

Shorthorns

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well to get the most out of the breeding program. These include uterine implants to synchronize female heats, and computer-signaling heat detectors glued onto cows' rumps.

About half of of the calves born on the farm are halter-broke each year. Masonic Homes exhibits its Shorthorns at various shows, including the Pennsylvania Farm Show, the Keystone International Livestock Exhibition, the North American International Livestock Exhibition, and the Maryland Eastern Regional Show. Showing helps establish buyer contacts from across the country.

"The only reason we show is to market cattle," Stoltzfus said. The farm has sold breeding stock to buyers as far away as Texas and Nebraska.

Masonic Homes is part of a four-farm Shorthorn marketing arrange-

ment called Mid-Atlantic Genetics. One of the partners in this venture is the McElhane farm of western Pennsylvania. The group also includes a farm from Maryland and one from Ohio.

"The four of us cooperate together in marketing semen and bulls," Stoltzfus said, noting that the group is also beginning to work together on selling freezer beef. "It's a real loosely made arrangement. It's done on a hand-shake."

A regular marketing event put on by the co-op is what they call their Preferred Stock Sale. It has taken place on the first Saturday after Labor Day for the past seven years, with all intentions to continue into the future.

More than 30 females and about a dozen bulls are sold for production per year, plus about 15 head that go to club youth.

Shorthorns are known for easygoing temperaments. Their colors range from dark red to roan to white, showing any amount of variegation among

them. Many Shorthorns are actually hornless.

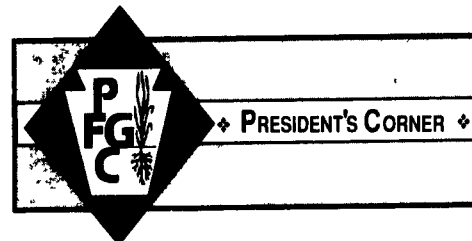
"Polled Shorthorns sounds like an oxymoron," Stoltzfus said. "But there are more polled than horned."

Beside one full-time employee on Masonic Homes farm, some part-time help is needed to prepare calves for the show ring. Elyssa Hevner from Union Bridge, Md., is an education major at nearby Elizabethtown College. She helps halter-break calves at Masonic Homes during her free time on spring afternoons.

The farm gives her a chance to keep up one of her favorite hobbies while in college, said Hevner, who raises Shorthorns on her grandfather's farm in Maryland.

Along with the farm's commitment to youth and good Shorthorn breeding and marketing, grassland management is becoming integral to the Masonic Homes' practice of looking toward the future.

According to Director Tracy, "Grazing is part of our long-range planning."



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meat and milk. We have been given grass, legumes and other plants which stabilize the soil and, most importantly, feed our livestock which in turn feed us.

What a great system that we have been blessed with. The cow and other ruminants really are the backbone of our food system. But for some reason, many producers have removed their livestock from pasture over the years.

The cow was created to be on pasture. Of course pasture growth does not occur all year long and she does need stored feed for several months. But why do many farms feed large quantities of relatively low quality stored feed when during over half the year the cow can harvest her own feed? High quality pasture is extremely close to a balanced TMR ration and it only costs about 2 cents per pound of dry matter.

At the same time, while the cow is working for you to harvest her own forage, she is also in a clean environment. That is assuming the farm manager is managing his pastures. Ah hah! Here lies the answer that many farmers and the support industry — including many in the universities — have forgotten about pasture.


While U.S. agriculture put its efforts into mechanized systems focusing on corn, beans, alfalfa and other grains, we simply forgot about pasture. However, in many other parts of the world, advancements in pasture management over the last several decades have been huge.

How can New Zealand ship milk around the world without subsidies? The answer is in the efficiency of the pasture system! Yes, we are not in New Zealand, but we can take advantage of many aspects of their system others around the world. Managed pasture systems offer huge potential for strengthening our dairy and livestock economy. In fact, managed grazing is now rapidly moving into the early adoption stage of acceptance.





Many farmers are making grazing work very well, but just think how much more we can improve. We need the industry and the universities to support its advancement. Graziers are just learning to walk. Think of the potential when all the pieces of the puzzle come together for our part of the world.

I am very excited about the future of the dairy industry in Pennsylvania. The potential is huge! To quote Dr. John Roche of Dexcel, a New Zealand applied research organization, "Pennsylvania dairy farmers have the potential to have dairy profits above \$1,000 per cow at \$12 milk."


Managed grazing systems will be the backbone of making it happen. Stored forage systems will always be needed but should be used to supplement the primary grazing system. John Roche and his brother Tom from Ireland were featured speakers at The Pennsylvania Grazing Conferences in March. We have much to learn from around the world and from each other. The Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council hopes to be part of that process.



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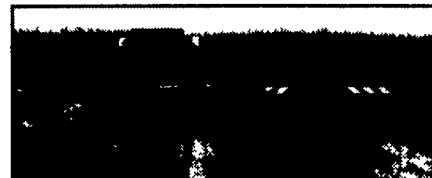


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