

The Vanclief Family

The Rare Breed

Show covers Quinte farm operation

By PENNY GORDON
Staff Reporter

A Quinte area farmer is featured in a CBC television program—the second of a series of six called The Rare Breed: Close Up of Canada's Food Producers—scheduled to be aired June 12 at 8:30 p.m.

The production as originally filmed was called the The Wizard of Willowlee, featuring Lyle Vanclief of Ameliasburg. It was aired Jan. 14, 1979, as part of CBC's Country Canada and topped the ratings for that program.

"The CBC decided to try something different," says Sharon Vanclief, "and put an agricultural show on in prime time."

Vanclief is an Ontario mixed farmer with a highly diversified operation. Mixed farming was the usual style of Ontario farmers in the past, while specialized farming is the style of today. Vanclief combines both past and present styles at Willowlee Farms where he grows 17 crops on 1,000 acres.

The Rare Breed segment captures a profile of Vanclief, and records the harvesting and life-style at the farm from June until November.

Vanclief's father, Clarence, bought the original 170 acres

in 1943. Until 1964, the farm had a dairy herd, feeder hogs, an acre of strawberries and some cash crops.

Vanclief graduated from the University of Guelph in 1966 with a BSc in agriculture, dreaming of a large dairy herd. But he found the dairy industry in a state of upheaval so he remained in diversified farming and formed a family corporation.

In 1972 the farm finished 800 hogs for market, to venture and decided into farrowing (breeding) rather than buying r weaner pigs to fatten for market. Currently the farm has 150 farrowing sows and markets almost 2,000 bacon hogs each year.

Willowlee now has 25 acres of strawberries and about half of the crop is sold to stores and wholesalers. The remaining strawberries are marketed in a "pick your own" operation. This year the strawberry growing has solid-set irrigation.

"We've placed irrigation pipes and sprinklers in the fields, and they will remain in a fixed position for the re-

mainder of the harvest," says Vanclief. "Now we can make it rain anytime."

When the program was filmed a helicopter crop duster was available to spray the farm's 35 acres of potatoes and a CBC cameraman shot aerial views.

The potato crop, 70 acres of canning peas, 125 acres of sweet corn and 10 acres of cauliflower are contracted to processors. Acreage of winter wheat and grain corn—600 acres -- are for the farm's use. In addition, 75 acres of soybean for livestock feed are sold through the soybean marketing board.

There are 35 acres of alfalfa, some used for cattle feed and some used as a cash crop.

Vanclief started buying

mostly crossbreed cattle for a small beef lot, and now markets approximately 400 head a year.

Willowlee has a full-time staff of four employees, with an additional six from April to December. But the number can swell to 150 during strawberry season with pickers and supervisors.

Mrs. Vanclief is as busy as her husband as "Wizards of Willowlee". She is homemaker, mother, book-keeper, clerk, and manager of the Country Store at Rednersville which the Vanclief's lease.

The CBC production on June 12 will be seen in this area on CKWS, Kingston, CHEX, Petreborough, and CJOH, Ottawa.

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