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# Horse operation pays off for Smalley family

By ERKKI POHJOLAINEN  
 For the Smalley family, raising standardbred horses and cattle go hand in hand.

Although the cattle operation is the bread and butter of the farm

## They're flying farmers

Ron and Mary Wyatt of Zephyr, recently attended a three-day International Flying Farmers (IFF) Workshop in New Orleans, Louisiana. The organization has approximately 8,000 members from across Canada and the United States.

Ten other members of the Ontario chapter also went to the Jan. 17-19 workshop, as did numerous members of the Québec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta organizations. The convention featured tours of the city, the Zen-Noh Grain Corporation, Destrehan Plantation and other plantations in the area. The schedule's highlights were a mini-Mardi Gras and special speakers; Wilmer Mizell, of the U.S. Department of Agriculture; air traffic controller Patty Viall; and aviation safety consultant Rod Machado.

IFF members own approximately 4,000 airplanes, as farm equipment. Dusting crops, hauling supplies to area not accessible by roads, feeding marooned livestock and checking fences are some of utilitarian uses. An airplane can cancel the isolation factor of a large farm operation.

One of the main objectives of the organization is to promote the practical use of the airplanes in agriculture. The IFF, in cooperation with other avionic and agricultural organizations, sponsors education and research in agriculture, and promotes safer flying. The organization also sponsors programs that encourage women and teens to fly.

After the Oklahoma Flying Farmers Association was formed in August, 1944, the idea spread and in January, 1946, the National Flying Farmers Association was formed. Later that year, 16 states were represented at the first national convention at the Stillwater, Oklahoma, headquarters.

south of Mount Albert, the family — father Morley and sons Harold, 27, and Ralph, 30 — the horse operation is coming into its own.

In an interview at the stable, Harold said they bought July Time, a standardbred race horse, in 1977. "It started out as a hobby but now it's more than that."

While Morley, 64, and Ralph work the family's 400 acres, most of which is used for pasturing their herd of 400 cattle, Harold runs the horse operation.

The first horse raced in the "B" circuit at Peterborough's Cawatha Downs track, but the second, Huck's Girl, went to Greenwood in the "A" level.

They now have horses competing in both levels of harness racing.

Through the day, Harold spends about half an hour giving each adult horse a workout on a half mile track at the farm. The horses are paced for about seven miles every day. On days when the weather doesn't permit outdoor training, they're exercised on a treadmill for about 40 minutes.

Every second day, Harold works with the younger horses developing their speed and training them to keep stride. The two two-year-olds are too young to race.

When Ralph's wife, Patty, isn't busy with their children, baby Jordan and three-year-old Sarah, she helps look after the horses.

With fondness, Harold remembers acquiring Nealie's Snap for \$25,000 as a two-year-old in a "claimer race" at Greenwood. As a six-year-old she runs on a \$75,000 claimer and in four years has won \$150,000 in prize money.

When the Smalleys began keeping standardbreds they were housed in the same barn as the

cattle, but since 1978, the horses have been in their own stable.

"A lot of people buy race horses just for prestige," Morley said, adding, "most of them never even rode a horse."

Almost seven years ago, Harold received a licence allowing him to race on the tracks. "It took about three years to get it," he said.

Though most of the time he drives the horses, occasionally he hires professional drivers. Harold said, "because they tend to get a little more out of the horse."

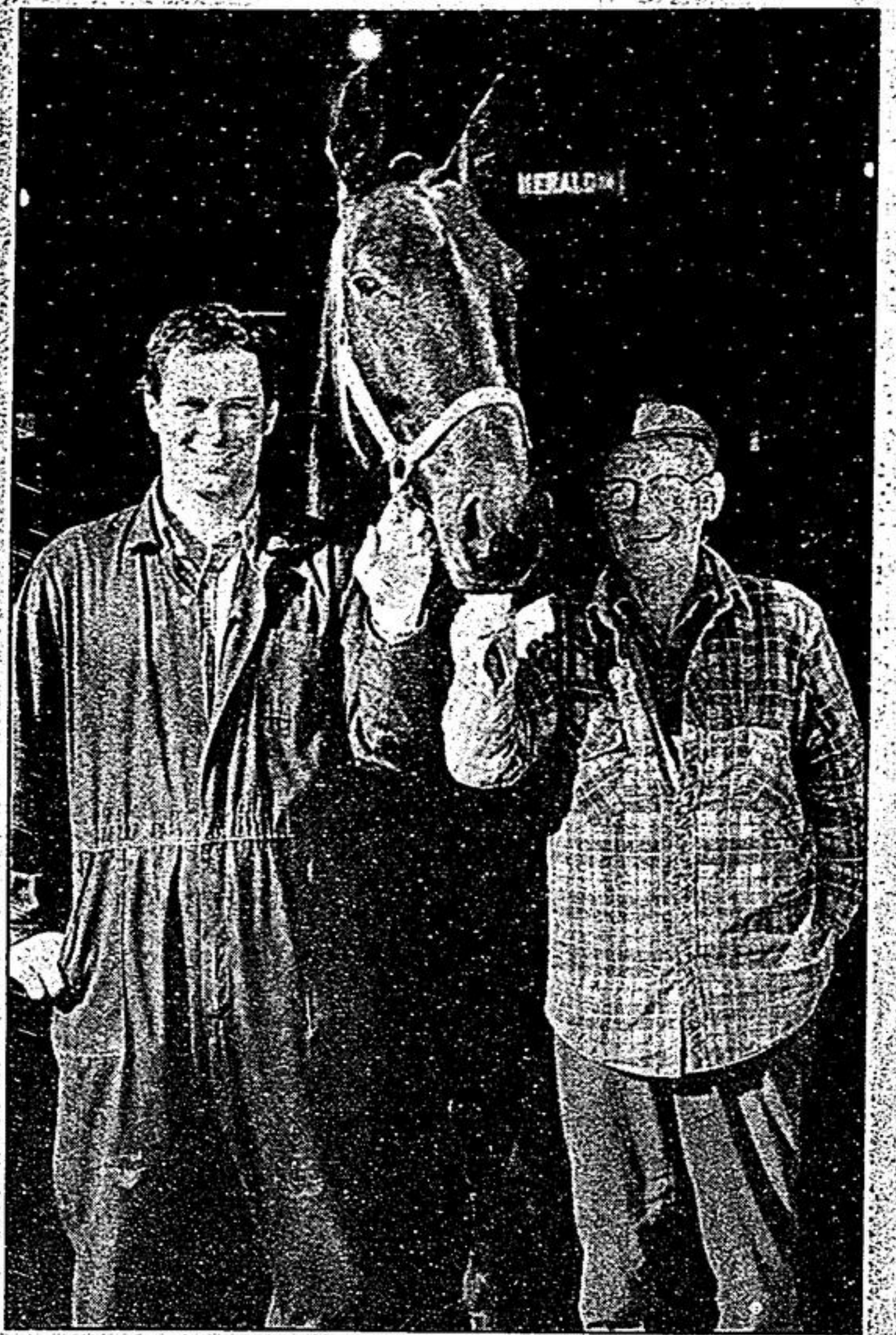
Harold spends an average three nights a week at the tracks. That's on top of training the horses through the day. Though he wants to breed Huck's Girl now that she's too old for racing, he doesn't intend to have more than five horses at one time.

