



Home Is Where Your Heart Is

Deborah Benner knew farming had changed her forever when she realized that she had, without thinking about it, altered the way she introduced herself. "I used to say, 'Hi I'm Deborah Benner and I'm married to a dairy farmer,'" she says. "A year after I started working here full-time I noticed that I started introducing myself as 'Hi, I'm Deborah Benner and I'm a dairy farmer.'"

By Michelle Kunjappu

She had never envisioned using those words to describe herself. An actress and model with agents in Los Angeles and New York, Deborah Benner had lived and worked in a world far removed from the rolling acres of Lancaster County that she now calls home.

Bright Lights, Big City

Pursuing her career in New York, Deborah picked up a trade magazine and noticed an advertisement for the "Noah" show at Sight and Sound Theatres in Strasburg, Pennsylvania. Her interest piqued, she decided to audition. After getting the part, she made arrangements to move to Lancaster for six months, renting a cottage in the countryside. The cottage was owned by a relative of Arlin Benner, a lifetime dairy farmer who knocked on Deborah's door one day, met her, and proposed two weeks later.

"I knew nothing about dairying," she says. "The first time I visited him on the farm, I went looking for him in my high heels and a skirt and wondered what on the earth that smell was."

Reality Sets In

They were married four months later and she met with the reality of farm life almost immediately. The newlyweds returned from their honeymoon amidst a snowstorm that kept the hired help away—and



Taking their cue from their capering calves and one of Deborah's oft-used expressions, Arlin and Deborah Benner, Mount Joy, Lancaster County, aptly named their property "Yippee Farms." Andy Terrell, account executive, and the Benners have worked together since March 2004. The scripture that accompanies the logo, which ends in "... and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall," followed soon after they settled on the farm name.



The front porch of Rocky Acre Bed and Breakfast beckons those who have come to the farm for vacation. The bed and breakfast is located on Arlin's parent's property, an adjacent farm, and operated by his parents and sister. Young visitors can enjoy not only farm toys but feed a newborn calf, gather eggs from the henhouse, ride a miniature horse, or pet a goat or kitten.



The calves were Deborah's first responsibility when she began working on the farm, and she continues to enjoy watching carefully over her small charges.

required the new bride's help. After she helped milk in freezing temperatures and then hiked up a snow-covered hill, she remembers collapsing on the floor of their mobile home, thinking, "What have I done?"

For almost two years after they were married, she continued to pursue her acting career. However, Deborah was often traveling and Arlin finally asked her to work on the farm full-time.

Shortly after she decided to stay on the farm, Deborah and Arlin took the opportunity to purchase a neighboring farm. Two years later they were able to rent another adjacent farm.

Growing Responsibilities

With the additional land came more responsibilities, and Deborah threw herself into the job, transitioning from solely keeping the farm's books to also helping with the calves and working on renovating the newly acquired farms.

"I think what has made the Benners successful is their hard

finances, human resources, public relations and marketing aspects of the farm, as well as speaking with and training the employees in Spanish."

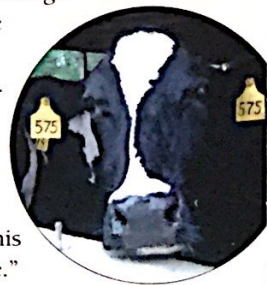
They both continue to fully appreciate and enjoy living and working among the wonderful people that make up the ag community.

she says. "With farming, that learning curve has never flattened out." Actually, many aspects of Deborah's life before farming have contributed greatly to her work on the farm. Raised in Texas, she studied for a semester in Spain and taught Spanish for three years in high school. Now she can not only easily train the employees—many of whom speak only Spanish—for farm work, but also help them buy

off. Deciding she wanted a say in how the farm's dollars were spent, she served on the National Dairy Board, where she could lend her experience to help mold the dairy business's advertising campaigns.

