

# This youthful farmer is making his mark

By BRUCE STAPLEY

Since graduating from Kempsville Agricultural College in 1982, Ron Herrema has more than made his mark in the farming industry.

The 27-year-old son of Durham Regional Chairman Garry Herrema, Ron has made a success of his dairy and cash crop operation just outside Leaskdale, as well as lending his talents and his time to the local contingent of the Junior Farmers.

His selfless involvement with that organization has resulted in his being named Outstanding Junior Farmer of 1987 for the Durham Chapter.

The award is the county membership's way of recognizing Ron's outstanding efforts towards the promotion of the organization, along with his leadership and public relations skills as demonstrated by his involvements in the chapter's activities.

But he is reluctant to take all the credit. "It also took all of the other people of the Chapter to make it work," he insists. "I have made a great group of friends out of those people."

The province-wide organization, open to rural youth of Ontario between the ages of 15 and 30, offers a social, educational, and leadership function to its members.

In his six years of involvement with the Junior Farmers, Ron has taken part in a variety of activities from the county right through the provincial level.

He has acted as newsletter editor, treasurer, and president of the Durham Chapter. And its all been done on a volunteer basis, at night and on weekends.

He has somehow managed to find the time to chair the outfit's sports committee and the Agricultural Awareness Program, which was responsible for putting together a farm tours book for schools in Durham Region, to encourage students to come and visit the farms in that region.

"It was a good way of getting the urban students to come to understand just how their food comes to be on their table," states Ron.

He was actively involved in the hosting of the Junior Farmers' Culturama, their annual cultural event, in 1987, and he chaired the Zone Camp, where the different counties in his zone spent a social weekend at the Claremont Conservation Area.

"I think of it as fun and enjoyment, and a learning activity," Ron says of his hours spent on



Ron Herrema not only operates a successful farm but he's also very active in the Durham Chapter of Junior Farmers.

Junior Farmer functions.

However, he admits to having cut back somewhat this year, due to his being married this spring to Mary Anne, who is from the Brampton area.

"A 'people' person, he thoroughly enjoys the opportunity to meet and work together with members on the diverse projects that the Junior Farmers involve themselves with.

"The nice part of being involved is that you meet people from across the province. You work your way up the executive with them."

Ron is pleased with the 'new look' that the organization has adopted, whereby it is now open to urban youth as well as rural. "You no longer have to be a farmer to join" he states. "You just have to have an interest in farming."

There has been a good response from the urban areas, according to Ron. "A good percentage of our Durham membership now come from off the farm. There are firemen, lawyers, teachers and students."

Ron stresses the community involvement function of the Junior Farmers, pointing to their choosing of a different charity to support every year.

"This year, it's the Juvenile Diabetics' Foundation," he explains. "Last year, it was the 'Plant a Seed for Need' food gathering for the Salvation Army, and food

banks across Canada."

The Junior Farmers get involved in community betterment programs, at the county level, and at the provincial level. "It's a good mix of social times and serious times," Ron maintains.

When he's not looking after the business of the Junior Farmers, Ron devotes himself to his dairy operation, part of a collective effort along with his father, and his brother Howie.

"We have 500 acres altogether" he says. "We each own portions of the land." Each has their own separate business. Equipment, expenses, and liabilities are shared.

"It's not the easiest business to be in", Ron insists. "Expenses can exceed income. The consumer isn't willing to pay high prices for goods. The government subsidizes, so the consumer is, in effect, paying."

Like other dairy farmers, Ron works within a quota system, whereby he is limited as to his potential production. Ron's personal operation consists of 55 cows. "Your money is all in your assets and your land" he claims. "You don't make a lot of money while you are operating."

For Ron Herrema, a thriving dairy farming business and recognition of his tireless work for the Junior Farmers, speaks very well of a young man given to hard work, self-discipline, and the well-being of others.

# Country 'gal' loves the rural way of life

By DENISE McDONALD

You can take the girl out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the girl.

Such is the belief of Rural Organization Specialist Marlene Werry. She speaks from experience.

"I have an extensive background in farming and was actively involved in 4-H and Jr. Farmers when younger," she says. "I really enjoy agriculture and assisting farm people."

Mrs. Werry, working out of the Uxbridge Office, holds a Degree in Agriculture from the University of Guelph and a Masters in Extension Education.

In 1977, she joined the staff at the Ministry as Assistant and Associate Agricultural Representative at Alliston in Simcoe County.

In 1983, due to a major ministry reorganization, Mrs. Werry was transferred to Elmville, where she served as an Agricultural Management Specialist, a position she describes as "merely a name change."

A short time later, she resigned from the Ministry for one year, due to husband Don being transferred to Kingston.

"My two sons kept me pretty busy during that time, but I still managed to stay involved by writing leadership material at home and co-ordinating programs during the winter," she says.

When a position opened at the Kingston/Brockville office, she quickly jumped at the opportunity, one that would provide her a first work experience with the ROS (Rural Organization and Services) branch.

"It was much the same job I now have in Uxbridge," says Mrs. Werry. She explains the purpose of the branch mission is to develop and enhance the human resource skills of rural people so they can provide effective leadership to the agricultural community.

After working in the Uxbridge office two days a week, and at Bowmanville three days a week, Mrs. Werry came on full time at Uxbridge last January.

