June 12, 2013

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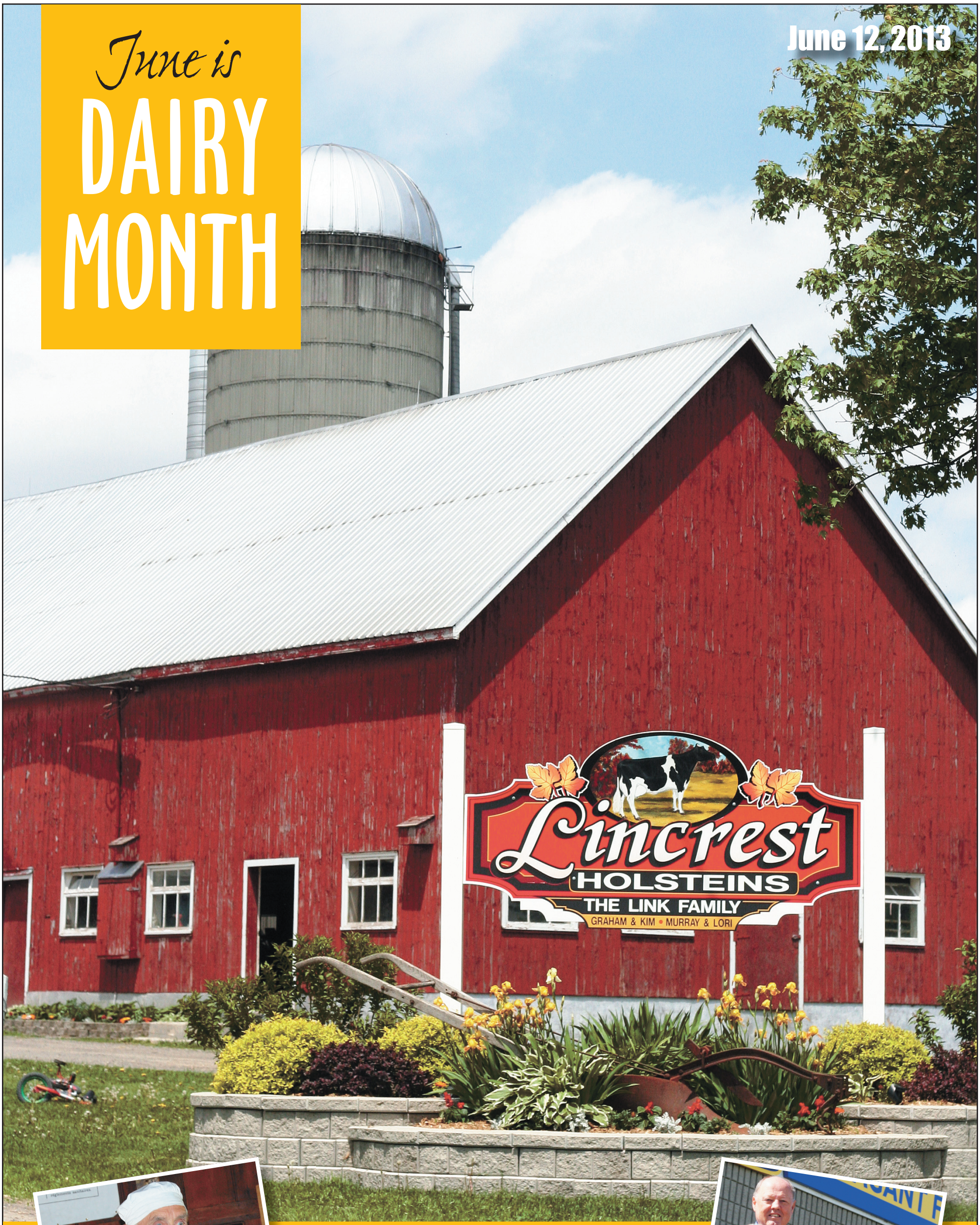





INSIDE:

- 100th anniversary of Link Farm
- Cheesemaking at UCV
- Weagants celebrate 60 years
- Decorate to celebrate Dairyfest

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE WINCHESTER PRESS



Lincrest Holsteins will be hosting this year's Dundas County Holstein Club Twilight Barbecue at the homestead on Link Road south of Winchester. The Link family farm is overseen by Graham (left), Kim, Henry, Lori, George, Jack, Mason, and Murray. Press Photo – Uhrig



This photo shows the family farm as it looked in the early 1900s.

Century farm

Twilight Barbecue highlights Lincrest centennial

by Matthew Uhrig
Press staff

WINCHESTER

In 1913, the region was not yet gripped in the throws of the First World War, and Winchester, as a village, was celebrating its 25th birthday.

For the Link family, that was the year their surname became synonymous in the local agricultural field.

This year, Lincrest Holsteins, as the family farm is known, achieves century farm status, as recognized by both the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

In order to obtain the designation, direct descendants of the same family must have owned the farm for 100 years, and a family member must still be living on the farm. The operation must also remain active within the family.

To mark the honour, Murray and Lori Link, along with their sons, Jack, Mason, Henry, and George, will be playing host to the Dundas County Holstein Club's annual Twilight Barbecue on Fri., July 19.

"It is an honour to host… There are not many century farms [in the region]," Murray said.

The couple lives at the family homestead, located on Link Road south of Winchester, and tends to the farm's 40 cattle and 200 acres. The adjacent fields consist of 35 acres of barley, 50 acres of corn, 85 acres of hay, and further acreage is used to pasture the cattle. (Murray's father, Graham, remains an integral part of the operation.)

"[The farm] has pretty much stayed the same as it was years ago," Murray said.

It was Murray's great-grandfather, William, who first began tending the land on Link Road, having purchased the farm from the Hymand family. From there, Murray's grandfather, Delbert, took over the farm, before leaving it to his son's, Graham and Harold.

Harold would ultimately sever his ties with the family operation, choosing instead to farm closer to Winchester, near the St. Lawrence Street railway crossing. This left Graham in charge of the farming operation, which he now shares with his son. (Graham and his wife, Kim, left the family home to Murray and Lori a few years ago, moving into a house on County Road 31, not far from the farm.)

Event anticipation

Murray said he and his family are expecting a large gathering on July 19 (perhaps 300 to 400 people), and will be prepared.

The evening's dinner will consist of roast beef or pulled pork on a bun, salads, desserts, and a drink option.

For the kids (or the children at heart), Little Ray's Reptile Zoo is to be on hand, complete with its many exotic critters.

Tickets for the evening are $20 or $5 for children.

