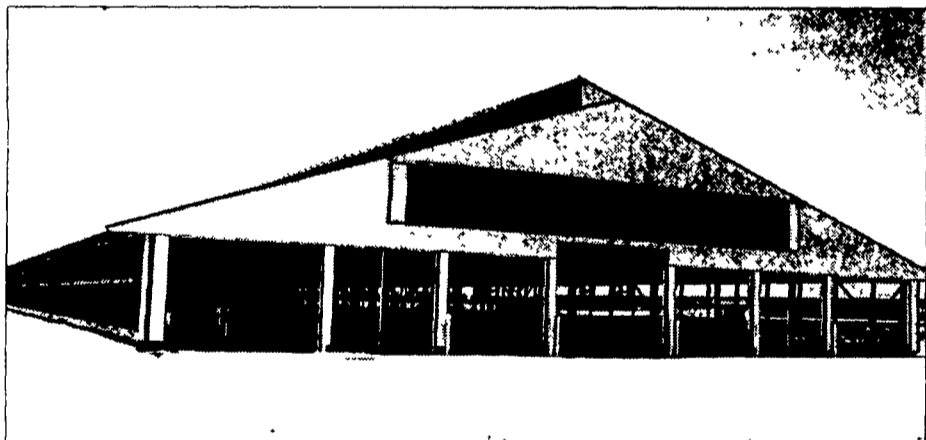
in a turkey house involves cleaning and disinfecting, noted Kile. If you don't like to clean, you wouldn't like to raise turkeys, he said.

Cleaning, before new birds arrive, is done all in about a day. One day is taken off to remove the birds. Both buildings can be

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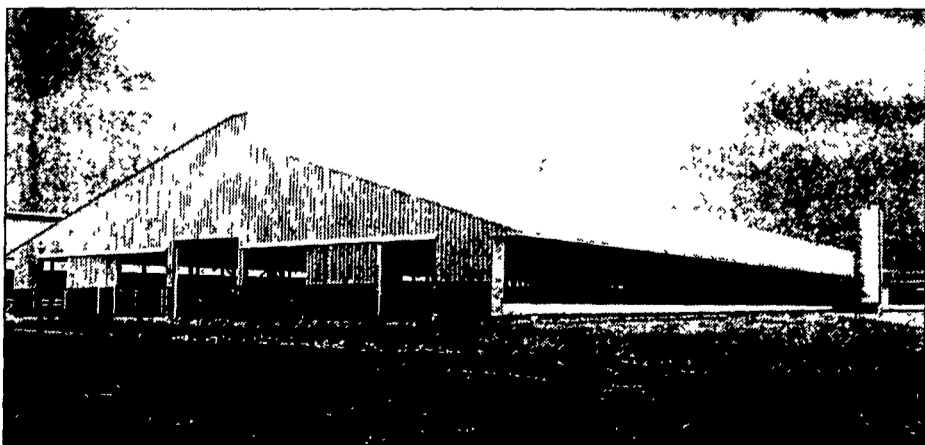
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