"I basically work with all the



Marlene Werry is a country girl at heart. She grew up belonging to 4-H clubs and now she co-ordinates their activities.

youth, 4-H and farm organizations in the area, training their leaders and helping co-ordinate their programs," she says. "I also try to help develop new programs in the Region to satisfy the needs of the rural people."

Mrs. Werry says she tries to maintain close contact with the community through the organization, in order to best know the people's needs.

"A good example of my involvement would be with the Bethesda Reach Road Institute," she explains. "It's a committee striving to provide rural day care in the area, which I've been working with in order to help set up a program this year."

Mrs. Werry is particularly enthusiastic about her involvement with 4-H.

"Young people enter 4-H programs at age 12 and don't usually leave until 21," she

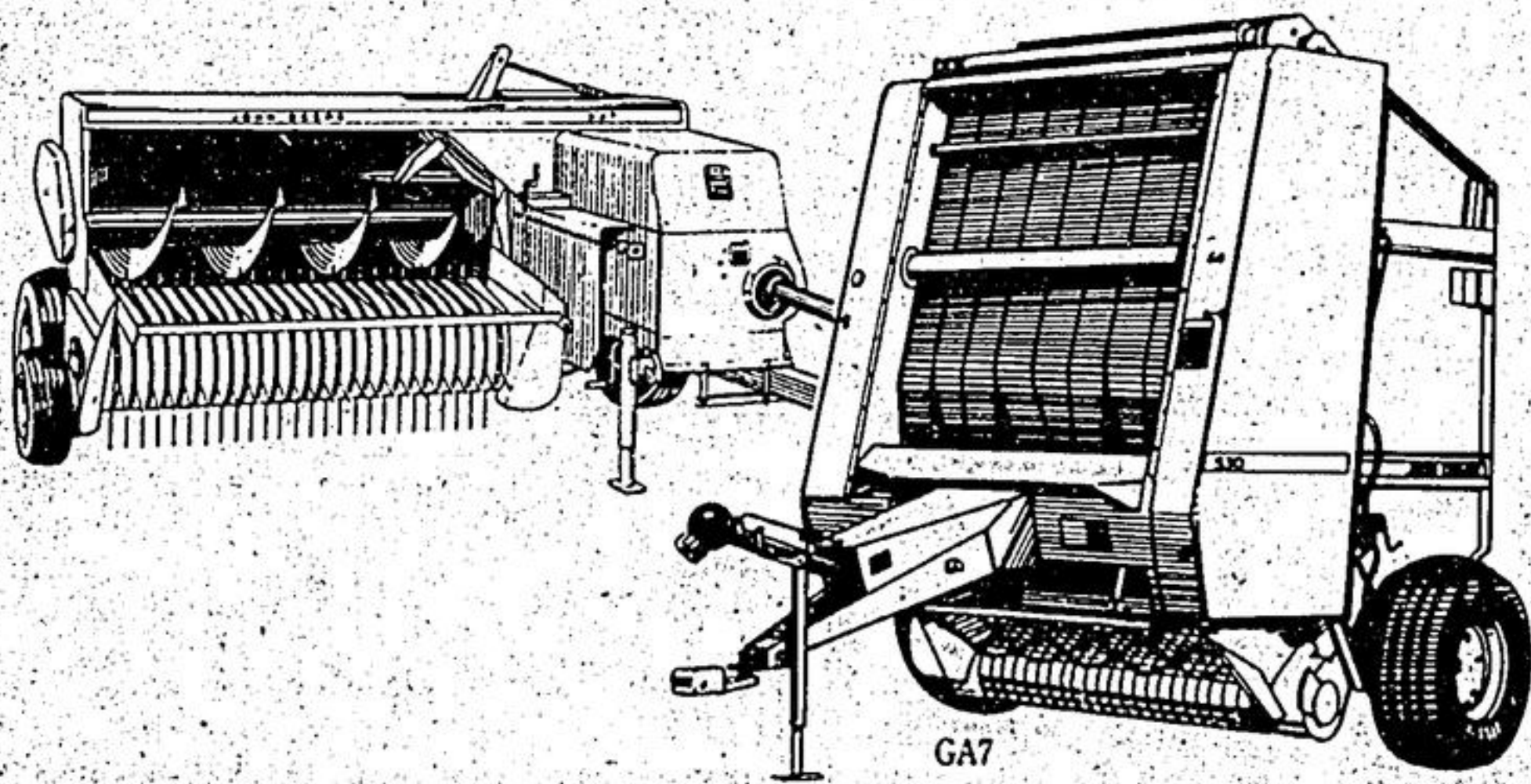
notes. "Depending on what they put into it, one can see a lot of development over the year. It's also wonderful to work with the 4-H leaders, people that are so motivated and committed to assisting young people."

"I guess 4-H is gratifying because I benefited a great deal from it when I was a teen," she continues. "I'm paying my dues now."

When asked what role agriculture will play in years to come, Mrs. Werry replies: "These days, in many sectors, agriculture is still very strong. And I definitely feel there's a future for the family farm."

"Another part of my job responsibilities," she continues, "is helping farmers cope with the stress of operating a family business. We've lost a lot of farmers in the industry due to financial stress. But the ones still carrying on are efficient and productive."

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