For more information, contact Murray (613-774-6631), Dan Schuler (613-448-1562), or Evan Porteous (613-774-6898).



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Left: *Weagant Farm Supplies is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. Pictured are four members of the current ownership team: Dave Black (left), Bob Weagant, Stacey Weagant, and Julie Baker.*

Above: *Weagant Farm Supplies as it looked in 1979, three years after it moved to its current location on County Road 43 west of Winchester.*

Right: *Fred Weagant, founder of Weagant Farm Supplies.*

60 years in, third generation prepping for Weagant's future

by Matthew Uhrig
Press staff

WINCHESTER

From humble beginnings as a hobby shop in the backyard of the family general store in South Mountain, Weagant Farm Supplies has carved itself a niche as a dominant farm machinery dealer in the region.

It was 1953 when Fred Weagant was selected as a dealer for Cockshutt, the first all-Canadian company to build a gas tractor. The story goes that he travelled to Smiths Falls to pick up a hay rake tongue, and instead returned home as a representative for the Canadian company.

From there, the firm continued to expand. The original South Mountain dealership thrived, so much so that a much larger facility was required. A new 6,600 square-foot headquarters was constructed on County Road 43 west of Winchester in 1976.

Just a few short years later, Weagant Farm Supplies grew bigger once more, opening a location on County Road 29 north of Brockville. In 1993, the business expanded for a third time, albeit under a new name, launching Topline Trailer and Equipment Sales on County Road 31 north of Winchester.

"[This business], it is a source of pride," Stacey Weagant said.

Stacey is just one in a long line of family members involved in the firm's day-to-day operations. Her father, Bob, has been an integral part of the business for some time, as have her uncles, Dave Black and Laird Weagant.

But times are beginning to change, and just as the first generation handed down to the next, the third generation is awaiting its moment to take Weagant Farm Supplies into the future.

"We are poised to take over the company," Stacey said, adding she will do so with her cousins, Julie Baker and Scott Weagant. "[The eventuality] has been well received by our customers."

What makes the move unique, however, is that two females are set to become key parts of an agricultural institution. In the past, farming has largely been viewed as "an old boys club," but Stacey said times are changing.

"Julie and I were lucky to have our mothers as strong role models," she added. "Both were registered nurses, with their faces in the public, and a lot of community involvement."

As well, Stacey said, her grandmother, Anita, was side-by-side with her grandfather in the business' earliest days.

"She definitely downplayed her public involvement, but she was very much involved with the business," Stacey said. "She was critical to this company."

Today, the Weagant family's business empire has more than 60 employees between its three locations, with 47 employees in the Winchester area alone.

"Working here has definitely given me an opportunity to settle in an area that I love," Baker said. "It has also created an opportunity to stay close with my family… We work side-by-side."

Her cousin agreed.

"We are all definitely lucky to get a job that we love, and in an area that we love," Stacey said.

Going forward, and as the scope of farming expands, so too will Weagant's.

"One of the real opportunities is a shift in service," Stacey said.

In the business' early years, 100 acres was a big farm, but today, 300 acres or more is not unusual. Meanwhile, machinery continues to increase in size, thus requiring more thorough repair methods.

"As the equipment gets bigger, the roads don't get any wider," she said. "So we're looking at more mobile options, and maybe more after-hours work."

Technology's place in agricultural is also a new approach being consistently developed at Weagant's, as smartphones and other means are being adopted by farmers.

"As the technology changes, it allows us to push the envelope further," Stacey said. "A lot of our customers are becoming more receptive to it."

For now, the business is reflecting on its past, while being mindful of what is to come in the future.

"Throughout sixty years, there has been big change. Not only are we third generation, but so are our customers," Stacey said. "It is important to me, and all of us here, that we carry on a business that we're proud of."



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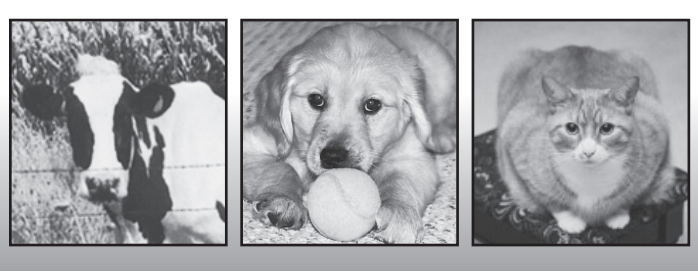

University of Guelph studying dairy greenhouse gases

by J. Kaufman, OMAFRA

KEMPTVILLE

Usually when you think about greenhouse gases, agriculture isn't the first industry that comes to mind.

However, the agriculture industry produces approximately 12 per cent of the world's greenhouse gases, with the dairy being responsible for four per cent of emissions.

Researchers at the University of Guelph are investigating greenhouse gas production on dairy farms, focusing on determining practical ways to reduce emissions.

Titled "Farm-scale assessment of greenhouse gas mitigation strategies in dairy livestock-cropping systems," the project's goal is to develop best management practices for recommendation to farmers, and ensure farmers are on the leading edge of environmental stewardship.

The project focuses on three areas for greenhouse gas mitigation – feeding strategies, manure management, and cropping systems. It also incorporates new knowledge into mathematical models to estimate emissions.

Research is taking place in multiple institutions across Canada and the U.S. Barn air quality and diet information are being monitored at a farm in Southern Ontario. Another farm involved has an anaerobic digester, which ferments manure to produce an energy source for heat and electricity. This system has potential benefits to emission reduction on farms. Researchers are also looking into manure storage and management to determine the lowest emission practices. Cropping systems are also being observed, while effects of soil type, fertilizer type, and method and season of fertilizer application on greenhouse gas production are also being analyzed.

The study is currently in the data collection phase, and will be continuing until the project wraps up in 2015. Results from all component studies will be combined to determine the lowest emission practices. These best management practices for the reduction and mitigation of greenhouse gases can then be recommended to Canadian dairy producers for implementation on their farms.

This study is led by Claudia Wagner-Riddle, with the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of Guelph. Funding for this project has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, under the Agricultural Greenhouse Gases Program, and Dairy Farmers of Canada.

For more information, visit www.uoguelph.ca/DairyGHG.

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Dairyfest committee asks Winchesterites to...

Decorate to celebrate 25th anniversary

WINCHESTER

It is going to be a big birthday bash, and Winchester residents are invited to help decorate.

This year's Dairyfest will be holding a home and lawn decorating contest to help celebrate the festival's 25th anniversary.

"I think it's going to be a lot of fun," Marnie Fossitt, competition organizer, said. "There will be categories for lawn, balcony, and storefront. We're working on some great prizes, too."

