

Troutmans Named Outstanding Berks Farm Family

(Turn to Page A22)

"Hel" in "Reu-Hel Farm." Scott and Connie incorporated with Connie's parents, Elwood and Ruth Ohlinger, in 1991 and built a home on the farm. The house is situated across the driveway from the home Connie grew up in and where her parents currently reside.

Scott's parents, George and Mary Troutman, also a farm family, reside in Myerstown. Connie's sister and her family also live on a nearby farm and help the family milk occasionally. The Troutmans, both 35, believe that the farm is an excellent place to raise Jason, 12, Eric, 9, and Douglas, 7.

Milking more than 150 registered Holstein cows in a 54-stanchion barn with six visotron milkers takes a substantial amount of manpower, as the Troutmans have discovered.

The combination of milking and switching groups of cows takes three people about three and a half hours. "It's difficult to find help," said Connie. "And we can't operate with less than three people, so someone has to quit field work to help milk."

The solution may come with new facilities in the future. "We're hoping to expand," said Connie. "We're not very far yet but you have to start somewhere." They are currently working on the plans for expansion to 250 cows and a parallel parlor.

Since Scott and Connie both grew up on a dairy farm, they treat many of the cows on their own. Scott works on sore feet while Connie dispenses the necessary medications. "It's all on-farm training," said Connie. "There was a time that I wanted to be a vet, but I followed a veterinarian around and decided that I have enough cows I can practice on here rather than treat somebody else's."

Currently the farm has almost 150 registered Holstein heifers

and has sold 16 registered Holstein bulls for AI in the United States besides selling cattle on consignment each year. The Troutmans have also exported embryos they have exported to France and Holland. They sell 15-20 head per year for dairy purposes.

"My grandfather started early with AI about 45 years ago, selecting for type and high production, so a lot of what we have today dates back to what my father and grandfather did with the herd. Now we have generations of our own breeding," said Connie.

Reu-Hel farm spreads over 541 acres on six different parcels. With the addition of 200 rented acres, the family raises about 300 acres of corn and 200 acres of alfalfa plus smaller amounts of soybeans, barley, wheat, and oats on 680 acres of tillable land.

The herd is classified every year by a Holstein Association classifier. With the last classification the farm had 17 Excellent 48 Very Good, 45 Good Plus and 12 Good cows. The herd average is more than 24,000 pounds milk, 923 pounds fat, and 778 pounds protein.

Although the family does show cows and have a few reserve all-Pennsylvania honors, the boys' interest seem to lean toward sports at this time. "We pursue what they enjoy," said Connie.

The boys can find a game to play year round, with baseball in the spring, swimming in the summer and winter, and soccer in the fall. Their father has been an example as he enjoys his position as pitcher for the Northwest Berks fastball league. "Sports is his outlet," said Connie.

Besides attending sports events, "I go to meetings," said Connie, who was just elected state director for Berks County to the State Holstein Board, a three-year term. As director she will represent the county's re-

sponses to state decisions in the dairy industry.

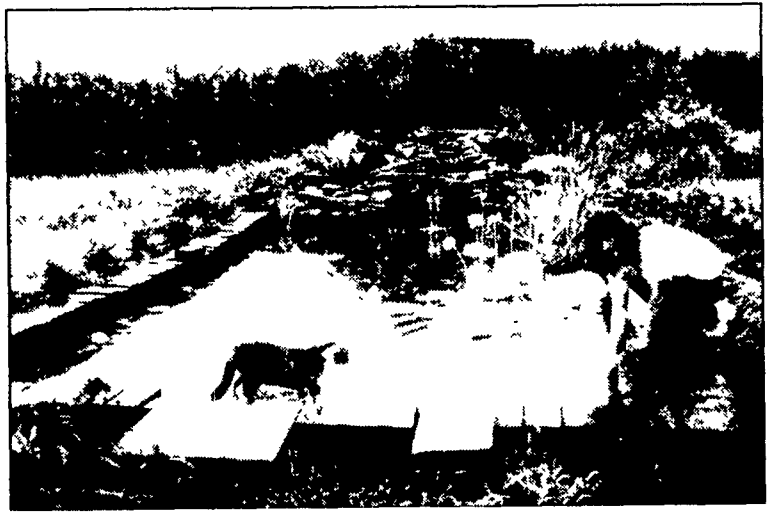
A former dairy princess, Connie still works at promoting dairy products. Each year the Holstein Club sells five-pound blocks of cheese as a fundraiser, and, since 1990, Connie has singlehandedly sold and delivered 5 tons of cheese.

