

Snowstorm Challenges Producers Across Southeast Pa.

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After weathering the first big snow, the Glick family's Holsteins experienced a second deluge when the roof, snow load and all, caved in Tuesday morning.

At 8:30 a.m., the trussed roof fell in on the 49 Holsteins below, according to Jonas Glick, Leola farm owner. "They all walked out with scratches," he said. "It was surprising, the way it looked. Some of them, of course, were trapped until we got to them."

The morning milking, which began at 5 a.m., was already completed. Glick's son Samuel operates the dairy.

The roof, built in 1993, was already weighted with the first snow load when the wind blew snow from the other, steeper-sloped roof two feet above. The additional snow proved too big a load.

"When we get wet snow, I think about it (shoveling it off), but this snow was dry and fluffy, so I never gave it a thought," said Samuel Glick.

Instead of the trussed roof, "it's going to be a new design," he said.

The Glicks were hoping to have the barn under cover to milk that evening, with help from the 50-60 volunteers that showed up at the farm throughout the day.

Jonas Glick is "not sure" how the word got around so quickly.

"One man told the next, I guess," he said. "We had the fire company here, too — I guess that's how it got around."

The cows were relocated outdoors, where they snacked at a bunk feeder all day. "We kept feed in front of them all day long — they were happy," said Samuel.

Hauling Milk

Milk haulers throughout the region worked overtime from Sunday through Wednesday to keep bulk tanks on dairy farms from overflowing before the milk truck could reach them.

"For the conditions, things went really well," said Clair Hoover of H&H Liquid Transport, New Oxford, Adams County. "We have a lot to be thankful for."

"There was very little milk dumped. We put chains on the trucks and made use of all our equipment."

Hoover said that all 27 of his crew of full- and part-time drivers were on duty making the rounds to 100 dairy farm clients in Adams, Lancaster, and York counties, as well Frederick County, Md.

H&H uses 16 tractor-trailer trucks to haul milk for companies and cooperatives including Rutter's, Land O' Lakes, Maryland and Virginia, Dairy Farmers of America, and Cumberland. Some of the milk goes as far south as Georgia.

"It was rough going for the drivers," Hoover said. "They were maxed out."

According to Hoover, the snow was the most challenging storm since the blizzard of 1996. That blizzard dropped 30 inches of snow in southeastern Pennsylvania, setting the record.



"No problem here." Scottish Highland cattle gather around the hay feeder Tuesday on the farm of Peter Sheppard, a few miles south of Hanover in York County.

Photo by Dave Lefever

Larry Mummert, York County dairy farmer, said that H&H hauled his milk out on time throughout the snow crisis.

"We've been very lucky," said Mummert, who milks about 150 Holsteins along with his family on Yellow Buttercup Farms just south of East Berlin. The farm is situated along Rt. 194, a major road and snow emergency route.

The milk truck came and went smoothly, except for one small hangup when it got stuck negotiating a corner of the lane.

"We had to pull him out," Mummert said.

Mummert is looking ahead to spring and anticipating a good crop season. He grows about 800

acres of alfalfa, corn, barley, and soybeans.

The snow helps restore groundwater levels after last year's drought, plus the long, hard freeze should serve to loosen the soil, Mummert said.

Calving Time In Virginia
Thirty inches of snow topped with sleet on Sunday night has also posed challenges to Virginia producers.

"We've had probably around 14 calves since Sunday, and we hadn't had but one or two before," said beef producer Roger Hockman, Hockman Farms.

The farm is located in Strasburg, Shenandoah County, Virginia, 80 miles west of Washington, D.C.

Hockman operates the more than 1,200-acre farm with his father, John, and brother, Wesley.

The farm's heifers are scheduled to calve within about a two-month period. "We've done this for about 10 or 15 years and we didn't expect anything like this," he said.

The commercial herd includes heifers, cows, and steers of mainly Angus but also black white face and 15-20 Charolais cattle totaling 300 head with the 150 first-calf heifers.

Since the cows have already calved, it is the first-calf heifers whose numbers are up for calving.

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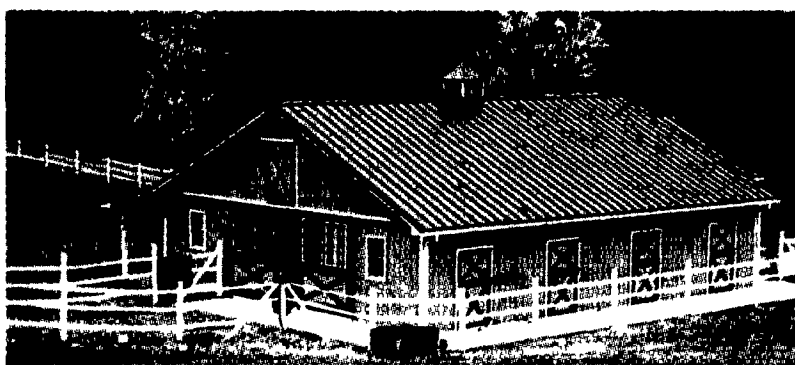
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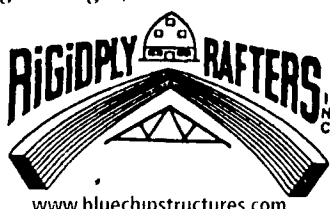
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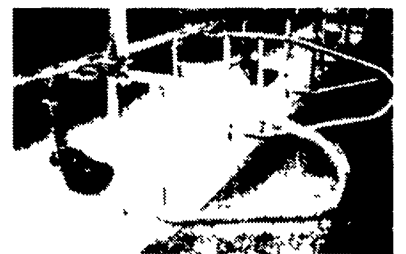


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