Additionally, she had worked as a business manager at a doctor's office in New York City, a fact that helped her to quickly take on the role of bookkeeper for the farm.

She became especially interested in learning the in's and out's of farm management "because of the bottom line," she says. "I did the books, and I needed to know what would make this farm profitable."



"By seeing the opportunities in renting two adjoining farms with dairy facilities but feeding and managing from one, they are able to leverage their investment, continue to grow and milk more cows," says Terrell.

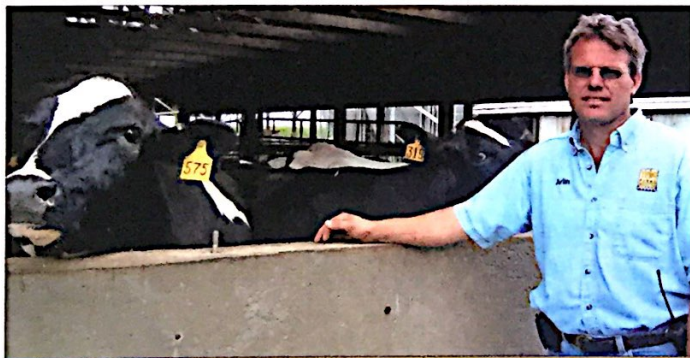
The Next Move

In the midst of this involvement in agriculture, Deborah is looking toward making the move from a mobile home—which the couple has lived in all of their married life—to the new home they are building on the property.

Arlin has lived in the mobile home for 18 years since he was 22 because he expected to move away and begin a business elsewhere. "So now I feel like we're staying, and putting down roots [with this new home]", he says.

As for Deborah, her years of extensive travel and enjoying the luxuries that metropolitan life had to offer did not keep her in the city, but instead has helped her to appreciate farm life. "I had been there, done that, so it didn't mean anything to me," she says.

Although she had loved her acting and modeling career, she now considers farming to be her career choice. "When I see the investment in people and animals, it's rewarding," she says. ❖



Lifetime dairy farmer Arlin Benner, along with his wife Deborah and 12 full-time and four to five part-time workers, oversees 700 cows milked at three separate properties, 540 heifer replacements and 650 acres divided between seven rented farms.

groceries, make appointments or purchase a car.

Also, with many members of her family being physicians, Deborah had planned on becoming a doctor and had taken pre-med classes. Consequently, her pharmaceutical knowledge benefits her as she helps to oversee the health of the farm's 700 cows and 540 heifers.

Working as an account executive at a large advertising firm in Texas readied Deborah to help the farm on yet another front. As she worked on the

books, she noticed a deduction on each check, asked Arlin about it, and was thus introduced to the dairy check

work and team effort," says Andy Terrell, MAFC account executive who has been working with the Benners since March 2004.

"They complement each other. Arlin has excellent cow, operational and strategic skills. Deborah excels at managing the

Even with its daily measure of hard work, farm life agrees with Deborah. With her previous jobs, "I had a learning curve, and I loved it, but then that would flatten out and I would get bored,"



Volume 10, Issue 4
\$3.95



A PUBLICATION OF MIDATLANTIC FARM CREDIT

LEADER

IN THIS ISSUE

There's No Place Like A Home: The Morris Family of Rocky Ridge, MD	4
Home Is Where Your Heart Is: Yippee Farms of Lancaster County	6
You Can Go Home Again: Lazy Day Farms of Vienna, MD	8
How to Make Your Home Someone Else's Dream Home	10
MAFC Kids	12
A Holiday Getaway: Exploring Bethlehem, PA	14
Around Our Town	16
Nominating Committee	17
Annual Meeting Dates	17
Financials	18



Home Is Where Your Heart Is

Deborah Benner knew farming had changed her forever when she realized that she had, without thinking about it, altered the way she introduced herself. "I used to say, 'Hi I'm Deborah Benner and I'm married to a dairy farmer,'" she says. "A year after I started working here full-time I noticed that I started introducing myself as 'Hi, I'm Deborah Benner and I'm a dairy farmer.'"

