

'Letting Go' Brings Devotion To Dairy Industry

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spacious farmhouse.

Establishing friendships with people in the new community proved easy because the Mowrers immediately found a friendly church community and became active in the local Farm Bureau. Mowrer is a board member of the county Farm Bureau and had been on the county extension board for several years.

Last summer, the Mowrers expanded the barn and increased the herd size to 260 milking cows. They put curtains on all four sides of the barn for optimum ventilation. The barn has room for 200 more head. The milking parlor was expanded from a double-7 to a double-10 with automatic takeoff. One person takes care of everything in the milking parlor.

"We saw a big difference in production when we expanded," Mowrer said. Before that, they were running 220 cows through 160 stalls. The added room decreased cow stress and the herd responded with increased production, body condition, and all-around great improvement, Mowrer said.

They also brought the dry cows back instead of using rented facilities. This allows Mowrer to keep better control over them.

"I really recommend not overcrowding," Mowrer said. "It really pushes back first-calf heifers."

The Mowrers also tore down an old bank barn and replaced it with a pole shed used for equipment and hay storage.

Five full-time employees and several part-time have designated duties. One is a herdsman, two are responsible for milking and feeding, another is a mechanic, and another oversees the field work. Mowrer works as manager and fills in wherever needed. He also takes care of weekend milking.

The Mowrers grow their own feed and process it, including high-moisture corn. They take soybeans to be roasted in a nearby mill. The majority of the feed is stored in trench silos.

Mowrer said that he is changing to more no-till practices that work better on the hilly ground.

One of the most frustrating problems is dealing with deer damage. The family has counted as many as 100 deer on their acreage at one time. They can't raise any sweet corn, and Mowrer figures deer easily destroy 20 acres of field corn.

"We live next to two private hunting clubs, and they can't control where the deer wander."

By law, Mowrer can shoot deer on his acreage if they are damaging crops, but the conflict that causes with the hunting club members isn't worth it.

"Sometimes I see the deer use

their hooves to kick open the ag bags to eat high-moisture corn right out of the bag," Mowrer said.

Mowrer believes to be successful, "It is important for farmers to stay on top of things and keep up with the times. Don't fall behind."

Mowrer reads a lot to keep up with new technology.

He thinks the biggest future concern is water supply. "Farmers use water more wisely compared to other industries," Mowrer said. "Farm acreage allows water to filter through the ground and replenish the water supply, unlike water runoff from shopping centers."

Several times a month, Nathan makes the 3½ hour drive to the farm to help with the work. Nathan said, "I like college, but I miss the farm. I know that farming is what I want to do."

Mom, a full-time school teacher, helps coordinate Becky's scheduled appearances, and prepares dairy beverages and cheese cubes for her promotions.

Mom is also a community 4-H club leader with 32 kids, meeting at the Mowrers' home.

As a wife, mother, career person, 4-H leader, and a person active in church and community events, Janet said, "It's important to keep life in balance." She credits having a good family to depend upon.

Rebecca said, "This year I'm



The Mowrers recently expanded this barn and added curtains on all four sides for optimum ventilation.

have grown spiritually," Becky said.

In school, Becky participates in speech club, which requires three competitions annually. This year in school competitions, Becky presented the same speech she had used in pageant competition and was named best senior high school speaker in Hunting-



Becky and her brother share interest in raising Beagles. Now at college, Nathan misses the farm and returns whenever he can to help out.

“If they want to work on the farm, that’s great. But I want them to be free to be involved in extracurricular activities. They (the children) have a whole life ahead of them to work. They should have some responsibilities, but it’s not fair to kids to be so tied down to the farm that they miss out on activities with friends.”

Michael Mowrer

devoted to doing as much as I can for dairy promotion.”

She credits Juniata Valley School District for being supportive in allowing her flexibility in fulfilling many promotional activities.

Her “shy” personality is being replaced with confidence, Becky said of the experience she has gained from hundreds of speaking appearances before both agricultural and nonfarming events.

“Being dairy princess has impacted my life in every area. I have grown and matured, and become more comfortable with myself. I know who I am. And I

don County.

“Occasionally I get butterflies,” Becky said, “but I enjoy speaking. I always write my own speeches and try to tailor them to the group.”

At school, Becky presents announcements every morning over the school’s public address system. She also goes to a county radio station every month, where she is interviewed about upcoming ag events, dairy promotions, and related news, and prepares 30-second radio spots that are broadcast several times daily.

Becky’s career goal is to become a midwife or obstetrician, a dream she has held on to since third grade.

In the meantime, she enjoys telling others about the value of dairy products, the facts about lactose intolerance, and meeting awesome people.

She especially enjoyed promoting milk at events such as the Special Olympics, Easter Seals, Girl Scouts, and Cub Scouts.

One of her more unusual promotions was participating in a talent show at the Huntingdon Fall Festival. Becky presented her skit as her talent.

She said, “I did it more to get the milk message to a different audience than entering it for a talent.

For county events, mom or dad serve as chaperones, and for state events, coordinators for the Pennsylvania Dairy Princess and Pageant take charge.



Fulfilling the role of wife, mother, career person, 4-H leader, and someone active in church and community events, Janet said, “It’s important to keep life in balance.”

Becky is treasurer and acting vice president of her school’s Blue Juniata FFA Chapter. She is a member of the 4-H Beef Club, the Shaver Creek Community Club, and treasurer of the county 4-H council.

“I used to participate in a lot more 4-H clubs and school clubs, but I had to give up those to concentrate on dairy promotions,” Rebecca said.

She continues involvement in the schools’ SADD, library club, select chorus, senior high band, and chorus. She is also active in her church youth group.

A brochure with the Mowrer family’s favorite recipes using dairy products is available. Send a stamped, self-addressed, business-size envelope to PDPPS, 23515 Range Rd., Union City, PA 16438.

Here is one you’re sure to enjoy during the upcoming berry season. Make sure you clip it.

Strawberry Pretzel Salad
 2 cups crushed pretzels
 ¾ cup butter, melted
 3 tablespoons sugar
 8-ounces cream cheese, softened
 8-ounces whipped cream
 1 cup sugar
 6-ounce box strawberry-flavored Jell-O
 2 cups boiling water
 20-ounces frozen strawberries
 Mix together crushed pretzels, butter, and 3 tablespoons sugar. Press into 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 400 degrees for 8 minutes.

Combine cream cheese, whipped cream, and 1 cup sugar. Spread over pretzel crust.

Mix Jell-O with boiling water, add frozen berries. Stir until berries soften and Jell-O starts to thicken. Gently pour mixture on top of cream cheese layer. Refrigerate. Sprinkle pretzels over top before serving.



Becky has six of her own animals to show. Here she and her dad take a moment to pet the lone Brown Swiss, owned by Becky’s sister Abby.