Participants will be asked to include at least one of the following themes – celebrating the dairy industry, Dairyfest's anniversary, or the 125th anniversary of Winchester. Judging will take place the week before Dairyfest and announced on Fri., Aug. 9 as the summer celebration begins. The displays will make for an extra treat for out-of-town visitors. Registration forms will be available online at www.winchesterdairyfest.com or at the Township of North Dundas office.

Barn Dance entertainers

The annual Dairyfest Barn Dance on Sat., Aug. 10 will be rocking to the sounds of Ottawa band Cherry Suede. With a high-energy live show, the band is fresh off a European tour supporting their new album, *Between Here and There*. Featuring Randy Scott (vocal/guitar), Randy Young (guitar/vocal), Dan Joseph (bass), and Andrew Lamarche (drums), Cherry Suede has been compared to Bryan Adams and Bon Jovi.

"They have a pretty big local following," Gina Welch, Dairyfest's committee chair, said. "We're excited to have them, and think it is going to be a great show with music everyone will enjoy."

Dairyfest 2013 will combine new events with old favourites. The Casino Night will return on Aug. 9 with a lower ticket price. Guests will be able to play poker, roulette, and blackjack with Dairyfest dollars and the top five winners of the night will select from a prize board.

For those who like to shop, there will be a vendor fair with booths downtown on Aug. 10, and on the arena ice surface on Sun., Aug. 11. Saturday will also feature a sidewalk sale by local businesses, local entertainment at Sweet Corner Park, and a youth performance of *Alice in Wonderland* by Dundas County Players.

The arena grounds will once again be home to a variety of air bounce amusements, Vanderlaand The Barnyard Zoo, Lego car racing, the Back it Up! Truck and Trailer contest, and a vintage tractor display.

New this year will be a focus on the local arts community with various artists demonstrating their techniques in the gazebo near the pool. Winchelsea Events will share some of its culinary expertise with a dairy-themed cooking demo. There will also be something new for horse lovers on Aug. 10 – a show by Alingsview Stables from Chesterville.

Keep an eye on the Dairyfest website and the *Winchester Press* as schedules, news, and volunteer opportunities become available.







Popular attractions from last year – Lego car racing, air bounce amusements, and Vanderlaand The Barnyard Zoo – will be back at Dairyfest 2013.

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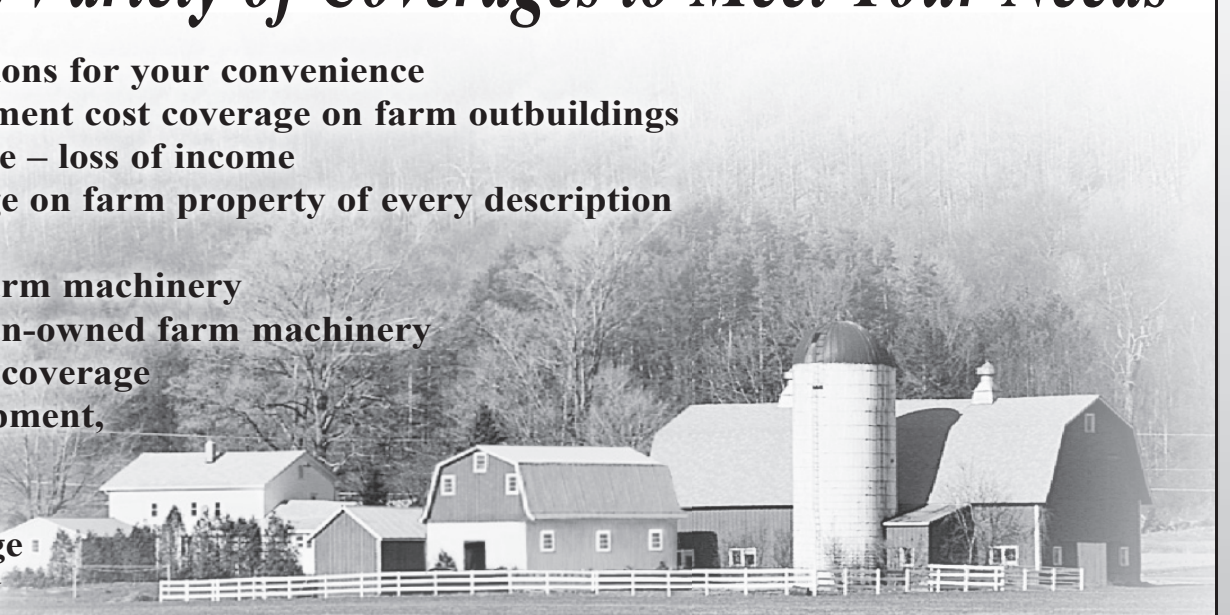

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Dairy Herd Improvement results for 2012

Following Winchester Press *tradition, we are once again publishing the top farms in local herd listings from the 2012 CanWest DHI (Dairy Herd Improvement) Ontario Progress Report.*

Ontario's best

The local region had five farms place in the top 56 for herds with low SCC (somatic cell counts) in the province.

Placing in the fourth spot was Ferme Brissfrance, operated by Andre Brisson of Embrun, while ranking in the 27th spot was Wintergreen Farms, owned and operated by Carl Sears and his sons. The 30th spot went to Midlee Farms, and its owners Jim and Connie McDiarmid of Vernon, while Kearnsvale (operated by Mike Kearns of Berwick) was the final local entry, placing 36th.

Rosenhill Farms, operated by Andre Hildbrand of St-Albert, placed sixth in the province in the top herds for management score listings, receiving 960 of a possible 1,000 points.

Also finding themselves in the top 40 was Alexerin of Osgoode (20th), Ferme A&L Desnoyers of St-Albert (24th), and Marvellane of Marvelville rounded out the region's top farms, placing 28th.

In the Holstein top publishable herds for average BCA by breed rankings, Heiwa Farm placed ninth, followed by Ginary Farm in 15th and Topfarm Holsteins in 19th. Heiwa Farm also placed first in the Brown Swiss ranking.

In the Ayrshire BCA listing, Rosayre Farm of Mountain finished in the top spot, while Osgoode's Tile Croft Farms was third.

In the Holstein milk value category, four local farms placed in the top 15. Bekkon Corner Farm of Russell was fifth, followed by Hermenie of St-Albert (eighth), Topfarm Holsteins of Osgoode (13th), and Heiwa Farm (14th). Tile Croft Farms was first in the Ayrshire milk value category.

