

By Bus Or By Feedlot, Farm Show Family Works As One

SANDY BRADLEY
Mercer Co. Correspondent
GROVE CITY (Mercer Co.) — The term "family farm" takes on new meaning when two generations, husbands and wives together, work as one toward a common goal.

For the Rains family, Austin and Dorothy together with son Dale and daughter-in-law, Brenda, this holds true on the farm as well as off.

When the four family members are not operating their Mercer County school bus business in which they own and manage 10 buses, they are raising and showing their collective herd of more than 80 registered Angus cows. The entire operation takes place near Mercer on three separate parcels: the 55-acre farm occupied by Dale and Brenda, which has about 25 acres in crop; a 35-acre homestead occupied by Austin and Dorothy; and a rented location, the 150-acre Munnell Run Farm, which is owned by the county and referred to locally as the old county home farm.

The rented location comprises most of the Rains' pasture, said Brenda, but also includes crop ground. Between the three locations, the family raises enough corn, hay, and oats — all that they need — to feed their herd throughout the year.

Though most of the operation is somewhat typical for a family-owned farm, one aspect is a little less usual; unlike many farms in

which land and business pass from father to son, all of the Rains' farming history ties to Dorothy, Dale's mother.

"Dorothy was a Woods," Brenda explained. "They've been raising Angus for more than 80 years, and so this has come about through them."

As a result, the couple of 10 years now lives on part of what originally belonged to John Woods, Dale's maternal grandfather. Ironically, Brenda said, it is Dorothy who might refer to farming as an expensive hobby — and though the Rains' collectively own the cows as well as the school bus business, Dorothy also earns money by driving a school van owned by the Mercer school district.

On the farm, while Dale and Brenda handle many of the day-to-day ongoing chores, in summer months all four family members help with crops. During the Farm Show and other exhibitions, Brenda, Dale and Austin do the traveling while Dorothy stays home to handle the feeding.

Although Dale Rains has attended the Farm Show since childhood, this year's event will mark more than consecutive trips to Harrisburg, where he will show two March heifer calves, an April bull calf, a January bull calf, a March junior yearling, and a February junior yearling.

In past trips to the Farm Show, the Rainses have shown two supreme champion females and three grand champion



Dale, Brenda, and Austin Rains pose with cows Ellie, held by Brenda, a February yearling who attended last year's Farm Show, and Gayla, a March heifer.

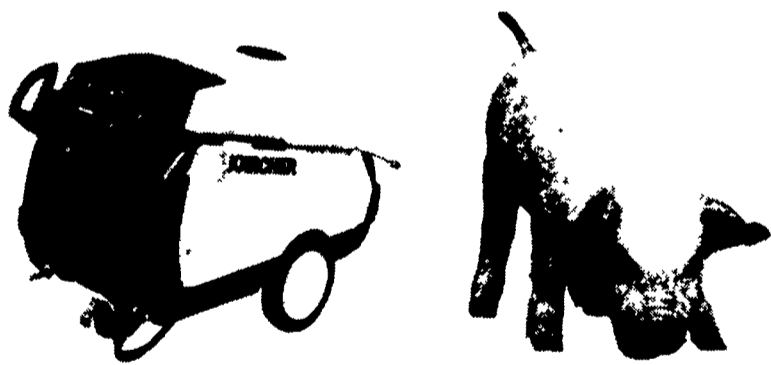
Angus bulls. Last year they were named premier breeder.

As one of about 10 Angus breeders in Mercer County, said Brenda, there is also a good chance that several cows either purchased or bred from their line will also be shown at this year's Farm Show — one from Bethlehem, near the New Jersey line, and a couple of others from York County.

As well as being rewarding, said Brenda, attending the show makes good business sense as far as advertising and selling cows. "That's basically why we go," she said. "We can usually sell one or two heifers right out of the string there. Last year, two of the bulls got sold through the Farm Show. It increases publicity and it makes people aware."

"But there is definitely a social aspect to it, too" she said. "It's very enjoyable to see the people: It's good in terms of trying to educate the public. It's a lot of rapport — to promote beef cattle and the farming industry to a non-agriculture public. But then you certainly wouldn't go through everything you had to to get ready if the competition wasn't the fun of it, too."

A MORE RUGGED PRESSURE WASHER? HOG WASH!



...AND FLOOR WASH, AND TRACTOR WASH...

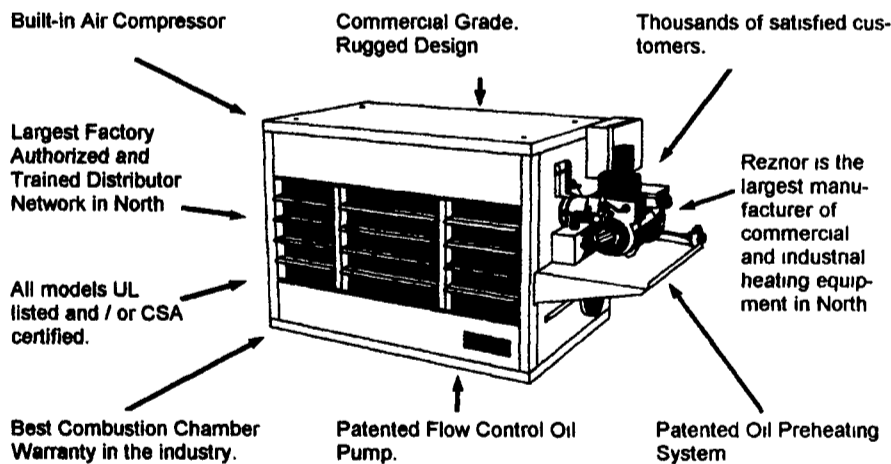
Don't let our looks deceive you. From the inside out, Kärcher's electric and gas powered high-pressure washers are ruggedly designed to withstand the harshest of conditions and stand the test of time. Proudly, they possess an unbeaten track record for low servicing and maintenance costs, and long service life to prove it.



THE WORLD'S LARGEST MANUFACTURER OF PRESSURE WASHERS

Visit us in Harrisburg at
 The Pennsylvania Farm Show
 Booths 7-8-9
 for Special Farm Show Pricing

FREE HEAT



REZNOR

Waste Oil Heaters

We have been keeping people warm for over 110 years!!

Kochel Equipment Co.

3030 Ridge Rd. (Rt. 23), Elverson, PA 19520
 (610) 286-5519 1-800-922-9680 Fax (610) 286-2162
 www.kochelequipment.com