

## Love Of Farming

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Seventy-eight cows are milked to the pipeline system of the barn. The "L" shape requires that the family rotates the two batches, or strings, of cows.

They feed the animals that have been in the barn overnight, milk them, clean out the barn, re-bed the area, and bring in the next group to milk. These animals will stay in the barn during the day until they are milked at the afternoon milking and turned out to spend the evening in the pasture or freestall barn. The twice-a-day job requires about two hours for each milking.

Herd production average for the last three years is more than 22,000 pounds of milk, 835 pounds of fat, and 738 pounds of protein. Besides the 162 milking cows, the Schantz have 160 of their own replacement heifers.

The Schantz use AI breeding for the cows and live cover for their heifers. A registered bull from one of their top-producing cows in the herd is the cleanup bull. The bulls are replaced every 15-24 months.

The rolling hills of the Dairy of Distinction farm have long ago necessitated the family's conservation practices. Burd began techniques such as water-

ways, diversion terraces, and strip cropping to help hold the topsoil. They use conventional and minimum tillage in their fields.

### Fair Competition

Late summer and fall is an exciting time for the family. Fair time is show time for the Schantz children, who exhibit animals at Oley, Kempton, Reading, and Kutztown fairs. They are involved in the Berks County 4-H Club, where Megan and Matthew are teen leaders, and show only 4-H animals.

Last year they walked away with junior and reserve champion honors at Oley Fair. This year they have gotten off to a good start by bringing blue ribbons home from the Kempton Fair.

In addition the extensive garden in the backyard yields produce, flowers, and fruits that are canned, frozen, arranged, and displayed by the Schantz family for fair competition each year. Also hay and grains from the fields are entered at area fairs. Megan's FFA project chickens yield eggs for local fairs.

Summertime vacations for the family are short respites in their pool and wintertime brings time

for snowmobiling, another favorite activity.

Besides fair participation, other community involvement includes Kathy's storyboard demonstration that she gives to students about life on a dairy farm. Besides also giving demonstrations about farm life, Megan and Matthew can be found helping on the junior Holstein club's milk shake wagon at the Kutztown Fair.

The Outstanding Farm Family honor is awarded by the Grange. David has been involved in Grange all of his life, beginning with Junior Grange. He has served on Pioneer Grange No. 1777's finance committee since 1995. The children are junior members.

Also during the banquet two 4-H members and two FFA members will be honored for their accomplishments.

4-Her Taryn A Stein, Bernville, has been a very active member of the Leesport 4-H club and has served in leadership for the club for several years. She has also attend leadership conferences and State 4-H Days for the past two summers in the Fashion Revue. She has also been a member of the Planning Committee for 4-H Capital Days.

A 9-year 4-H member, James C. Kauffman, Laureldale, has focused on the 4-H rabbit and reptile projects besides taking food and nutrition projects with the Leesport 4-H club. He has served in leadership positions in the rabbit and reptile club. A delegate to National 4-H Congress in 2001, he has also participated in 4-H contests.

FFA member Amy Moyer, chapter president this year, placed 8th out of 77 contestants at FFA Activities Week this year in Dairy Cattle Judging. She was recently selected as the Lebanon County Dairy princess.



Nathan is quickly learning the ways of the farm and is already beginning to help milk the cows and help in the field.

Additionally she was a Teaching Lab Assistant (TLA) at Conrad Wiser High School this year in the Agriculture Department. Her career plans including taking a place in the dairy industry as a producer, fitter/showman or professional.

Angie Lengel, Elverson, served as president of the FFA Twin Valley chapter this year and has served as treasurer and

sentinel. She has been involved in Food for America programs, pet therapy at the retirement community, and creed speaking, besides helping organize and participated in contests and recreational activities for the organization.

The Reading Fair is scheduled Aug. 6-11 at the new Reading Fairgrounds near Leesport.



Matthew enjoys spending his summer days in the fields and barns of the farm.

## From Eggs To Layers

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### Emphasis On Genetics

"The product sold to customers is a combination of four families," said Kreider. The chicks come from Iowa, which has the pure strains to make the "AB" males and "CD" females, selected for feed efficiency, egg quality, and disease resistance.

These chicks are then combined to produce the "ABCD" line sold with the genetic potential of all four lines. "We're always testing different kinds of crosses," said Kreider.

The AB and CD chicks — "parent stock" — are shipped to contracted farms when they are one day old to become the breeding flocks for Hy-Line. They are raised by contracted farmers to 20 weeks old, when they are old enough to lay eggs.

In the breeding houses, a one-to-10 ratio of roosters to hens ensures fertilized eggs. Well over 99 percent of the eggs come to

the hatchery fertilized.

The breeding flocks will produce for one year before they lose efficiency. "We also want to incorporate genetic progress to our customers as soon as possible," said Kreider.

The farmers gather the eggs that roll from the boxes into a belt and onto a gathering table, then are stacked in trays. To slow the maturation process, the eggs are cooled to 55-60 degrees until they are sent to the incubator to fulfill an order.

"Setting" the eggs at the hatchery, which can set one million eggs at one time, is based on orders. The average order is 100,000 chicks.

The eggs are nestled in at 100.3 degrees with a relative humidity of 50-55 percent and turned every hour.

After they are hatched, the chicks are sexed by the appearance of their wing feathers. The females have fast-feathering wings, with primary wing feath-

ers longer than the smaller covert feathers.

Workers quickly check the wings before putting the chicks in the appropriate slot that takes the males and females to separate destinations. According to Kreider an individual worker can sort an average 3,600 chicks per hour.

Once sorted, the females are vaccinated and delivered to the farm within 24 hours. The yolk sack serves as a 72-hour food supply for the chicks, which do not need to be fed at the hatchery.

Once they are on the farm, the laying chicks, a future laying flock, will be productive for one-and-a-half to two years for the customers in Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York, and up the coast of Connecticut and Maine.

Kreider likens the hatchery to a biosecure maternity ward.

Upon arrival at work, the employees change into uniforms supplied by the company and laundered on the premises. Additionally each room is independently ventilated. The hatching rooms are washed down between sets of chicks.

Alarms and flashing red lights help monitor the temperature of the incubators via a fiber optic network. If the temperature varies more than one-half of a degree, an alarm goes off to signal the problem and make sure the eggs stay in the proper temperature zone.

After 17 days, just before the chicks begin to hatch, the eggs are transferred from the egg racks into a hatchery basket so the chicks do not fall through the racks.

Editor's Note: Next week, a look into Longenecker Hatchery.



After they are hatched, the chicks are sexed by the appearance of their wing feathers. The females have fast-feathering wings, with primary wing feathers longer than the smaller covert feathers. The wing on the left is a female.



The eggs are nestled in these racks in a climate warmed to 100.3 degrees with a humidity of 45-50 percent. They are turned every hour by the angle of the steeply-sloped racks.