In the top cows by breed (Ayrshire division), Rosayre Farms' Blaster's Beacon placed first with a 437.3 BCA, while another Rosayre animal, Bb Rebel Et, finished second with a 357 BCA.

In the top cows by breed Holstein division, yearling's category, La Ferme Gillette of Embrun's Sandy Valley Planet Melody placed first. In the two-year-olds category, Gillette Roumare Winter Star, also from La Ferme Gillette, finished second, while the farm's Gillette Bolton 2nd Motivation was first in the four-years-old division.

For the Brown Swiss, Heiwa Farm's Eastwind Dynasty Daisy Et finished in the top spot.

Herd Management

Listed are the top three farms in the region that placed among the best for herd management.

Carleton County: First place – Alexerin, Rob and Todd Nixon, Osgoode, 936 total score. Second place – Marvellane, Theo and Marie Nyentap, Marvelville, 923 total score. Third place – Topfarm Holsteins, Gerald and Janet Vanbokhorst, Osgoode, 850 total score.

Dundas County: First place – Glen Haven Farms, Tom Macgregor, Morewood, 894 total score. Second place – Wintergreen Farms, Carl Sears and Sons, South Mountain, 883 total score. Third place – Nation Valley Farms, Jim and Carol Ann Byvelds, Chesterville, 840 total score.

Grenville County: First place – Gerann Holsteins, John and Dawn Wynands, Cardinal, 902 total score. Second place – Rideauside Farms, Charles and James Bennett, Kemptville, 899 total score. Third place – Kemptville College, 839 total score.

Publishable Herd Listings

The following rank listings of the highest production herds for publishable milk record programs are based on the annual summary reports generated for each herd enrolled with CanWest DHI. The report is a detailed summary of production and BCA for milk, butterfat, and protein for eligible records that reached 305 days in milk, or terminated at or before 305 days in milk, between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2012.

Carleton County: First place – Topfarm Hoslteins, Gerald and Janet Vanbokhorst, Osgoode, 279.3 BCA. Second place – Alexerin, Ron and Todd Nixon, Osgoode, 277 BCA. Third place – Marvellane, Theo and Marie Nyentap, Marvelville, 274.7 BCA.

Dundas County: First place – Rosayre Farms, Ken and Shirley Rose, Mountain, 289.3 BCA. Second place – Signature Holsteins, Michael Farlinger, Morrisburg, 271 BCA. Third place – Verspeek Farms, Peter and Charlene Verspeek, Winchester, 266.3 BCA.

Grenville County: First place – Kemptville College, 257.7 BCA. Second place – Gerann Holsteins, John and Dawn Wynands, Cardinal, 252.3 BCA. Third place – Rideauside Farms, Charles and James Bennett, Kemptville, 252 BCA.

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Reasons to include more dairy in your diet

A healthy diet can improve quality of life and reduce a person's risk of developing disease or other negative health conditions. For example, a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can boost the immune system and promote cardiovascular health, lowering your risk of heart disease in the process.

While the benefits of including fruits and vegetables in your diet are widely known, the medical benefits of dairy are often overlooked. The following are a handful of ways that dairy products like low-fat milk, cottage cheese and yogurt can make a nutritious and beneficial addition to your diet.



• Dairy packs a protein and calcium-laden punch. One cup of nonfat yogurt can provide as much as one-third of your daily recommended calcium intake and nearly 20 percent of your daily recommended protein intake. Though dairy products like ice cream don't pack the same nutritious punch as yogurt, healthier fare like reduced-fat cheese and skim milk can go a long way toward meeting your daily intake of protein and calcium.

• Dairy is a great source of vitamin D. In addition to providing sufficient calcium and protein, dairy also helps men, women and children boost their vitamin D. That's especially important in the winter months when people tend to get less exposure to the sun. Exposure to the sun is a natural way to boost your vitamin D, but the shorter days and colder weather of winter can make it hard to get sufficient vitamin D during that time of year. Dairy products like low-fat milk can boost your vitamin D, which can improve your bone health and, according to recent research, might help reduce your cancer risk.

• Dairy may help lower your blood pressure. Men and women with high blood pressure might benefit from including more dairy in their diets. In a study of 5,000 adults, Spanish researchers found that those who reported consuming the most low-fat dairy products were more than 50 percent less likely to develop high blood pressure than those who consumed less low-fat dairy. Though researchers are not certain as to the reason behind low-fat dairy products' impact on blood pressure, some theorize that their calcium and protein content are likely behind the benefit.

• Dairy benefits your bones. Dairy has long been known to improve bone density. But it's not just seniors who benefit from the bone-strengthening impact of dairy. Youngsters who consume dairy can also expect an increase in bone mass, which can make them less susceptible to injuries like broken bones. Seniors who consume dairy to improve their bone density should know that a recent study from researchers at the Institute for Aging Research found that not all dairy products are equal when it comes to improving bone density. While milk and yogurt were linked to higher bone mineral density, dairy products like cream and ice cream contain less protein, calcium and vitamin D and more fat and sugar than yogurt and milk, and these products may actually be associated with lower bone mineral density.

Though there are many ways men and women can improve their overall health, it's important to consider the nutritional value of dairy when making any alterations to your diet.

Enjoy dairy for good health

To some people, dairy's reputation for contributing to high cholesterol and weight gain is a misconception that is hard to let go. But dairy's detractors should know the right dairy products enjoyed in moderation can actually be good for your health for a variety of reasons.

Consuming dairy products as part of a nutrient-rich diet is important for individuals of all ages. Dairy products have many nutrients and vitamins essential to good health. Calcium, protein, phosphorus, potassium, and supplemented vitamins A and D are all nutrients the body needs. Calcium, for example, is necessary to build and maintain strong bones.

Osteoporosis, a condition wherein the bones weaken and are more susceptible to injury, can affect anyone, but it is particularly common among women age 50 and older. To keep bones strong, health professionals recommend eating a diet rich in calcium and vitamin D – both of which are found in dairy products.

Eating low-fat dairy products can reduce a person's risk of developing cancer. Studies have shown that populations that eat a high amount of calcium-rich foods have a lower incidence of colorectal cancer. According to research, calcium controls the multiplication of epithelial cells lining the colon. Fast multiplication of these cells increases a person's risk of developing cancer.

Dairy products, especially milk, are also essential for different health benefits. Drinking milk helps protect the enamel surface of teeth against acidic substances. This helps prevent tooth decay and weakening enamel.

Milk and other dairy products might also help maintain healthy skin.

Dairy also plays a role in digestive health. Consumption of milk products may help in reducing acidity in the stomach. Yogurts with active cultures have been known to promote healthy digestion and alleviate occasional irregularity.

