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Sproles' Dairy Barn Found At End Of Search For Mystery Farm No. 15

"It's not a farm without a horse," says H. B. Sproles, owner of Mystery Farm No. 15, located on the Bunker Hill road just north of Columbia. This is the farm near the airport that belonged to Van Morris until he sold it to Mr. Sproles about six years ago.

The Sproles farm is a real farm. It has a horse. This horse leads the good life, according to his owner. It never has to work, but it does qualify the place as a farm.

Even if the horse doesn't work, it doesn't mean that work is not done on this place. The Sproles farm is a dairy farm with 82 head of dairy cattle. There are some registered Guernsey cows, a registered Guernsey bull and a registered Ayrshire bull. The other cows are either Guernseys or crosses between Guernseys and Ayrshires.

Mr. Sproles says he is crossing these two types of dairy cattle in order to increase the milk output, even though the butterfat content will not be quite as high. He figures that he will more than offset the loss of butterfat by the increase in volume.

The Sproles moved to Columbia from Amite, La., where they had a dairy six years ago last February 18. This was the same day the dairy barn was completed and its use began.

Mr. Sproles brought some dairy stock with him and started here with 72 milking cows and 50 heifers. Lack of space required him to cut down on his herd somewhat. Today he is milking 32 cows and putting on a hundred gallons of milk a day.

Mr. Sproles says the dairy business is getting more and more to be a specialized business, that a man must watch all parts of the business to make ends meet. He believes one method of making a profit on the dairy is to have good cows. Another way is to grow your own feed.

Mr. Sproles believes in letting his cows do some of the work of gathering their foodstuff. He tries to keep his pastures green the year around. He had to rent land this year to grow his corn crop, since 120 of his 124.9 acres are in pasture of one kind or another.

Thirty-two acres of this pasture

land was in cat-tail millet which the recent rains helped tremendously. It had begun to be badly affected by the drought.

Lespedeza and carpet grass make up a sizeable part of the pasture that the Sproles cattle have a chance to graze. However, this carpet grass and lespedeza pasture is reserved for the dry cattle. When they get to springing they are brought out to the other pastures and to the barn.

One cow on this farm has special treatment. She is a special, privileged character. "She gets fed every day, twice," says Mr. Sproles, regardless of whether she is milking or not. She is a Guernsey, 23 years old, and is nursing two calves. Her udder has broken and he says he can't keep her fat, but he will keep her as long as she lives.

On this farm are one spring and one pond. The pond has been stocked with fish. It ranges from two

and a half to three and a half acres in size, depending on the amount of rain.

Mr. Sproles says he can't figure it out, but they don't bite too much for him or for anyone else except a local doctor. He says he and the doctor can get in the same boat and fish with the same lures. He can throw in the same places as the doctor but he can't catch them. He figures Doc must have some trick or something to make them bite, but from the expression on his face and the look in his eyes he seems determined to find out what the man has that he hasn't.

Mr. and Mrs. Sproles and Jacqueline live on the farm. The other two daughters are married and live in New Orleans. Their names are Muriel Georgia Forstall and Joyce Delois Barru.

Jacqueline finished Columbia High School last session.

Mr. Sproles says his deep freeze

cost plenty when he bought it, but it is worth it. It is filled from the farm. It has both vegetables and meats in it. There is a calf in the pen that doesn't know it, but he is deep-freeze bound.

Five hundred pounds of white onions were grown and were spread in the barn to cure. He figures he'll have enough onions to last the family until the next harvest.

The grocery bill at this house averages around \$7.00 a week, Mr. Sproles says, pointing out that the few acres in the farm that are not in pasture on this farm are made to produce abundantly.

Mr. Sproles likes to look at television a while in the morning after he finishes milking. He likes to keep up with the news and the weather over the local radio station, WJCU. He says most of his radio listening is done after six o'clock, but he can't stay with it too late because dairymen have to stir early in the morning.