Morley said they intend to keep the cattle fattening operation even if the race horses are successful. He paraphrased a common statement heard around the track: "Be sure to keep your other job."

Though the Smalleys grow some of the required cattle feed, most of the corn and barley has to be bought from neighboring farms. The stockers, or 450 pounders, are kept until they reach about 1,100 pounds. These are sold to Toronto Stockyards.

As well, they grow some hay for the horses, but have to buy most of the feed. "Sweetfeed" is a special blend for race horses that contains molasses.

While Harold, a bachelor, is busy with standardbreds on one of the family's farms, Ralph is content to have a team of two work horses at the other, where he lives with his wife and children.



**Raise quality horses and cattle**

Morley Smalley and his son Harold are proud of their success at owning and racing standardbreds at their Mount Albert area farm. The family farm also includes brother Ralph in the operation. Here, they are shown with Nealie's Snap.

— Erkki Pohjolainen

# Farmers told to set firm goals

By ERKKI POHJOLAINEN  
 Keeping costs down is the best way to stay out of debt and ride out tough times; a group of farmers was told at the Central Ontario Dairy Update in Newmarket recently.

Jim Marshall of Hillsburg, Larry Sheardown of Schomberg and Frank Barkey of Blackstock (and formerly of Stouffville), each told the audience of about 150 how they manage their farms and prosper in these difficult times.

When Jim bought the farm with his wife Sharon and brother David, interest rates were at 10

per cent, he said. "But that was 1976. Soon after, rates soared."

In the first six years, "we bought things that we wanted, not necessarily what we needed."

He said, "to survive in the dairy business, we had to design an overall farming plan."

It included getting rid of their hog operation and growing alfalfa. As well, they sold 40 acres to raise money to pay debts and buy milk quota.

Jim's wife keeps a close watch on the monthly cash flow, he said. They try to avoid borrowing money.

"If we're buying any more quota, the money has to come from the farm, not the bank," he said. To increase production, Jim hopes to milk an additional two or three cows each year.

The Marshalls own 143 acres and rent an additional 50. The soil in their fields is too sandy for cash cropping, Jim said, but is sufficient to raise cattle feed.

He said, "it's not exactly what you have to work with that counts, but how you work with it." The best way to improve farming methods, Jim insisted, "is to talk to your neighbors and learn from them."

Larry Sheardown's key to success is simple: Increase income by getting more from the cows.

"Better test results for protein, not just butter fat," he said. "I think that'll be important in time to come."

He hopes to have a computer program to help manage the farm "as soon as the software becomes available," he said.

Larry and his father do most of the maintenance on their 100-acre farm which helps cut down on expenses. "Why hire someone to do the job if you can do it yourself?" he asked, and added, "if there's a hump in the roof you'll know why it's there."

Last winter they built a work shop, Larry said, emphasizing the importance of using the extra time in winter to do various projects.

He stressed farmers "need to make goals and meet them; we did. Now it's time to set new ones." Ten years from now, he said, he hopes to be milking 40 cows. They now milk 30 from a herd of 60 Jerseys.

Frank Barkey said the most important aspect in raising cattle is to start out with a good cow. "Life's too short to start with a poor cow," he said, "but don't expect one cow to do it all."

"Most good herds in the country are from good cows," he said, pointing out that the cow has more effect on the calf than the bull. He added "live sires are better than artificial insemination."

Speaking about the days he lived in the Stouffville area, he said, "an average producer with average tests and good 'type' would fetch a high price at the Sales Barn."

Frank was awarded the Master Breeder Shield in 1978 for his Holsteins. He attributes his success, in part, to the way he treats his herd.

"Give cattle the best feed possible and pasture them in the summer," was one of his recommendations. He added, being with them while they're calving, and keeping their bedding clean is important too.

His closing remark was "no thing is more profitable than a good cow."



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