

Careful Selection Breeds Results For Coldsprings Farms

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cludes 60 percent production and 40 percent type. It's not a bad slide rule."

Hoff developed the sire, Etazon Brian, ranked among Holsteins' elite Top 100 TPI sires. Hoff has also been responsible for 6 Gold Medal sires in the AI industry. Coldsprings Farms has sent between 15 and 20 mature bulls to stud. Over the years Coldsprings Farms has sent more than 80 young sires to AI service.

Hoff also looks at the kind of family that is behind the cow.

"Fifty years ago, a good cow family could get you by a bad bull. I've found over the years that a cow that has several generations of good cows behind her has more of a chance of having a good calf than a good cow without the background," he said.

"Production is my number one priority, but with type in the back of my mind. I also pay attention to components. I think the udder, feet, and legs are important and maybe, to a greater extent than most people think, capacity," said Hoff.

The 550 milk cows are kept on the central farm with the heifers, dry cows, and calves kept on nearby farms. Ninety-four percent of the herd is homebred and 97 percent is registered.

The cows are milked in a double-20 parallel parlor with automatic identification and milk weight recording. During the last three years, the herd has averaged almost 24,000 pounds of milk, 900 pounds of fat, and 770 pounds of protein with a twice-a-day milking. The farm has had 625 cows with lifetime

production of more than 100,000 pounds of milk and/or 4,000 pounds of fat and/or 3,000 pounds of protein. Marlin has also bred 112 Dams of Merit and 60 Gold Medal Dams.

The farm includes 1,000 acres in close proximity with 480 additional acres in the vicinity. Crops include 900 acres of corn, 300 acres of soybeans, 200 acres of alfalfa, 150 acres of timothy hay and smaller amounts of barley and wheat.

Hoff began in 1963 with 80 cows and 80 heifers and has grown from there. He began registering calves in 1950 with an alphabet system. With this system the years were assigned a different letter of the alphabet,

so the calves born in 1950 had names beginning with an "A". The farm has been through the alphabet twice, and the system proved cumbersome at times such as the "Q" year. Currently the calves are designated by a number and letter. "The names got too confusing," said Hoff, who tells the story of having an exciting ride chasing down "Vail" before she went to the butcher in place of her counterpart "Veil."

"We expanded four years ago from 350 cows. We had a parlor capable of milking twice as many cows," said Hoff, who cites economic reasons as the motivation for increasing numbers.

Because of the replacement heifers available, Hoff was able to increase numbers without purchasing a large number of animals outside the farm.

Coldsprings Farms has been handed down...and handed down...and handed down. "My family came in 1869 to the home farm here," said Hoff. The original farm building, however, has burnt down twice.

Originally interested in singing, Hoff went to New York for voice lessons before he joined the Maryland Judging Team in 1959. "That's what made me get interested in breeding good cattle, my judging experience. I got to see good cattle in every

breed. And every breed has good cattle."

Because of these experiences, by the time Hoff reached college four years after graduation, he knew exactly where he wanted to focus his studies.

After graduating with a degree in dairy science from the University of Maryland, Hoff returned to purchase his own farm located near Coldsprings Farms. Only one year later Hoff took his father's offer and purchased the 260 acre family farm.

"Probably two-thirds of this herd traces back to three cows," said Hoff. "A heifer my father bought in Canada, one I bought

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Several lines of calf hutches stretch across the green hills of the farm. The calves, which go through an extensive vaccination program, are housed in about 100 hutches. The 550 milk cows are kept on the central farm in freestalls with the heifers in loose housing on nearby farms.



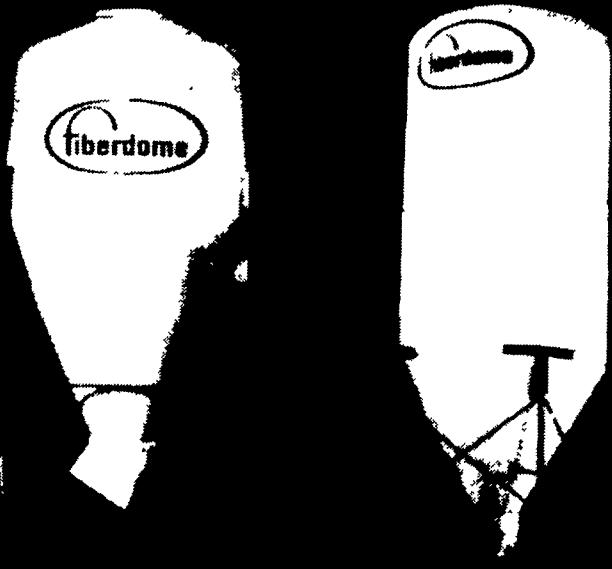
Hoff's sons Matt, 31, left and Ian, 33, not pictured, are an integral part of the operation. Matt manages the crops and works on the feed rations while Ian works with the cows and heifers. Hoff's wife Kathy "keeps everyone straight," said Hoff, and takes care of the bookwork for the farm.



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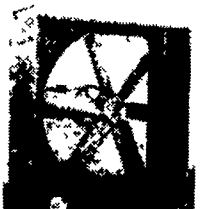
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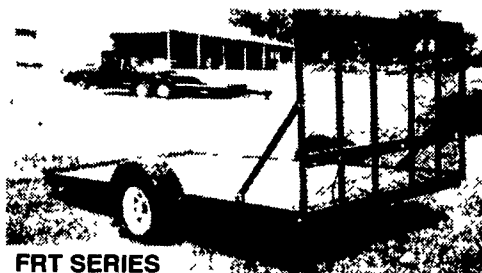
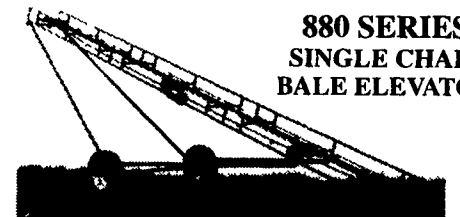
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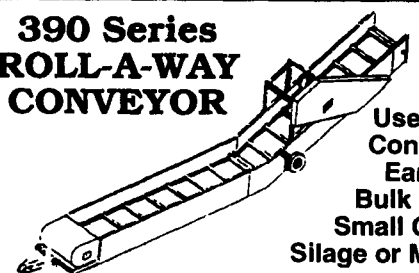


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