

Dairy Family Demonstrates Five-Star Care For Cows, Environment

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quality of cull animals sold for beef.

Jason Swallow, a dairy nutritionist and certified DQA consultant from Columbia, reviewed Winterspring Farm for the program.

Swallow was already working with the Martzes on balancing their feeding rations. He saw the DQA program as "a great way to delve into other parts of the farm."

According to Swallow, the DQA review not only recognized areas where the operation excelled, but also outlined a plan

of action for points that could be improved.

The Martzes are an innovative dairy family who are always looking for ways to do things better, he said. "They're a real pleasure to work with."

As a young man, Bill Martz worked with his father who managed a dairy farm in Baltimore County, providing milk to Mt. Wilson State Hospital, a facility for tuberculosis patients at that time. The family later purchased a dairy farm in the Eldersburg area.

After the death of Bill's father, and with increasing de-

velopment coming into the area, his mother sold the farm. Bill Martz spent some years working in the construction business, then managed a dairy for four years for a state senator in Frederick County before purchasing Winterspring Farm in 1977.

The Martzes made the move with four children to the Keymar homestead. Bill gave it the name Winterspring Farm for the large number of year-round springs on the property.

The family went to work establishing a dairy operation there that would sustain them through cycles of low milk prices and droughty conditions during the '80s, '90s, and into the '00s.

According to Jamie, the soil in the area is a challenge because of its tendency to hold water.

"You have to know when to (work it), and when to sit still," he said.

The Martzes have installed drainage tiles on a large part of the farm.

They grow corn, alfalfa, and mixed hay as well as some wheat for chopping, grinding their own TMR from the forages, high moisture corn, soybean meal, and mineral supplement.

Jamie Martz said that the TMR mix is changed according to conditions, including the cost of soybean meal and other supplements, and with a goal of keeping the cows at their healthiest.

Milking cows are also given free-choice mixed hay.

The feed is not mixed for highest possible milk production because the Martzes would rather see the cows live longer, produce more calves, and make more lifetime milk.

According to Jamie, "hot" rations also tend to make hooves



The Martzes turn the cows outside for exercise as often as weather conditions allow.



Jamie Martz with 17-year old "Rolls," a Gemini daughter who still calves every year while maintaining healthy feet, legs, and a well-attached udder.

grow faster, requiring more attention to foot care. The family keeps a close watch on hooves and trims them as needed, without having to rely on outside help.

"We've only had a hoof trimmer in once," he said.

Other keys to good cow care on Winterspring Farm are keeping the animals off cement and allowing them to exercise whenever possible.

When it comes to choosing sires, the ones that produce good feet and legs are first pick, Jamie said.

"If a cow can't walk, she can't milk," he said.

Sires are chosen from various sources, including semen suppliers in Canada and the U.S. Semen is stored on the farm, as Jamie has been breeding cows by AI since 1980. Several registered bulls are also kept as "clean-up" breeders and for breeding some of the heifers.

The Martzes use sand for bedding in the freestall barn.

Sand does not heat up like other types of bedding such as wood shavings, Bill said. The result is less bacterial growth and a generally cleaner environ-

ment for the cows.

The sand also sticks to the hooves, preventing slippage on concrete.

Winterspring Farm cows produce an average of about 62 pounds per day, with milkfat generally at about 3.9 percent. Typical somatic cell counts (SCC) in the milk run about 250,000.

Swallow said that he is working with the Martzes to lower the SCC even more.

According to the DQA Center, Winterspring Farm provides daily milk to nearly 6,000 people, via the Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative where the milk is shipped.

Swallow said that the Five-Star recognition will help assure those people they are buying a quality product.

"It increases the confidence level of the consumer," he said.

The DQA program was formed to increase public awareness of milk quality issues and is funded by various private industries and milk producers. Its administration is funded in part by grants from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Walker Selected Granger Of The Year

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to. To be an inspiration in your lifework is a pleasure when you love what you're doing."

Walker said church, family, and the Grange have been the center of her life. She remembers traveling around the state to take on new members.

The 129th annual session of the Pennsylvania State Grange opened in Altoona last Saturday when Grange Master (president) William A. Steel delivered his opening remarks. Secretary of Agriculture Samuel Hayes, Jr. also spoke.

Grangers attended seminars and business sessions on Sunday and Monday and concluded the convention on Tuesday. The presentation of awards highlighted the All-Granger Banquet.

Steel presented the Recruiter of the Year Award to Raymond Gross of the Plumsteadville Grange in Bucks County. Gross secured 15 new members. Community Service chairpersons Michael and Janet Pratt reported that Grangers throughout the commonwealth contributed more than 123,000 hours to improving their communities. Although the dollar amounts donated totaled more than \$58,000, the Pratts believe the figure is much higher because not all Granges submitted reports.

The top four Subordinate Grange winners were, in alphabetical order, Fort Granville in Mifflin County, Middletown in Bucks County, Schneeksville in



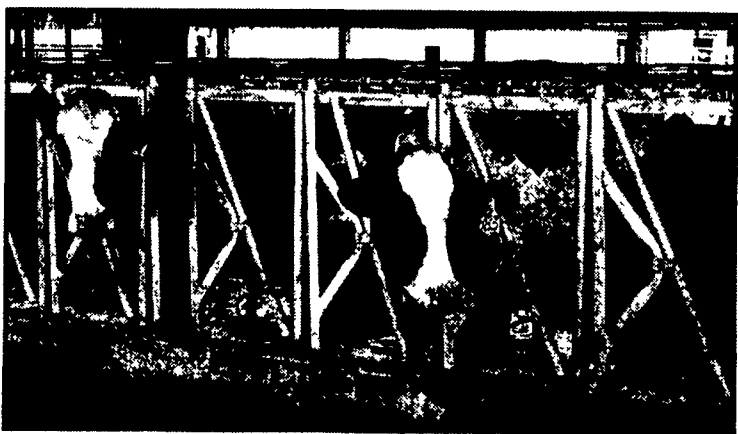
Ruth Walker, center, of the Buffalo Grange in Washington County was given the Granger of the Year Award. Congratulating her are, left, Harold Steeley, 2000 Granger of the Year, and, right, William Steel, Pennsylvania State Grange Master.

Lancaster County, and Virginville in Berks County. The Middletown Grange donated more than \$30,000 to local fire departments. The top three Pomona winners were Centre County, Lancaster-Northampton, and Montgomery-Northumberland-

The Community Recognition Award of the Year went to Deputy George Palombo of Beaver County Firefighters of the Year went to Andrew Kuffie, Jr., of Beaver County, and Teacher of the Year went to Roger Bowman of Berks County.

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