

Diversification, Old-Fashioned Way Key In Long-Term Family Business

our own feed. We may have several cattle around for a week.

"The farm's been an asset to our business in that we can adjust our slaughter. We can always keep our beef fresh. If we get bought ahead we can just feed the cattle until we need them," said Sidney.

Besides beginning the butchering operation, Harry Troutman also ran a retail store in Middleburg along with the slaughter business. His sons, John and Claire, later took over the retail business and the two enterprises became separate entities.

Striking a balance between the old-fashioned way and new technology may be key to a successful business.

Troutman's Market, a wholesale and retail operation, features sales of fresh and smoked products complemented by a custom curing and smoking business.

A family business since 1937, Brothers Frank and Elwood Troutman sold the business to Ron and Chester Troutman in 1972.

"Chester retired in 1982, and I was in business by myself until Aaron came last year," said Ron Troutman.

Aaron, 25, grew up working in the business and is the fourth generation of Troutmans to operate the market.

Troutman's Market, which employs eight people, includes retail stores in Middleburg and Selinsgrove plus a wholesale route which covers a 60-80 mile radius.

The boxed beef, turkey, chicken, and pork enters the



Employees take care of some custom killing at the slaughterhouse. Custom killing accounts for 10 to 15 percent of the total slaughter. Although custom killing varies seasonally, autumn is the busiest time.

Troutman's doors to exit as ring bologna, mini bolognas, ham lunchmeat, all-beef hot dogs, smoked turkey breast, smoked ham, sausage, turkey, chicken, and beef, or beef jerky. The business combines making old fashioned smoked products with modern processing procedures.

"We have to be state-of-the-art-nowadays," said Aaron. "Time is money. The future in this business is definitely high tech to make it easier on everybody."

Three computer-controlled, self-cleaning smokehouses, a 20-needle injection system, and a vacuum stuffer comprise part of the production facilities at the Troutman operation. Produc-

tion averages 1,500-2,000 pounds of bologna and 1,000 pounds of sausage per week.

According to Aaron, ring bologna is the biggest signature product, with hams coming in second. The holiday season, understandably, is the busiest time of year for the Troutmans, who move approximately 200 hams a week compared to 400-600 hams per week over the holidays. Fortunately, with today's processes a ham can be smoked and cured the same day. The injection system gives an even cure to ham.

The addition of the vacuum stuffer for sausages and hot dogs is an exciting development for

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