

cowsrus1@ptd.net

**READ**  
Every page online

www.farmshine.net

# FARMSHINE

We rise every week to cover farmers and agribusinesses

Farmshine • Volume 35, Number 51 • \$15 one year

Mailed the day before

August 29, 2014



The Benner Family of Yippeel Farms. From left are Valera, 10, Diana, 6, Deb and Arlin, Oksana, 14, Yarik, 4, and Nikita, 4. Please see pages 12-13.

Photo by Sherry Bunting

**PERIODICAL • DO NOT DELAY**

Sherry's Market Moos .....	3	Salty nutrition panel .....	15
Risk management event .....	5	Holstein field day .....	20-21
Lancaster DHIA .....	7	Jersey popularity noted .....	23
Top Guernsey herd .....	14	Corn silage trials .....	28

**THE WEEKLY DAIRY FARM FAMILY MAGAZINE**

*Yippee!*

# Ingredients for success abundantly evident

By SHERRY BUNTING  
Special for Farmshine

MT. JOY, Pa. – “I’ve always appreciated the PDMP events, so I was hoping we could give people something that was of value for their time,” said Arlin Benner, who, along with his wife, Deborah, and their five children, hosted the PDMP Summer Summit earlier this month.

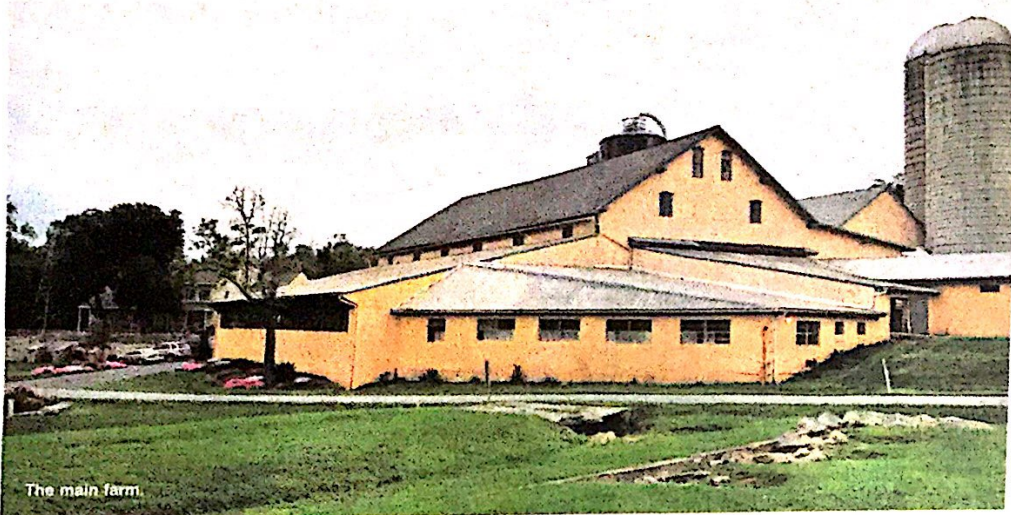
The Benners’ *Yippee!* Farms runs on basic management principles, team work and successful innovations, all three of which are abundantly evident.

The day had both an educational and summer picnic atmosphere as farmers attended with family members and employees. The 250 attendees were well-equipped with questions for the *Yippee!* team, wanting to learn more about how their 950 cows – housed in three separate locations – achieve a rolling herd average of now over 30,000 pounds with somatic cell counts averaging 140,000.

Some attendees came to see the manure digester work in the multi-site setup, others to learn more about how Benner achieves high quality forages for his high forage rations. Still others were interested in every detail of herd management from calffood through lactation.

Deborah served as a guide for one of the three wagon tours and gave snippets of the stories found in her 2012 book – *Fifth Avenue Princess to Dairy Queen* – about her journey from her previous lives as a Spanish teacher in Texas and actress in New York City to a role in “*Noah*” at Sight and Sound over 17 years ago in rural Lancaster County, where she met Arlin.

She pointed out her husband’s hard work and innovation as he gradually expanded from the 100 cows at the home farm, where



The main farm.

his parents still run their bed & breakfast, to two additional farms and a fourth to be added in the near future.

“Arlin started working from the time his foot hit that tractor pedal,” she said.

“I never really planned to milk on multiple farms, nor did I even imagine it,” Arlin recalls. “It just happened one thing at a time, as the opportunities came up. We kind of improvised and made things fit as we went along.”