By Michelle Kuniyippu

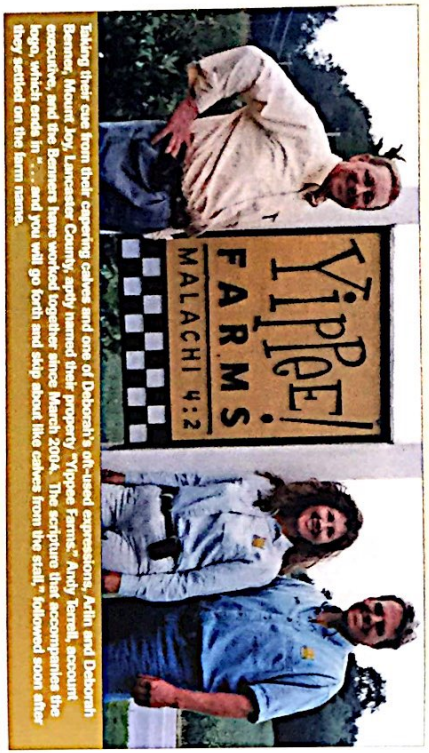
She had never envisioned using those words to describe herself. An actress and model with agents in Los Angeles and New York, Deborah Benner had lived and worked in a world far removed from the rolling acres of Lancaster County that she now calls home.

Bright Lights, Big City

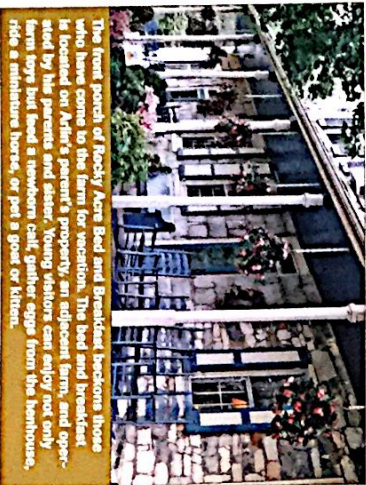
Pursuing her career in New York, Deborah picked up a trade magazine and noticed an advertisement for the "Noah's" show at Sight and Sound Theatres in Strasburg, Pennsylvania. Her interest piqued, she decided to audition. After getting the part, she made arrangements to move to Lancaster for six months, renting a cottage in the country side. The cottage was owned by a relative of Ailin Benner, a lifetime dairy farmer who knocked on Deborah's door one day, met her, and proposed two weeks later. "I knew nothing about dairy," she says. "The first time I visited him on the farm, I went looking for him in my high heels and a skirt and wondered what on the earth that smell was."

Reality Sets In

They were married four months later and she met with the reality of farm life almost immediately. The newby weeks returned from their honeymoon amidst a snow-storm that kept the hired help away—and



Taking their cue from their capering calves and sons of Deborah's oft-used expressions, Ailin and Deborah Benner, Mount Joy, Lancaster County, aptly named their property "Yippee Farms." Andy Korral, account executive, and the Benners have worked together since March 2004. The sculpture that accompanies the logo, which ends in "... and you will go forth and siph about like calves from the stall," followed soon after they settled on the farm name.



The front porch of Yippee Farm Bed and Breakfast beckons those who have come to the farm for vacation. The bed and breakfast is located on Ailin's parent's property, an adjacent farm, and operated by her parents and sister. Young visitors can enjoy not only farm toys but feed a newborn calf, gather eggs from the henhouse, ride a miniature horse, or pet a goat or kitten.



The calves were Deborah's first responsibility when she began working on the farm, and she continues to enjoy watching carefully over her small charges.

required the new bride's help. After she helped milk in freezing temperatures and then hiked up a snow-covered hill, she remembers collapsing on the floor of their mobile home, thinking, "What have I done?"