Individuals with lactose intolerance, a food sensitivity where there are inadequate levels of lactase in the body necessary to break down the lactose sugar in dairy products, may avoid dairy foods. However, some research has shown that those with a lactose intolerance can still handle at least two cups of milk a day if taken with food and spread throughout the day. Studies also indicate that consuming small amounts of lactose-containing foods may improve lactose tolerance over time.

Dairy products, like milk, cheese, yogurt, creams, and even ice cream, can provide much of the daily recommended allowances of vital vitamins and minerals. Low-fat dairy products are important components of a healthy diet.

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Understanding osteoporosis

While osteoporosis is most common in older women, anyone can develop it. As many as half of all women and a quarter of men older than 50 will break a bone because of osteoporosis, which many men and women are not even aware they have until that initial injury occurs.

When discussing osteoporosis, it's best to first discuss osteopenia, a silent condition that precedes osteoporosis, often robbing bones of their strength. Osteopenia is related to bone mineral density, which measures the levels of minerals in the bones. When BMD levels are low, a person is said to have osteopenia, which can, and often does, gradually become osteoporosis.

Osteopenia is akin to an accomplished art thief. Methodical and often unnoticed, osteopenia exhibits no physical signs, and even the most physically active people could have osteopenia and not know it. The first warning sign could be a fractured bone.

Can osteoporosis be prevented?

While milk alone won't prevent osteoporosis, dairy products like milk are rich in calcium, an essential nutrient for building and maintaining strong bones.

Another way to prevent osteoporosis is to exercise regularly. Routine exercise helps strengthen bones and muscles and prevent bone loss. Weight-bearing exercises, which include walking, jogging and even dancing, done three to four times a week, are the best for preventing osteoporosis. Strength and balance exercises also help avoid falling, decreasing the risk of broken bones.

Adequate calcium is necessary to prevent osteoporosis, but men and women must also make sure to include vitamin D in their diet. Vitamin D, which can be found in eggs, fatty fish (including salmon), cereal, and even some supplements, is necessary for the body to absorb calcium. Research continues to indicate that people are simply not getting enough vitamin D. Discuss vitamin D with a physician to determine the best way to get more of it in your daily diet. A vitamin D supplement might be the most viable option.

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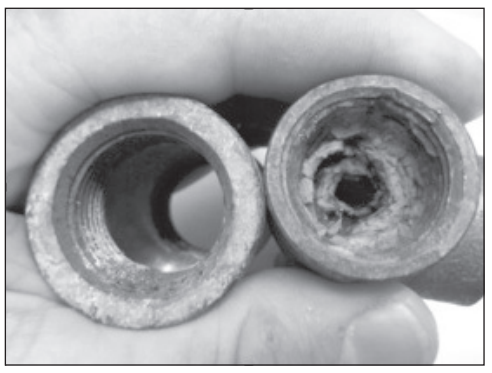

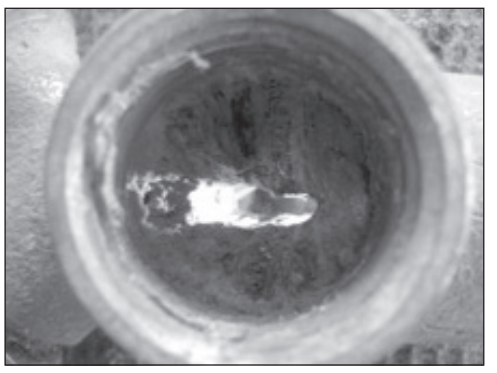

Water: are your cows getting enough?

by Mario S. Mongeon, OMAFRA

ALFRED

Because it is all around us, we tend to take water for granted. Nevertheless, water is the most important essential nutrient supplied to dairy cattle. Water intake can be affected by various factors, such as milk production, dry matter of the ration, sodium intake, and ambient temperature. It is a good thing to keep in mind that 87 per cent of the make up of milk is water. A typical dairy cow can consume an average of 115 litres of water daily. A cow can fulfill up to 60 per cent of her daily requirements for water in the hour following milking. It is therefore crucial that water availability be adequate.

A cow can ingest up to 16 litres of water per minute when she has access to a water trough. Flow rates in water bowls should be monitored to make sure that the delivery rate is at least four litres per minute. Behaviour studies have shown that cows will spend less than 30 minutes a day drinking. High producing cows are known to absorb up to 160 litres of water during that short period of time and so, good access to water and adequate flow rates are key. One should remember that in tie-stall barn designs, just after milking, many cows will be drinking at the same time and the last bowl on the line should deliver as much water as the first one. In order to achieve this goal, delivery pressure and size of piping are critical.

The longer the waterline, the less the pressure and flow rate will be at the end. Similarly, the smaller the diameter of the pipe, the faster the pressure and flow will drop along its length. This is why it is important to avoid any restriction on the line, especially close to the pump, since it will have an impact on the downstream system. Remember, the water pump is the heart of the system and should be chosen according to the pressure and flow rate required. It also needs to be inspected and serviced regularly.

Water pipes should be checked for clogging regularly, especially if the delivery system is made from galvanized pipes. For example, the clean pipe in the picture is one inch in diameter. The clogged pipe has the same original diameter, but now with an aperture of a quarter of an inch, 25 per cent of the original diameter.

For a similar water pressure, the clogged pipe will deliver 15 times less water than a similar size clean pipe. This can seriously impact cow productivity.

Water bowls and water troughs should be cleaned regularly to make sure that water consumption is not affected simply by deficient hygiene.

Several factors can affect water quality and thus consumption, including dissolved minerals; bacteriological contaminants; chemicals; and organic matter. On most farms, water comes from private wells. Do you know what is in the groundwater under your farm? It is a good idea to have water from your well tested regularly.

The test should include both bacteriological and mineral aspects. Many laboratories offer water testing services. Have a look at your watering system today. What you find might surprise you.

Fencing is the key to rotational grazing

by Jack Kyle, OMAFRA

KEMPTVILLE

Fencing is the tool that allows you to manage your livestock to provide re-growth time for the grass and manage the quality and quantity of forage available for your livestock.

Perimeter fences need to be substantial enough to keep your animals where they belong, and to give you piece of mind to sleep at night.

Fences to sub-divide the pasture into paddocks do not need to be elaborate, as a single or double wire electric fence works very effectively. If there is need for a larger or smaller grazing area, these fences can be easily repositioned.