“Employees here are motivated to want to do their best for the Benners,” observed herd manager Bryan Allman. “Arlin has instilled in us that we have a purpose and we take pride in our roles in the big picture on this farm.”

Arlin admits that farming the land and raising quality forages for the cows is what he enjoys most about the dairy business, so he surrounds himself with people like Bryan who are passionate about the details of managing and milking the cows.

Finding enough ground to grow enough feed for the cows is one of the biggest challenges for this operation in an area where land prices are extremely competitive for purchase and rent. The land crunch is one reason Arlin is phasing out his alfalfa fields.

“We just do not have the acreage to grow enough tonnage,” he said. “We’ll grow some ryeilage and concentrate on corn silage to utilize more homegrown nutrients in the ration.”

Benner is also increasing his use of BMR varieties to grow more digestible energy and nutrients for the ration, which is formulated at 70% corn silage and includes some ryeilage, alfalfa, wet brewers’ grain and high moisture corn.

He has done some experimenting with corn silage moisture levels. Instead of packing the trench silos with a pay loader, Arlin now uses a 3-point roller. The density is a little less, but he can harvest at his preferred 69 to 70% moisture without having juices leaking from the bunker.

“The BMR has worked well here from day-one. We saw a 3 to 5 ton per acre yield loss but a 3 to 5 pound milk increase,” he explained. So, even though his feed cost is higher because of the lost yield, his cost per hundredweight of milk shipped is lower because of the net gain in milk production.

Bob Krammes of Red Dale Ag has been the feed consultant here for 16 years. He gave the crowd a snapshot of “the man behind everything.”

“Arlin works hard, but he also works smart, and the biggest key to his success is his attitude,” Krammes explained, adding that the *Yippee!* focus is not on high production. Instead, the

turn to page 13

# Yippee! Farms from page 12

high production comes from the focus on continual improvement to have cows that are well-fed, well-managed, comfortable, healthy, and performing optimally in their reproduction.

Allman and the herd veterinarian Dr. Brenda Griffin of Lancaster Veterinary Associates noted the dairy's reproduction performance keeps a fresher herd, which in turn improves herd milk production averages. The herd average seldom exceeds 180 days in milk, they explained.

A Select-Detect system is used to identify heats in heifers, while mature cows get pre-synch and ov-synch regimens and are bred in a 10-hour window of standing heats. "Most heats are detected from 5 p.m. to 3 a.m.," said Dr. Griffin, noting heifers are bred to calve at 22 months of age.

Meeting that benchmark begins in calthood, Griffin stressed, adding that the Benners do a good job with colostrum management — feeding 2 quarts 2x/day for a few days and then 4 quarts of pasteurized waste milk 2x/day. Weaning begins at 7 weeks, then by 8 weeks, calves are moved in groups of 9 from the row of individual wood huts at the home farm, where Arlin grew up, to the renovated tobacco barn at the same location.

"That's where they learn to compete for food," Deborah explains. "It's a labor intensive job, but one of the most important jobs on the farm, making sure the calves get all of the food and water they need to really grow."

That process of watching the calves grow is what she enjoys most about life on the farm. "Taking them as babies, they get to know you," says Deborah. "I like to look around knowing all the girls here I've raised."

She said the calf chores also provide opportunities to teach the children, ranging in age from 4 to 14, how to care for animals. "These animals pay for our food and our home," she says. "The kids learn that we all have a stake in this family farm. Even more than that, is the higher calling to care for God's creatures."

The home farm is where the 2-year-olds are milked as the double-8 parlor is narrower than the parlors at the other farms; 120 first-calf heifers peak at an average 90 pounds/day.

The "Randy farm," so named for the person who sold it to Arlin, houses 280 mature cows and first-calvers, clocking in with peaks averaging 98 pounds.

The main Yippee! Farm houses the balance of the herd, peaking at an average 109 pounds, for a 3-facility average production just over 90 pounds/cow/day. This is achieved with a one-group TMR built on excellent forages and a cow-focused environment.

Stall beds, for example, consist of pasture mat topped with memory foam and then that is topped with deep bedded recycled shavings from the pen pack barn after those shavings have been put through a spreader and stored under roof.

There are no milk weights in any of the parlors, so Arlin has instilled in his employees the priority of checking temperatures and ketones every day for the first 14 to 21 days post-calving, and to treat accordingly.

"How does Arlin get people on board to his way of thinking? He has a genuine respect for people and encourages his employees with a shared sense of purpose and enthusiasm for their success," Krammes observed. "He gives back, has a ready smile, and communicates simply with an attitude of teamwork that is contagious."

