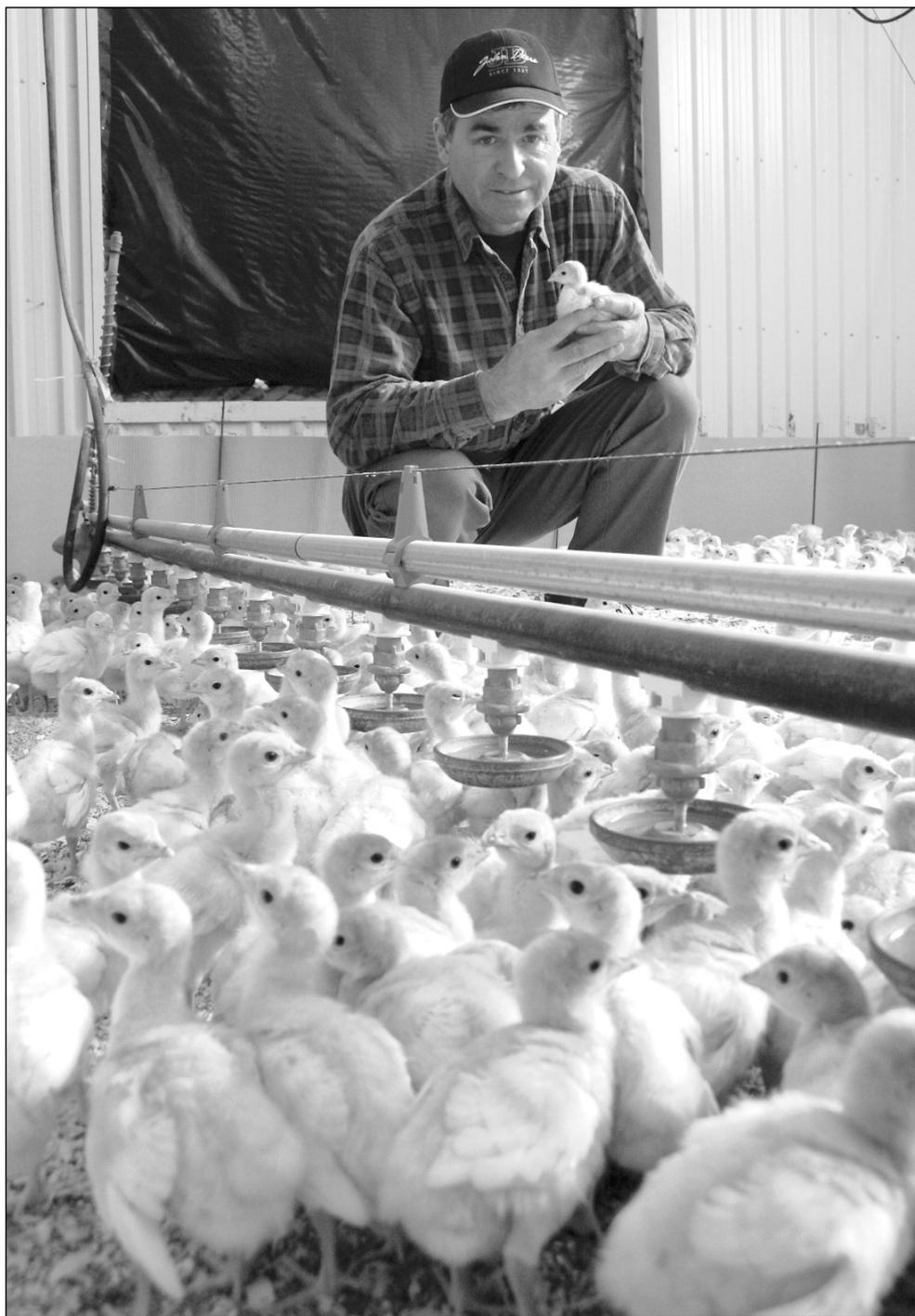


A diary of a successful Wilmot Township farmer

Jim Bearinger is no straw-hat wearing, tobacco-chewing country bumpkin

CINDY MATTHEWS
special to the Independent



Jim Bearinger inspects a fresh arrival of turkeys on his Snyders Road farm last week. The 2,000 turkeys, which are only five days old, will grow to be 17 weeks old before being slaughtered. Bearinger said these turkeys will not end up as Thanksgiving meals, but rather deli cuts.

