

Mount Joy farm featured on TV

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Mount Joy's own Yippee Farms was recently featured on the Discovery Channel's popular series, Dirty Jobs.

The 700-acre complex of dairy farms centered around 880 Pinkerton Road is responsible for a large tanker of milk every day, and with over a thousand cattle to account for, the job gets very dirty

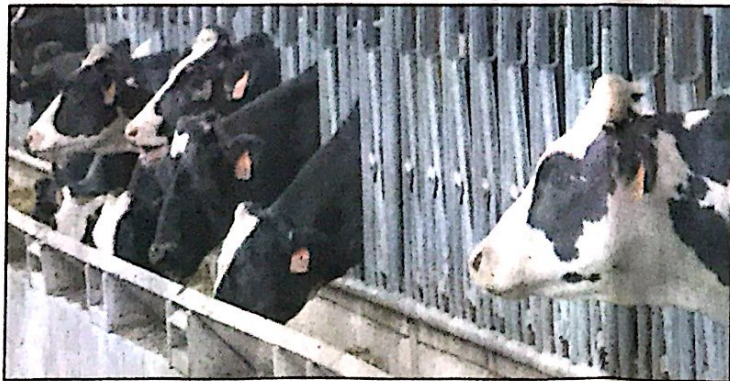
indeed.

Co-owner and self-avowed "dairy-woman" Deborah Benner helps run the farms with her husband Arlin and 18 employees.

"It's twenty-four seven, that's for sure," said Benner of the hard work farming entails.

Dirty Jobs was most interested in hoof maintenance, a crucial part of large-scale dairy farming.

"They filmed last March, and the show (See FARM, Page 8A)



(photos by Raymond McKeeby)
Jason Charles, pictured above, performs routine hoof maintenance at Yippee Farms in Mount Joy. Pictured at left, cows line up for feed at Yippee Farms.

•Farm

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aired just a few weeks ago," said Benner. "Our hoof-trimmer Ami sent them some information and they were interested. Hoof maintenance is high order around here-- all the girls need to have their feet trimmed twice a year or their hooves will keep growing and their feet will get sore, and they won't want to get up and feed."

Hoof maintenance is largely a development of modern farming, explained Benner. Since the cows stay mostly inside on rubber mats, their hooves do not wear down. Thus, the occasional pedicure is required. In addition to the "big trim" twice a year, individual cows are continually monitored for foot problems, and if anyone is sore or limping, they are seen to right away.

"You have a cow go lame and you'll lose them," she said.

In addition to trimming, foot baths are utilized to soak the cows' feet in solutions that clean and strengthen their hooves. A nutritionist adjusts feed rations every week to keep the cattle in optimal shape, and clean shavings are replaced every week to keep the cows' udders clean.

"We ask a lot of our girls, so we have to help them give us what we want," Benner said.

Just like the big business of dairy farming, there is much more to Deborah Benner's story than is immediately apparent.

Originally an actress from New York City, she met Arlin

while working on a show in Lancaster. They were married a few months later, and a real-life "Green Acres" was the result.

"I had lived in New York and Los Angeles," she said. "So I knew nothing about farming. Zero. We originally worked for Arlin's dad, Galen. I quickly learned that it was really good every time it rained, and I would say 'yippee!' And when a heifer had a calf to replenish the herd, I would do the same thing. Arlin joked that if we ever bought a farm of our own, we would call it Yippee Farm. He was just kidding, but when we bought his father out, I reminded him. He said 'no way,' but I just said 'yes, we're naming it Yippee Farm.'"

Deborah is also responsible for the scripture reference, Malachi 4:2, found at the bottom of the farms' logo.

"I'm responsible for taking care of the calves," she said. "They spend eight weeks in single stalls, and then we move them to a group area. When they are in a big barn, they just go nuts and kick up their heels. It is the cutest thing. I wanted an old testament reference, because I have a lot of jewish friends. God gave me Malachi 4:2, which reads: 'for those who revere my name, the son of righteousness will rise with healing in his wings and you will go out skipping and leaping like calves released from the stall.'"

Those looking for more information on Yippee Farms can visit them on the web at www.yippee-farms.com.