VPI Football Coach Puts Free Time To Use Working on 93-Acre Farm

BLACKSBURG (Special to Daily Press) — A football coach at a major college doesn't really have a lot of leisure time. But Virginia Tech coach Charlie Coffey knows exactly what he likes to do when he has a few free hours during the Summer.

Chances are awfully good that you will find him hard at work in the garden next to his new house in Blacksburg, or if it is the month of June, helping to establish a going operation on the farm he recently purchased near Shelbyville, Tenn., his hometown.

"I grew up on a farm, and I like to see things grow whether it's grass, vegetables, trees or animals," says Coffey who now owns a 93-acre tract.

He spent 16 days during June working to improve his newly acquired vacation retreat and someday-to-be retirement home, fertilizing, putting down 160 tons of lime, and building all new fences.

"I got up at 5:30 every morning and worked until nine out there, then I went to the truck line that I own and worked there from nine until three, changed clothes again and went back to the farm and worked there from then until dark."

The 93 acres are all but 10 grassland and include a lake and a two-story log cabin built in the 1800s. It also has a new house trailer. "What I hope to do is go down there for the month of June each year and that will be my vacation."

"Then, someday far in the future: 'my idea of satisfaction upon retirement would be to have a piece of ground, some cattle, maybe a good walking horse and get involved with that to the extent that I want to and enjoy nature and work in a garden."

In the meantime, his current plan is to crossbreed his own herd.

"I've got 20 pure-bred black angus heifers and I plan to put a bull with them in October," he relates. "I'd like to maintain a herd of about 50 brood cows."

He also plans to crossbreed Holstein cows with the Italian chianina to get what he believes will be the next big thing in the beef industry.

"The Holstein is a heavy milker," Coffey notes, "and the chianina is a big cow that doesn't get fat."

When he's not on the farm during June, his spare time during the Summer is spent in his Blacksburg garden where he has a fine crop including lettuce, green beans, purple hull-peas, cucumbers, two different types of corn, onions, tomatoes, squash and okra.