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INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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Weekly column ☐Story (SCS) ☐(Other) ☒Feature (SCS) ☐(Other) ☐Editorial ☐Advertisement ☐**Gerald Forsythes—****Award winning dairy farm**By Mary Runkle
Farm Feature Editor

The Gerald Forsythes have come up with a coup in conservation. Recently, their farm was named 1970's regional sweepstakes winner for the Iowa Soil Conservation Achievement Awards.

The recognition isn't likely to change their ways because they stay far too busy for that, with 600 acres on their hands and a milking herd of 109 Holsteins in their grade A dairy six miles northwest of Drakesville.

One of nine families so honored in the state, they might have to milk a little early to go get their awards and a plaque from the Bloomfield Newspapers presented at the annual Davis County Soil Conservation District Banquet Nov. 18.

As a regional winner, they have a crack at the state title but since it's Forsythe's practice to farm to save his soil, he's a winner anyway, conservation contest or no.

Still, what made them newsworthy finalists were: 32 acres of row crops on the contour, over a mile of terraces, a half-mile of diversions, several farm ponds, erosion control structure and wildlife and tree planting area. There are 1,000 feet of open drainage ditch and almost 200 acres of renovated pasture besides 100 acres of pasture that was converted from crop land.

With a double five Herrinzhone parlor, milking their 95 cows now fresh can be done in two and a half hours. Forsythes' son, Nolen, and their son-in-law, Jack Moss, live near and sometimes do the milking and help with any of the other farm work.

Recently, they remodeled the milk house with a 12x21 foot extension to accommodate a new 1250 gallon bulk tank which sits by their old 850 gallon one. They also installed a new feed bin outside the milking parlor so the cows' grain ration is augered into feed pans automatically. Besides that, the water system was changed with pond water filtered to be used at the dairy. And they plan even more improvements in the future.

"We want to expand to milking more cows," says Forsythe, who now has altogether, 300 head of dairy stock.

Inside the dairy, the atmosphere is sterile orderliness; sparkling glass, transparent tubes, solid stone, and shiny stainless steel. Just outside, softening that inside "stark efficiency" look, are several ornamental plantings of swaying spreading juniper, which Nina grew from cuttings. She has rooted many cuttings and tucked them in odd nooks and corners of their farm yard and dairy buildings. All her trees, shrubs and flowers make for an interesting touch, like someone friendly lives there.

In fact, the whole farm is a combination of pleasant contrasts. A few noisy, probably unprofitable, geese honk quarrelsome protests as quiet, money-making cows contentedly chew their cuds.

There is no lack of business-like efficiency though. Baby calves have individual stalls in their own building with adjoin-

**Forsythes and cow**

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Forsythe, route 1, Drakesville, are shown looking over part of their dairy herd. The Forsythes

operate a Grade A dairy farm and were recent regional winners in the Soil Conservation contest.

ing lot. Dry cows stay in their own "waiting" quarters. Weaned calves run in their pasture with outside feed troughs and surrunt milkers stay in their paved lot, eating from the sheltered feed bunk or in the free stall loafing barn, which was one of the first in the county.

"We make 700 to 800 ton of silage a year," says Forsythe whose cows stay in confinement.

Forsythe doesn't sell veal calves but runs them on grass till about 1000 pounds. Although he keeps records and breeds dairy cows artificially, an Angus

bull is used for replacement heifers to get a smaller first calf.

Besides dairy stock, they have 25 beef cows, about 70 sheep, and 25 cats.

"I'd rather feed cats than rats," laughs Nina, who says they have a lot of feed around but definitely no rat problem.

Both Forsythes have kept active in community work. Several years they have been 4-H leaders and are on the adult board for the Youth Center. Nina has been president of the Davis County Retarded Children's Association. Forsythe has been on the Ex-

tension Council and the ASCS Township Committee. He was a School Study Building Committee member and helped organize and held office in the Dairy Herd Improvement Association besides being active in the Davis County Soil Conservation District.

For 15 years, Forsythes' dairy day has started at 4:40 or earlier. With such habit, Nina notes that even when they are in the city visiting, her husband still gets up by 5 and takes a walk. Forsythe laughs, "It makes you feel good to be up early and get all that fresh air."