Animals that have adequate quantities of quality forage available will not place nearly the challenge on fences that hungry animals will. Cattle are creatures of habit, and if they know that you are going to provide fresh grass later today or tomorrow, they will patiently wait – the job of the pasture manager is to not challenge their patience.

Moving livestock to fresh pasture every one or two days will optimize the quality and quantity of forage available for your livestock. This frequency of moves will minimize the animal's opportunity to take a second bite from the plants, and will help to prevent over grazing, which greatly diminishes plant growth. It is important to have enough paddocks that your livestock do not return to a paddock until the plants have fully recovered from the grazing. This depends on growing conditions, but generally takes about 20 days in May and early June, and about 30 to 45 days in July and August.

Having enough paddocks is the key to a good grazing operation with 10 to 12 being the minimum required to have a good system. Ideally, there will be about 30 paddocks for each group of livestock that you are managing. Experience has shown that those producers who have this number of paddocks are the most satisfied with their systems, and consistently achieve excellent results.

With attention to detail, you will have animals consuming large quantities of high quality forage to attain optimum growth throughout the growing season. These steps will give you a very successful and profitable grazing system.

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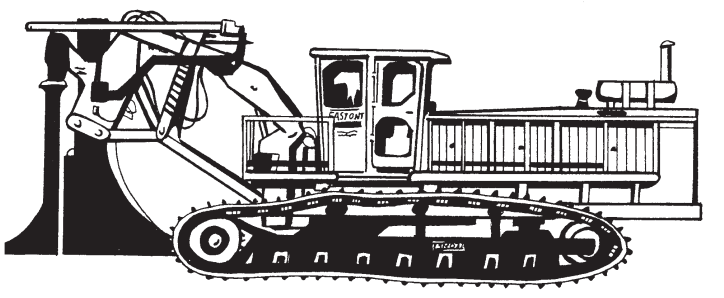

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Local company at forefront of new farm technology

by Sandy Casselman
Press staff

WINCHESTER

Advancements in dairy farming technology are making it possible for farmers to spend more time outside of the barn thanks to businesses like Clarence Holmes' Chesterville-based CNK Ag Tech.

CNK was recently involved in a massive project in Cobden whereby the Klaesi family's dairy barn was converted into a large automated factory with robotic milking, feeding, bedding, and more. Holmes' company was responsible for installing the feeding and bedding systems, using Rovibec Agrisolutions products.

Holmes, who had worked for the Klaesi family before, was contacted to reprogram the existing Rovibec feeding system, as well as measure and fit an additional system for the new barn, which was rebuilt after a fire destroyed the original in 2011.

The biggest challenge for the Cobden project, said Holmes, was the massive size of the building, along with its high ceilings. While there is usually 350 feet of I-Beam to install in a typical barn, in the Klaesi barn there was roughly 2,500 feet.

The bedding robot installed by Holmes is new and, as far as he knows, currently one of a kind, he said. It is completely automated, he added, from start to finish.

While the Klaesi barn in Cobden is the biggest project Holmes has undertaken in Canada, and as part of his CNK business, it is not the biggest he's ever been involved in. Prior to starting CNK, Holmes worked for Rovibec in Europe where he was the field manager for North America and Europe. He was responsible for selling, installing, and servicing Rovibec equipment.

Holmes, who currently works with his wife and three employees, installed three different robotic feeding systems locally last year alone. In addition to providing robotic equipment, the company also deals in barn renovations, manure-handling equipment, and material-handling equipment, such as conveyers, feed carts, and more.

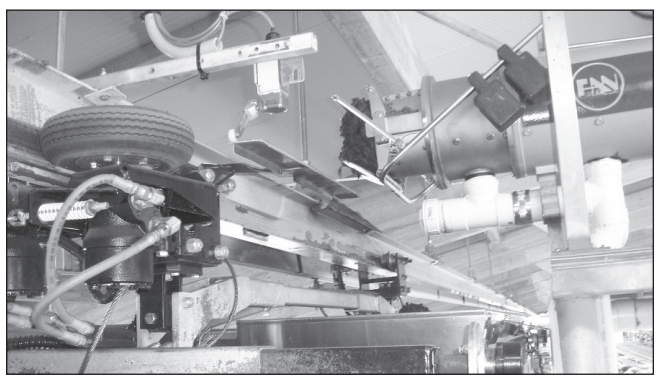
Basically, he said, his company takes care of the "front end and the back end of the cow."



While the Klaesi's had used robotic feeders for a number of years prior to the grand expansion, they did add to and update their automated feeding systems. The Rovibec feeder mixes feed, delivering it several times a day as it makes its way around the barn, suspended from the 25-foot ceilings on a circular tracking system. The feeders are also equipped with a sweeper that collects food that has been scattered, ensuring that there is no waste. Cows are fed roughly seven times per day. Pictured here, is the Rovibec feeder, which was installed by CNK.



Stationed roughly 20 feet above the barn floor, the Rovibec stainless steel bedding machine is also attached to a cylindrical track travelling around the barn on a loop, dropping fresh bedding for cows. Bedding is dropped to provide seven to eight inches of padding for the animals.



Dry manure from the dairy cows is used to make the bedding. Manure is put through a methane digester, which uses both manure and restaurant waste to eventually produce energy. The byproduct (slurry) left from the manure sent through the methane digester is pumped into a screw press that then pumps the liquid out. What is left is used in the bedding machine, which is pictured here. *Courtesy Photos*



The manure bedding, which absorbs moisture better than straw, looks a lot like peat moss, Holmes said. While there is a slight ammonia smell after it first drops, it quickly dissipates, he added. It allows the cows to stay comfortable and clean.

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Agrizone a key fixture at Winchester BMR

WINCHESTER

As Winchester BMR continues its expansion, the number of products offered at the local store grows with it.

Outside of the typical hardware items, one division of the store, in particular, has been added in order to appeal to a broader spectrum of the region's population.

The Agrizone line at Winchester BMR offers a line of farming products, ranging from work clothes to farm hardware, and dairy brushes to forestry equipment.

Many of the products aim to serve customers in a variety of fields, including the dairy, sheep, and beef industries, and more. There are also goods in stock that will serve equine-industry customers – such as salt and mineral licks, feeders, watering devices, and a variety of other merchandise.

Some of the products, meanwhile, may help to serve customers who are not necessarily a producer or cash cropper. There is an expanded line of work clothing, for instance; hydraulic oils and fluids, standard wire fencing, grouts and other accessories, to name a few examples.

The head office of BMR launched Agrizone in January 2010, with the express intent of catering to the needs of farmers.