"I wrote a letter to agribusinesses suggesting that they give cheese to their employees as a Christmas gift," said Connie. "So they'll buy 40-50 blocks at a time. Also the cheese is good so if I can get people to buy it once, they'll usually buy it again the next year."

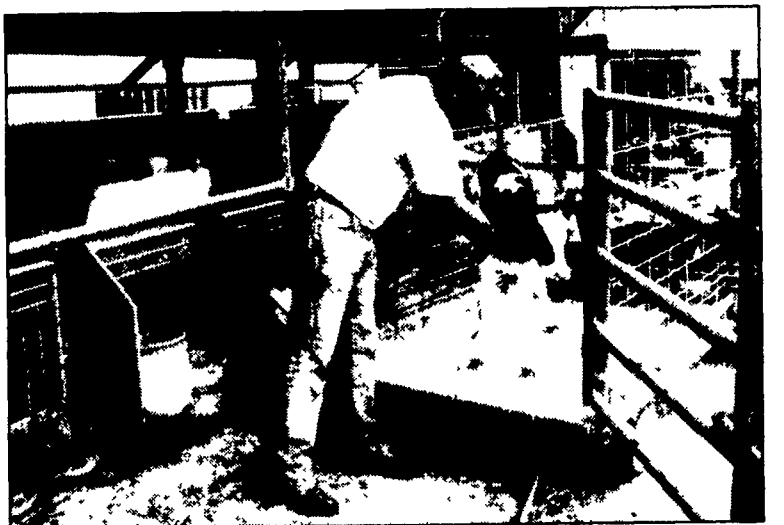
Each member of the Troutman family added a long list of accomplishments and organizational involvement and leadership to the farm family application. Scott has long been a member of the Ontelaunee, Berks County Pomona, and Pennsylvania State Granges and has participated on the volleyball and bowling grange leagues. A member of the Berks County Holstein Club, Scott has also served on several committees for the club besides helping on Young Farmer teams and committees. He was also a director for the Berks County Dairy Herd Improvement Association.

Connie's list includes involvement in the Granges, the Holstein Club, 4-H leadership and committee involvement, Farm-City Council Representation, Young Farmers membership and ambulance attendant certification.

"Farming is getting harder all the time, whether it's just finding help or dealing with new regulations. I still enjoy what I do, though, I wouldn't want to do anything different. It's a really nice place to raise the boys," said Connie.



Large lilies grace the pond, a highlight of the Troutmans' back yard. "Ponds are really cool but it's not like they just exist," said Connie. "They're a lot of hard work with weeds and aphids and strong roots to break up." Milo, the family cat, scopes the activity of the pond's resident fish.



After his shop burned down years ago, Scott got a new shop where he builds innovations such as the cart to move calves, such as this young one, from the barn to the new calf barn. He has also created portable vaccination chute and helper feeder for the farm. His current project is a 1937 Ford.



"Scott designs the landscape," said Connie. "I just tell him what I want and he figures it out and does it." Railroad ties accent the flowerbed which adds a dash of color to the calf barn.



Another product of Scott's shop is the automatic shutoff feeder at the helper barn, a feature which makes Jason's life a little easier.

Are Your Feed Bunks Fresh??

Greg Strait
Dairy Extension Agent
Fulton Co.

Would you eat at your feed-bunk? Are your cows eating fresh feed every bite they consume? If you answered "NO" to either one of these questions, then we need to evaluate your feed bunks.

During the hot humid days of summer, it is hard to keep the feed fresh at all times. This is something that needs to be done if we are going to keep dry matter intakes at their maximum levels. You need to keep the bunks dry and clean of all foreign matter. Are you feeding five percent over what the cows are eating? If so, then you need to sweep the bunks before each feeding and feed it to another group of animals. This will keep the feed fresh for the milk cows at all times.

One way to keep the feed fresh and the bunks smelling clean is to sprinkle some sodium bicarbonate down the bunk. This will both freshen-up and dry out the feed bunks. Be sure to clean all debris from the bunks before you spread the bicarbonate.

I can't stress this enough, keep the bunks clean, dry and fresh. If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call at the extension office (717) 485-4111.



Calves housed in the new, 30-head calf barn are always glad to see Eric moving up the line. The barn, built in 1995, is equipped with a feed room and a mixing room with a hot water heater. The calves are fed colostrum at birth and for the first three days. At weaning, the calves are picture for registration with the Holstein Association, dehorned, I.D. tagged, and castrated if necessary.