For almost two years after they were married, she continued to pursue her acting career. However, Deborah was often traveling and Ailin finally asked her to work on the farm full-time.

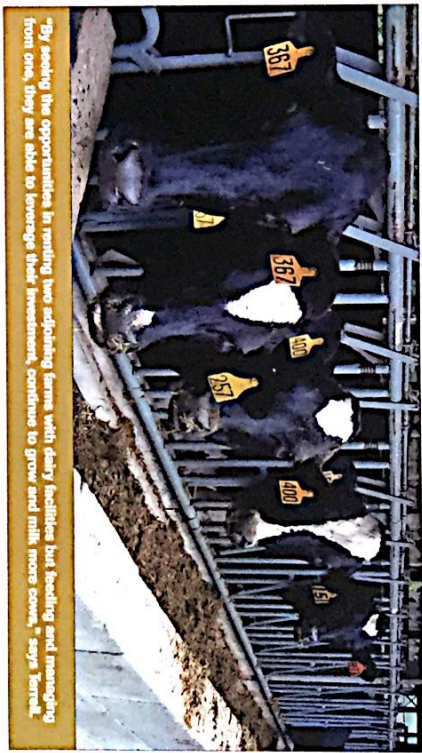
Shortly after she decided to stay on the farm, Deborah and Ailin took the opportunity to purchase a neighboring farm. Two years later they were able to rent another adjacent farm.

Growing Responsibilities
With the additional land came more responsibilities, and Deborah threw herself into the job, transitioning from solely keeping the farm's books to also helping with the calves and working on renovating the newly acquired farms.

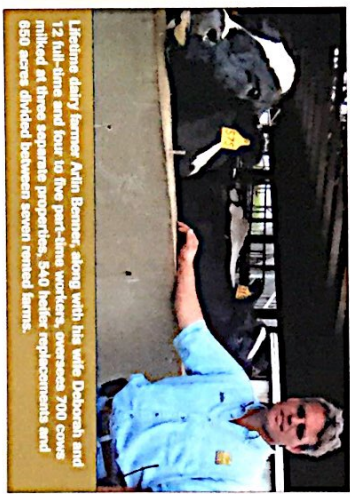


"I think what has made the Benners successful is their hard

finances, human resources, public relations and marketing aspects of the farm, as well as speaking with and training the employees in Spanish. They both continue to fully appreciate and enjoy living and working among the wonderful people that make up the ag community.



"By seizing the opportunities in renting two adjoining farms with dairy facilities but feeding and managing front ones, they are able to leverage their investment, continue to grow and milk more cows," says Terrill.



Lifetime dairy farmer Ailin Benner, along with the wife Deborah and 12 full-time and four to five part-time workers, oversees 700 cows milked at three separate properties, 540 heifer replacements and 650 acres divided between seven rented farms.

work and team effort," says Andy Terrill. MHC account executive who has been working with the Benners since March 2004.

"They complement each other. Ailin has excellent cow, operational and strategic skills. Deborah excels at managing the

Even with its daily measures of hard work, farm life agrees with Deborah. "I had a kenneing curve and I loved it, but then that would flatten out and I would get bored."



books, she noticed a deduction on each check, asked Ailin about it, and was thus introduced to the dairy check



The Next Move

In the midst of this involvement in agriculture, Deborah is looking toward making the move from a mobile home—which the couple has lived in all of their married life—to the new home they are building on the property.

Ailin has lived in the mobile home for 18 years since he was 22 because he expected to move away and begin a business elsewhere. "So now I feel like we're staying, and putting down roots [with this new home]," he says. As for Deborah, her years of extensive travel and enjoying the luxuries that metropolitan life had to offer did not keep her in the city, but instead has helped her to appreciate farm life. "I had been there, done that, so it didn't mean anything to me," she says.

Although she had loved her acting and modeling career, she now considers farming to be her career choice. "When I see the investment in people and animals, it's rewarding," she says.