Grouped under the name are more than 2,000 products related to the agricultural industry, with much of it available at the Winchester store. (If not in stock, an item can be ordered from BMR's distribution centre, while customers can also shop online at www.bmr.co.)

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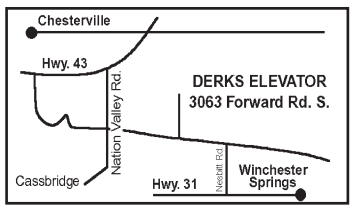

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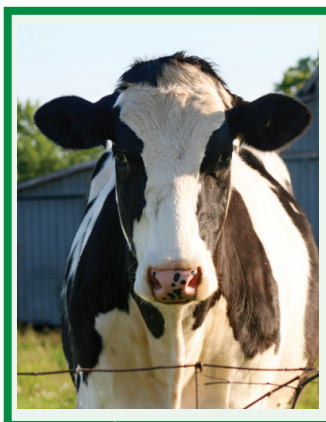

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Alternative forage options

by Michelle Linington, OMAFRA

KEMPTVILLE

Throughout the past few years in Ontario, there has been a decrease in the amount of acres devoted to growing forages.

As prices for corn, wheat, and beans have been strong, farmers are making the switch away from growing forages to capture a potentially higher return by growing grain crops instead.

Forages like alfalfa and grass hay are important feed ingredients for dairy cattle. They provide fibre in the diet that promotes rumen health and proper digestion.

Economically, forages are an excellent source of protein and other nutrients to support high milk production by dairy cattle, and are a cost-effective ingredient for feeding the herd.

Last year's dry weather further reduced forage yield in many parts of Ontario, and the weather this past winter was also very stressful to alfalfa plants, which resulted in many perennial stands of it being severely impacted.

Dairy producers have been looking for alternatives to the traditional approach to cropping forages more closely in the last couple of years as a result.

Although there is a lot of argument over the best forage options one thing is clear, double cropping is a great way to make ends meet. Planting a crop for forage production after winter wheat was quite successful for many producers last year.

There are different options when it comes to choosing what to plant, but sometimes planning ahead is half the battle. What the growing season will bring this summer is unknown, but the reduced land used for forages will likely continue to be a trend, which will make it more challenging to buy forage if you need it.

For more information about forage cropping options, visit www.ontario.ca/crops.

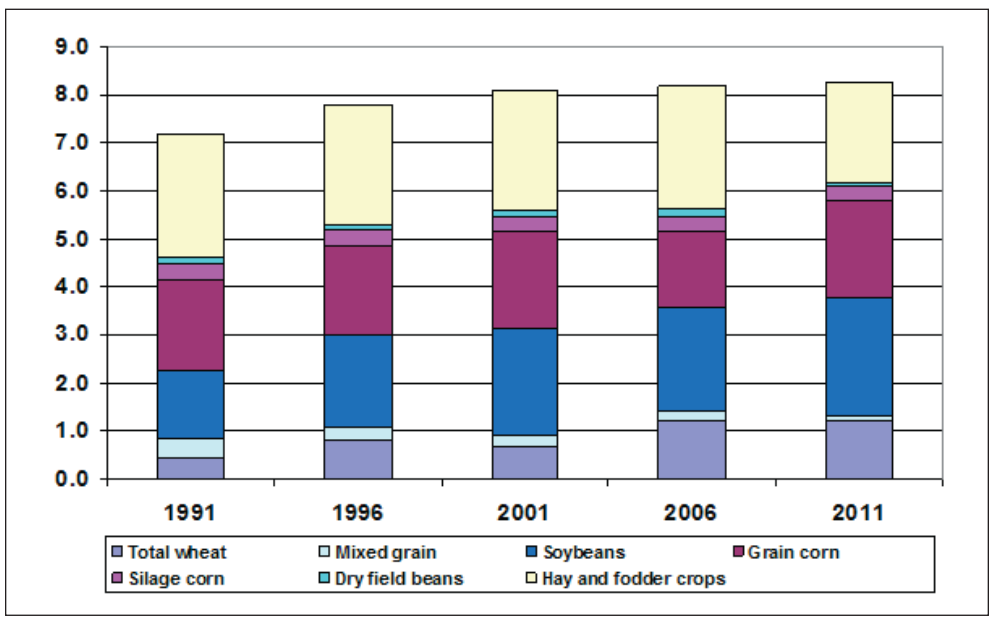


Figure One: Census data indicates that forage acres (in millions of acres) in Ontario has declined in recent years, a situation related to the appeal of commodity cash crops. Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture.

Spring forward

Replace plastic feeding equipment regularly

by Neil Anderson, OMAFRA

ELORA

Dr. Steve Scott from Perth doesn't mince words when giving advice about hygiene for feeding dairy calves.

"Throw them out [and] buy new ones," I heard him bark while waving a new pail and nurser bottle in the air for a group of producers to see.

His points were well made and irrefutable. In time and from constant use, plastic becomes almost impossible to clean properly.

I have some first-hand experience with Scott's advice. About a week after witnessing his magnificent cajoling, I took a telephone call from a producer who reluctantly replaced one of her barrels for feeding acidified milk. She had called previously to ask why her milk would acidify in the barrel, and make cottage cheese without the addition of acid.

I guessed that throughout the years she had created a colony of acid loving and producing bacteria in a well-used and difficult to clean barrel. It was a good news report because her new barrel solved the problem. She was going to replace her other barrels that day. She also telephoned the milk replacer supplier with a gracious apology for blaming his product for her troubles.

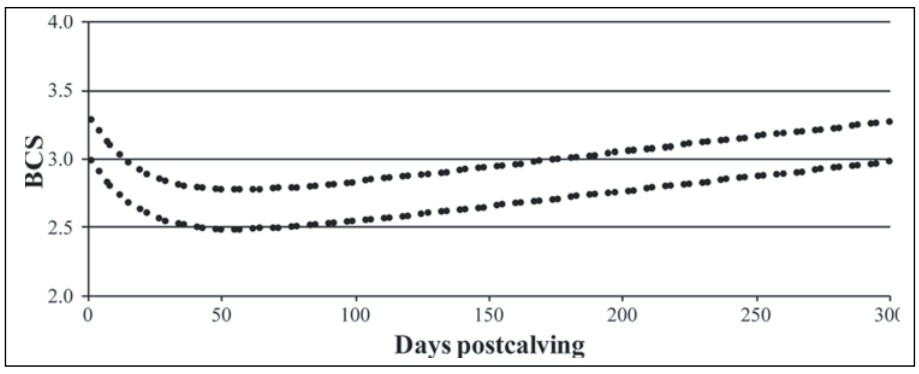
Plastic isn't like stainless steel. Plastic is porous and scratches, and can become difficult to clean and disinfect.