Teamwork is what makes the scattered setup work. Time is taken to feed, clean, bed and walk the barns. Not only are the wooden calf huts cleaned by hand, the cows are fed TMR batches that are mixed at the main farm and transported to the other two farms where feed is dropped from the large mixer wagon and carted to bunks.

Even though the three facilities are overcrowded by 20%, stalls are available for the cows to get enough rest due to the 3x/day milking. Furthermore, Arlin and his nutritionist believe the overcrowding, with good bunk management, helps develop a more competitive cow. TMRs are mixed and feed put down with the goal of no refusals and very little waste.

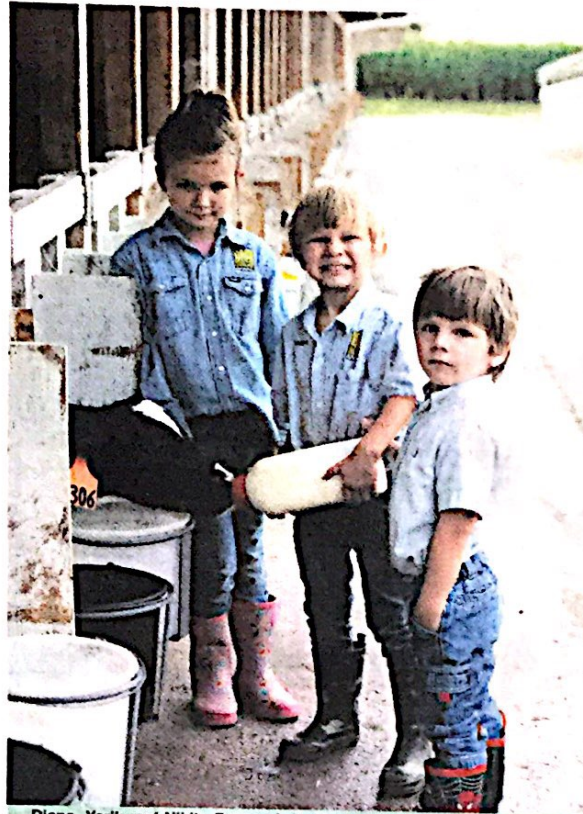
All three farms have pens for prefresh and calving, but the dry cows are centralized in a dry cow barn the Benners added at the "Randy farm." The milk cow population here was previously "pushing the limits" at 200 cows, so Arlin modified the back-in and drop-feed area to add freestalls for an additional 80-plus milking cows.

Arlin began investing in this farm from day-one of renting it, before purchase. The payback was milking more cows and more comfortable cows.

In Deborah's mind, one of their best overall investments has been the pasteurizer. At first it was something she resisted, but it has improved calf health and allowed them to feed more milk to have calves double their birthweight within the first 60 days of life. Griffin said research shows how accomplishing this level of early growth translates to 1500 pounds more milk in a heifer's first lactation and 1000 pounds more milk per lactation thereafter.

Arlin sees the farm's best investment to-date as the BMR corn silage and the manure digester — subjects of their own for a future edition of Farmshine.

However, the investment that was most obvious in touring the farm and talking with the folks who work for and with the Benners, is their investment in good people who like their jobs.



Diana, Yarik and Nikita Benner help their mom feed newborn calves in the early morning at Yippee! Farms.



Oksana washes bottles after the calves are fed. Photos by Sherry Bunting



Valera Benner gives starter feed to calves at the home farm.

The Benners have a knack for team-building that has overcome the challenges of operating a large and growing multi-site dairy where employees move from site to site to feed, manage, milk, and care for the cattle.

All things come full circle, says Deborah. She and Arlin adopted five children from Ukraine over the past few years. She shared some history of the country, telling how Ukraine was known as the breadbasket of the world in the days before the Russian Revolution and the turmoil that followed.

Mennonite farmers, many having come generations earlier from Germany to farm the fertile soil of Ukraine, later fled to America under the Soviet regime. History tells of women sewing seeds into pockets of their dresses to sow in the soil of their new homes in America.

Today, the Benners are sowing seeds of respect, humility, encouragement, stewardship and teamwork, not just with their suddenly large family, but also among their team of employees who manage the particular cow care at the heart of their herd's health and high production managed in no-frills facilities that have been improved and cobbled together over time.



## Committed to Agriculture. Committed to our Customers.

National Penn has been ranked the 28th largest agricultural business lender in the U.S.\*  
 With over 160 years of agricultural lending experience, National Penn's Ag team understands your business and can offer loans in virtually every segment of the agriculture industry. Give us a call.

