

Rotational Grazing Right Choice For Pond Hollow Farm Beef Operation

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MARTINS CREEK (Northampton Co.) — Elwood and Pauline Fox of Pond Hollow Farm, Martins Creek, know they made the right decision in converting their farming operation to intensive rotational grazing.

When asked if there were any regrets or anything they would have done differently, without hesitation both said, "We wish we would have started this in the 1950s."

Until the early 1980s, Pond Hollow Farm was a typical dairy farm. After the couple decided it was time to get out of the dairy business, one of their sons ran the dairy for a few years. When the decision was made to completely shut down the dairy operation, the couple had to decide what direction they were going to take in regards to the future of the family farm.

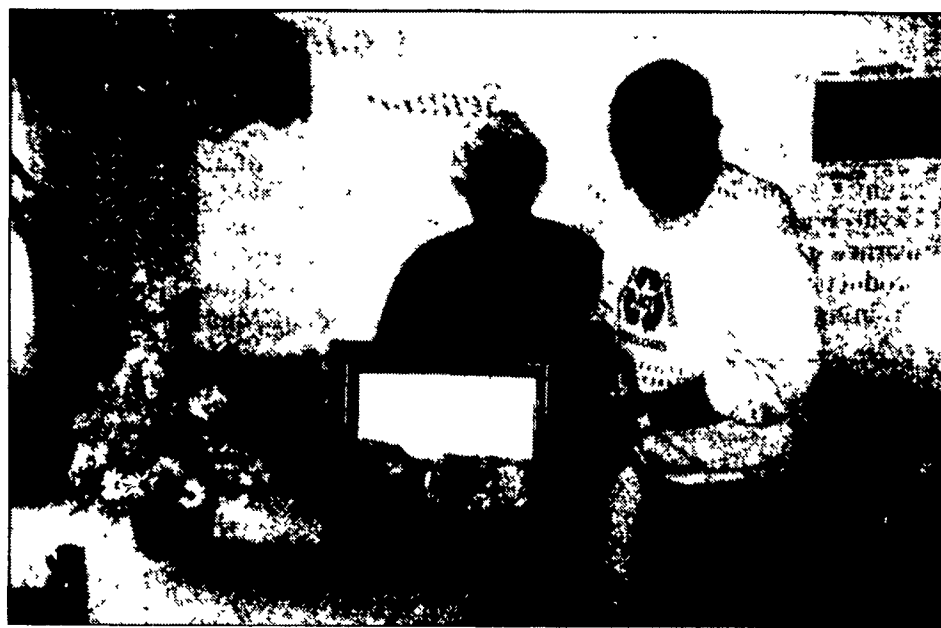
They had old machinery and had to decide if they were going to buy new equipment or do something where they could utilize the equip-

ment they had. About that time, the couple went to a meeting about rotational grazing and this idea got their interest.

The farm had been feeding heifers for a dairy from New Jersey for about eight years. The Foxes were going back and forth across the state line to pick up calves or drop off heifers that were close to freshening as often as three times each week. Occasionally the dairy would transfer a cow and her calf back to Pond Hollow Farm if the cow didn't fit into the milking line. After a while the couple started realizing that letting the cow raise the calf on pasture was an idea they wanted to pursue.

They noticed that the Holsteins did not fatten on grass alone and decided to start using beef bulls for their breeding. Through a very affordable agreement with another farmer, Fox leases a bull each year.

He exposes the cows to the bull from July 18 through Nov. 1 for freshening to start around May 1. Calving lasts for a three-month period.



Elwood and Pauline Fox celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a gathering of family and friends in November. One of their friends painted this farm scene for the couple and presented it to them as a gift.

Most of the bulls Fox has leased were Hereford or Simmental. He also purchased one or two Belted Galloway bulls. You can now see the beef influence coming into his herd.

Fortunately, the Foxes have experienced very few calving problems. Fox feels this is probably due to the fact that the cows are not fed grain and thus avoid overconditioning.

Any cows that do not breed are culled from the herd.

The couple takes care of castrating the calves. One benefit of seeing the beef influence in their herd is the absence of horns, thus eliminating another procedure that had to be done in the past.

Shortly after switching to the

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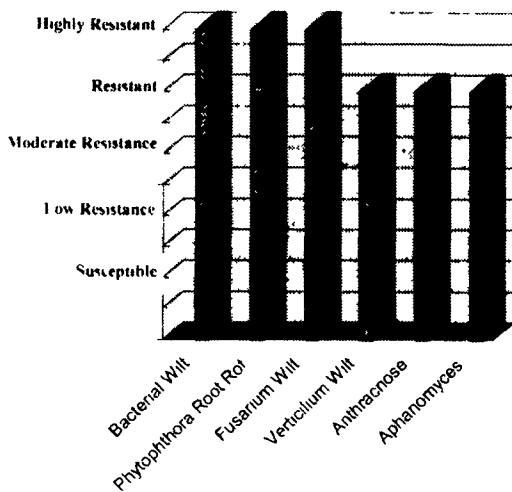


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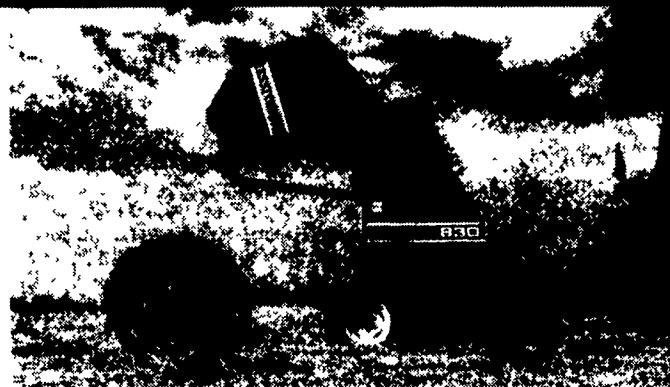
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