

# Farmers

## Richard R. Ebert

**The Farm:** Will-Mar-Re Farms is a dairy and cash-grain partnership of about 590 acres owned and rented by Rick and wife Diane and his brother William and wife Martha. Their families pitch in to do the field-work, manage the cow herd and milk 85 Holstein cows.

**Notable:** They paid off their FmHA farm loan and modernized their dairy without a heavy debt load. Using biosolids has dramatically reduced fertilizer and lime costs.



## Ebert invested via sweat equity

**R**ICHARD Ebert grew up on a small dairy farm as one of six children. After working part time at the dairy facility while attending Penn State, he earned a dairy science degree in 1982. Returning home to Westmoreland County that spring, he married wife Diane, and they formed a partnership with his brother Bill and wife Martha.

After being told they were too young and without enough collateral, they were finally able to purchase their first farm with 20 cows with

a Farmers Home Administration loan. He also was a substitute teacher in the Derry Vo-Ag Department during the first four years after college. The Eberts have four children: Rachael, Joshua, Jonathan and Jacob. Now, Ebert is working towards creating a hog enterprise for son Joshua to return home to after graduating from Penn State.

Service to community and agriculture has always been a high priority. Ebert has been a 4-H leader since 1982 and superintendent of the Westmoreland County Fair since 1980. He is vice president of Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and chairman of PFB's dairy committee. He is a past chairman of the American Farm Bureau's dairy committee and served on its Young Farmer and Rancher committees.

## Doodys' success is a tandem team effort

**W**HEN you think of young dairy farmers, the words "highly energetic" and "tremendously dedicated" fit Dave and Carole Doody to a T.

Both grew up on farms. When the Frederick County, Md., couple married in 1985, Carole was already a partner in her parents' dairy. Three years later, they struck out on their own with 70 cows and purchased their own farm near Union Bridge.

Frugal management and a constant focus on upgrading their dairy facilities, improving herd production and boosting labor efficiency paid off. The Doodys farm and manage 330 animals with the help of their daughters, Carissa and Cathleen, plus one full-time and one part-time employee. Last year, they received the state Holstein Association's Senior Breeder Award.

"Sitting around" isn't something that's done at Tulip-Pond Farm. The Doodys are extensively involved in their church and ag community. Dave is vice president of Frederick County Holstein Association and serves on the Dairy Herd Improvement Association's testing board. Carole is a leader of an 80-member local 4-H club, junior chairwoman of the Maryland Holstein Association and chairwoman of the Miss Frederick County Farm Bureau committee. She's also coached the state Holstein Dairy Bowl, 4-H Dairy Judging and Dairy Bowl teams.



## Carole and Dave Doody

**The Farm:** Tulip-Pond Farm is a partnership dairy business milking 150 mostly purebred Holsteins on 200 owned acres and 745 acres of rental ground. Milk, grain and dairy genetics generate its income.

**Notable:** Their land base and grain storage provides sizable feed inventories plus cash grain for sale. Many improvements were made while they've been able to reduce their debt load to a low short-term loan.



## John K. Lott

**The Farm:** Bear Mountain Orchards Inc. raises and packs fresh apples, cherries, peaches, pears and nectarines from its 1,605-acre land base. Its markets range from central Ohio to the New York-to-Virginia metro corridor — and exports to as far away as Africa.

**Notable:** Innovations in the orchard, packing facilities and marketing greatly expanded this business.

## Lott leverages 'fresh'

**J**OHNLott's early years were spent on his family's Adams County, Pa., fruit farm. His father, Robert, a 1961 Master Farmer, was the apple of John's eye. From him, John learned the art of orchard and packing house management from the ground up, then earned a horticulture degree at Penn State in 1972.

Bear Mountain Orchards, headquartered at Aspers, was incorporated in 1981. In

1985, Lott became president and chief operations manager at his father's death. John's sister, Sheila Lott Gantz, later became vice president and packing facilities supervisor and the corporate administrator.

Then, Bear Mountain Orchards grew exponentially from 300 acres and packing 20,000 bushels of fruit to more than 950 acres of tree fruit. Their packing facilities also grew, now packing fruit for about 20 other fresh fruit growers. The business employs about 100 workers at peak season.

Innovation fueled the growth. Production shifted to high-density systems, dwarfing rootstock, trickle and micro-sprinkler irrigation, and cooperative research with Penn State in integrated pest management, mobile orchard platforms, and mechanical blossom and fruit thinning.

Lott has held leadership roles in many ag organizations. Currently, he serves on the board of the Cherry Industry Administration, Knouse Foods Cooperative, Pennsylvania Apple Marketing Program and the Adams County Industrial Development Corp.

He's a past president of the Adams County Fruit Growers Association and the National Peach Council. In 2005, he was recognized as the State Horticultural Association of Pennsylvania's outstanding fruit grower of the year. In 2007, he received the outstanding co-operator award from the Adams County Conservation District.