\*FDIC. Data as of 1Q2014  
 Based on total dollar volume.  
 Equal Opportunity Lender  
 Member FDIC

717.925.2040  
[www.nationalpenn.com](http://www.nationalpenn.com)



# Ingredients for success abundantly evident

**By SHERY BARTING**  
Special for Farmshine



**Yippeel!**

**Yippeel!** Farms is a family-owned and operated business that has grown from a small dairy farm in 1960 to a multi-faceted agricultural operation today. The farm's success is attributed to the hard work and dedication of its family members and employees. The farm is located in the town of Yippeel, New York, and is a member of the National Farmstead Preservation Act.

Feeding enough grain to grow enough feed for the cows is one of the biggest challenges facing dairy farmers today. The farm's success is attributed to the hard work and dedication of its family members and employees. The farm is located in the town of Yippeel, New York, and is a member of the National Farmstead Preservation Act.

That's where they have to compete for feed," Deborah explains. "It's a labor intensive job, but one of the most important jobs on the farm, making sure the calves get all of the food and they need to really grow."

Deborah and Adam have three children, all of whom are involved in the farm. The children are involved in the farm from a young age, and they all have a passion for agriculture. The farm's success is attributed to the hard work and dedication of its family members and employees. The farm is located in the town of Yippeel, New York, and is a member of the National Farmstead Preservation Act.

The Banners have a knack for team-building that has overcome the challenges of growing a family business. The farm's success is attributed to the hard work and dedication of its family members and employees. The farm is located in the town of Yippeel, New York, and is a member of the National Farmstead Preservation Act.

Deborah and Adam have three children, all of whom are involved in the farm. The children are involved in the farm from a young age, and they all have a passion for agriculture. The farm's success is attributed to the hard work and dedication of its family members and employees. The farm is located in the town of Yippeel, New York, and is a member of the National Farmstead Preservation Act.

Farmshine, Friday, August 29, 2014



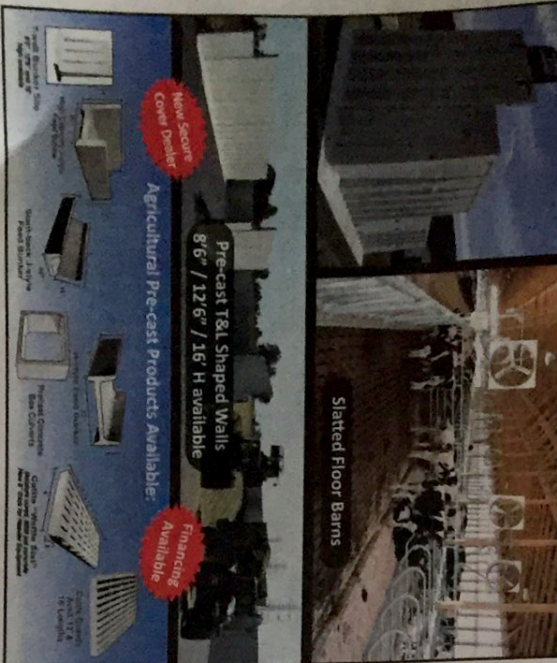
Oxanna washes bottles after the calves are fed. Photos by Sherry Barting.

Keystone Concrete  
477 E. Farmerville Rd.  
New Holland, Pa. 17357



(717) 355-2361 - corporate office  
(717) 355-9548 - fax  
keystoneconcreteproducts.com

Need additional feed storage? Call now and we can help you plan for the future.



Pre-cast T&I Shaped Walls  
8'6" / 12'6" / 16' H available

Agricultural Pre-cast Products Available:



Yippeel Farms  
MALACHI 4:2

Organic Available  
Super Sprng LLC  
717-656-6834

Having problems  
with high SCC?  
Call us, we can help!

Financing Available

## Yippeel! Farms

from page 12

high production cows, from the focus on continual improvement to have cows that are well-fed, well-managed, comfortable, healthy and performing optimally in their respective environments. Allman and the herd veterinarian Dr. Brenda Griffin of Lancaster Veterinary Associates noted the dairy's reproduction performance keeps a feeder herd, which in turn improves herd milk production averages. The herd average seldom exceeds 180 days in milk, they explained.

A Select-Direct system is used to identify heats in heifers, while mature cows get pre-synch and ov-synch regimens and are bred in a 10-hour window of standing heats. "Most heats are not bred to calve," she said. "We'll give the heifers a pre-synch on one silage to utilize some homegrown nutrients in the region."