TIM MURPHY, INDEPENDENT STAFF

Jim and Barb Bearinger currently own four and rent two farms in Wilmot Township. This is testimony of the hard work, knowledge, dedication and fortitude needed to bring success to a career in agriculture.

As a graduate of the Conestoga College Mechanical Engineering Technology program, upon finding employment in his field of training, Jim did not gain the pleasure in that industry that he had hoped. Jim was raised on a dairy, hog and cropping farm west of Mannheim.

With Jim's mechanical aptitude and knowledge of farming acquired through 'life on the farm', Jim took advantage of an opportunity to take up a career in agriculture when his father expanded his operation.

Jim said, "My father believed in diversity and was open to new ideas." Soon, Jim and Barb were operating their own farm operation.

For many years, they ran an effective dairy operation and over time, they observed that government regulations and policies increased in regards to the environment, food safety, marketing and animal handling practices.

Further, Jim has observed that technology has had a huge impact on agricultural practices. When Jim was a child growing up on the farm, agriculture was very labour-intensive while today it has a 'big business' approach. Now farmers plan strategically their reactions to fluctua-

tions in the market.

"Like any other business, computers are used commonly," Jim explained.

The computer is utilized everywhere on the farm from milking parlors to the farm office to the specialized equipment such as computerized sprayers, combines and balers. Jim finds himself checking the Internet to gather information on weather forecasts and crop reports. The computer is also useful for conducting inventory control and farm banking.

Modern-aged farmers must be organized. For example, Jim prioritizes frequently. Jim states, "I take my notepads, pen, cell phone and watch to keep me on track so no time is wasted."

He keeps a diary of phone calls to be made and does planning on a daily, weekly, monthly and seasonal basis. Twice weekly inventory needs to be done of feed bins and propane and fuel tanks.

Jim has found many rewards, though sometimes subtle, in farming. For example, Jim gets a rush from seeing a successful flock of turkeys. A golden crop of wheat grown in tricky conditions can bring a smile to Jim's lips. Watching a young calf develop or explaining to non-farmers about agriculture gives Jim pleasure.

"Rewards happen all the time, the trick is to find

them," Jim explains.

In an industry, that has not always enjoyed a perfect image or high respect, Jim wishes people would be respectful of farmer's land. He does not have high opinions of people who view his farm and that of his neighbours as public parkland.

"Not that farmers aren't reasonable people, but they do like if people would ask for permission first."

Some taxpayers think all farmland is 'public' and that is simply not the case. If people respectfully asked permission before traipsing

on their fields with a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle, there would be less strife.

Jim hopes that young people will see agriculture as an industry

worth pursuing, thus giving it a chance.

When asked about getting youth involved in agriculture, Jim said it this way, "It never was easy and it never will be, but if you are passionate, know the right people at the right time, why not give it a shot."

Over the years, Jim has enjoyed communicating about his well-loved profession with other farmers. Being involved in farming organizations like 4-H, the milk committee, and the credit union has brought balance. Barb and Jim value family and raising their children, Rebecca and Andrew, on a farm was a positive experience.

"My father believed in diversity and was open to new ideas."

- Jim Bearinger

Continued on page 21

CUSTOM CUTTING
Cut, Wrapped, Frozen

BEEF

Front.....	\$2.19 lb.
Sides	\$2.49 lb.
Hinds	\$2.89 lb.

PORK

Whole or Half Hogs.....	\$1.69 lb.
-------------------------	------------

EASTER HAM

Order Today!

Whole or Half	\$3.59 lb.
---------------------	------------

COUNTRY STYLE MEATS

Tues. to Fri. 9-6; Sat. 9-4 p.m.
Calvin Kuepfer 519-656-3380
3700 Nafziger Rd. Wellesley

Expert Service Department

FOCUS computers inc.

- SALES
- SERVICE
- UPGRADES
- REPAIRS

Competitive Pricing

Plus "After Sale" Service That Can't Be Beat!

- Complete Networking Solutions
- Sales & Leasing
- Custom Built Computers
- Software & Accessories

Specializing in Homes & Small to Mid-Size Business Solutions

Serving the community for over 10 years

73 Peel St., New Hamburg 519-662-6720