Banner is also decreasing his use of BMR varieties to grow more digestible energy and nutrients for the ration, which is high in protein, fiber, and dry matter. He has done some experimenting with corn silage moisture levels. Instead of packing the stretch sides with a pay loader, Adam now uses a 3-point roller. The density is a little less, but he can harvest at his preferred 9 to 10 tons per acre yield loss but a 3 to 5 percent dry-matter. The BMR has worked well. "We saw a 3 to 5 ton per acre yield loss but a 3 to 5 percent dry-matter loss because of the not gain in milk production," Bob Kammes of Red Dale Ag has been the feed consultant here for 10 years. He gave the crowd a snapshot of "the man behind every thing."

There are no milk weights in any of the parlors, so Adam has installed in his employees the priority of checking temperatures and retents every day, for the first 14 to 21 days post-calving, and to treat accordingly.

Teamwork is what makes the scattered setup work. Time is taken to feed, clean, bed and walk the barns. Not only are the wooden calf huts cleaned by hand, the cows are fed TMR buckets that are mixed at the main farm and transported to the other two farms where feed is dropped from the large mixer wagon and eaten through the three facilities, are overcrowded by 20%, silage are available for the cows to get enough rest due to the 3x/day milking. Farmhouse, Adam and his numerous believe the over-crowding, with good bunk management, helps develop a more competitive cow. TMRs are mixed and fed pad down with the goal of no refusals and very little waste.

The Banners have a knack for team-building that has overcome the challenges of growing a family business. The farm's success is attributed to the hard work and dedication of its family members and employees. The farm is located in the town of Yippeel, New York, and is a member of the National Farmstead Preservation Act.

Deborah and Adam have three children, all of whom are involved in the farm. The children are involved in the farm from a young age, and they all have a passion for agriculture. The farm's success is attributed to the hard work and dedication of its family members and employees. The farm is located in the town of Yippeel, New York, and is a member of the National Farmstead Preservation Act.

Teamwork is what makes the scattered setup work. Time is taken to feed, clean, bed and walk the barns. Not only are the wooden calf huts cleaned by hand, the cows are fed TMR buckets that are mixed at the main farm and transported to the other two farms where feed is dropped from the large mixer wagon and eaten through the three facilities, are overcrowded by 20%, silage are available for the cows to get enough rest due to the 3x/day milking. Farmhouse, Adam and his numerous believe the over-crowding, with good bunk management, helps develop a more competitive cow. TMRs are mixed and fed pad down with the goal of no refusals and very little waste.

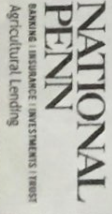
Teamwork is what makes the scattered setup work. Time is taken to feed, clean, bed and walk the barns. Not only are the wooden calf huts cleaned by hand, the cows are fed TMR buckets that are mixed at the main farm and transported to the other two farms where feed is dropped from the large mixer wagon and eaten through the three facilities, are overcrowded by 20%, silage are available for the cows to get enough rest due to the 3x/day milking. Farmhouse, Adam and his numerous believe the over-crowding, with good bunk management, helps develop a more competitive cow. TMRs are mixed and fed pad down with the goal of no refusals and very little waste.

Teamwork is what makes the scattered setup work. Time is taken to feed, clean, bed and walk the barns. Not only are the wooden calf huts cleaned by hand, the cows are fed TMR buckets that are mixed at the main farm and transported to the other two farms where feed is dropped from the large mixer wagon and eaten through the three facilities, are overcrowded by 20%, silage are available for the cows to get enough rest due to the 3x/day milking. Farmhouse, Adam and his numerous believe the over-crowding, with good bunk management, helps develop a more competitive cow. TMRs are mixed and fed pad down with the goal of no refusals and very little waste.

Farmshine, Friday, August 29, 2014



Oxanna washes bottles after the calves are fed. Photos by Sherry Barting.



NATIONAL PENN  
BANKING INSURANCE INVESTMENTS TRUST  
Agricultural Lending

Committed to Agriculture. Committed to our Customers.

National Penn has been ranked the 28th largest agricultural business lender in the U.S.®

With over 160 years of agricultural lending experience, National Penn's Ag team understands your business and can offer loans in virtually every segment of the agriculture industry. Give us a call.

\*FDIC. Data as of 12/31/14. Based on total dollar volume. Equal Opportunity Lender. Member FDIC.

www.nationalpenn.com  
717.925.2040



Yippeel! Farms gives starter feed to calves in the home farm.