Just like when we set our clocks forward for daylight savings time, and we're advised to change the batteries in our smoke detectors, we should also be reminded to replace the plastic equipment used to feed our nursery calves.



The nipple bottle on the door of the dishwasher appears white and clean. Note the two bottles inside the dishwasher. The bottle on the right is remarkably different in colour and cleanliness. It is past its best before date, and should be discarded.

This article first appeared in Ceptor Animal Health News, *a newsletter published by the veterinary science and policy unit of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs in Elora, Ont. It is reprinted with permission.*



Optimal range of Body Condition Score according to days in milk

Body condition score

Thinning the recommendations

by Mario S. Mongeon, OMAFRA

ALFRED

Body condition score (BCS) assessment is a recognized management tool. The scale used in North America is the five point scale where one is a very thin cow and five is an over conditioned animal.

In early lactation, when dairy cows cannot get enough energy through their daily ration to support high milk production, the animals will utilize body fat reserves to compensate for the energy deficit. This phase can last from 50 to 100 days post calving. The BCS profile is very similar to an inverted lactation curve. The lowest point of the BCS curve usually shows up around the time of peak lactation. Cows with superior genetics for milk production will have a higher lactation curve, and will tend to have a depressed BCS profile.

During the first 30 days post calving, management and feeding will have little effect on BCS loss. This is mostly due to hormonal adjustments. After that four week period, research has shown that management and diet can play an important role at reducing the length of time during which the cow will use her body reserves. Eventually, when the conditions allow it, the animal will replenish what was lost.

This fluctuation of BCS score is perfectly normal and cannot be completely eliminated by improved feeding. Traditionally, nutritionists used to come up with early lactation rations that would provide all the energy required by the cow to prevent as much as possible any body reserves losses. We now know that BCS change is a genetically regulated process that is, in fact, beneficial as long as it is not drastic (less than a point of BCS).

The primary means for controlling the extent of BCS variation and lowest point post calving is through the management of calving BCS. This is why monitoring BCS in mid to late lactation is also critical since it is during this period that the intended calving BCS can be more efficiently managed to achieve the optimal objective. It is less efficient to adjust the BCS in the dry period. We need to keep in mind that optimal BCS at calving is an important factor influencing the fertility outcome later in lactation.

The optimal BCS at the onset of the breeding period should lie between three and 3.5. In light of recent findings, it seems that previous BCS recommendations need to be thinned down a bit. Optimal BCS at calving should be between three and 3.25 and the loss of BCS after calving should be no more than one point of BCS to a lowest score of 2.25.

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The top photograph shows the location of the restraint rail at about 48 inches above the cow alley. Note the rail contacts the cows' necks in the area of the supraspinous processes. The bottom photograph shows the rail lowered to about 40 inches. Note the rail contacts the neck about midway between the poll and the supraspinous processes.

Lowering the bar at feed bunks

by Neil Anderson, OMAFRA

ELORA

Blemishes in the area of the supraspinous processes (high on the neck) on dairy cows are evidence of repetitive injury or contact with either tie rails in tie stalls, neck rails in free stalls, or the rail of a post-and-rail restraint at a feed bunk.

The blemishes are self-inflicted when cows reach for feed or compete with herd mates at free-stall feed bunks. In newer free-stall barns for Holsteins, the distance from the floor to the bottom of the rail is often about 48 inches. In hindsight, this location is proving to be a hazard for the most sensitive area of the neck.

In barns with lower rails, cows may have hair loss at a position halfway between the poll and the supraspinous processes. Although the hair loss may be unsightly, it is less traumatic than blemishes and injuries in the area of the supraspinous processes.

Properly designed and installed slant bar restraints seldom lead to neck blemishes, and feed barriers keep feed close to cows.

However, for practical reasons, producers want to keep their sweep-in feed bunks and post-and-rail restraints. If so, it is time to lower the high bar to a more cow friendly location. That is about 40 inches above the cow alley. This task was accomplished with about 30 minutes labour for two men for one pen of cows recently. A week later, there wasn't any noticeable drop in feed intakes or milk production.

This article first appeared in Ceptor Animal Health News*, a newsletter published by the veterinary science and policy unit of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs in Elora, Ont. It is reprinted with permission.*

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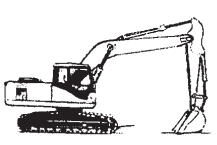

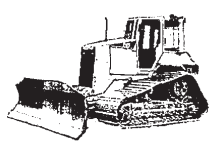



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Robotic milking systems growing in popularity

by Vanja Djukic, OMAFRA

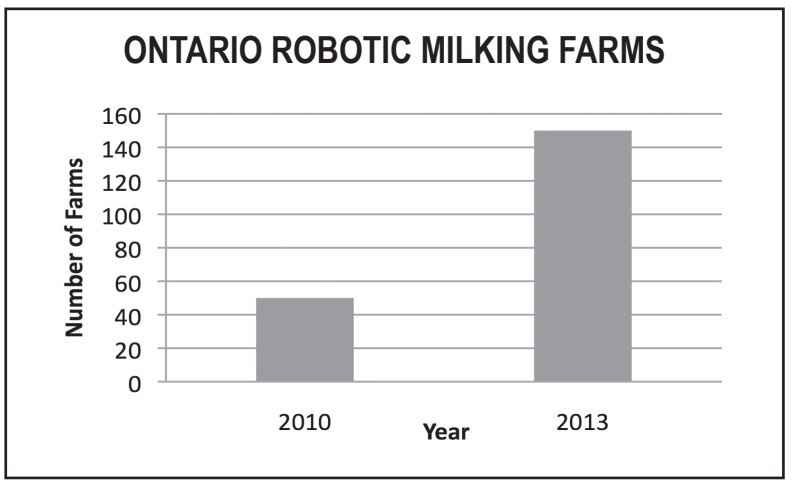
KEMPTVILLE

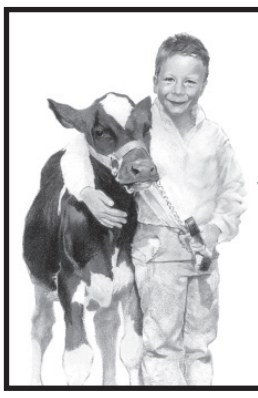
Throughout the last three years, the number of Ontario robotic milking farms has approximately tripled to about 150 farms. This trend is largely due to the improvements in the technology, the labour savings that robots offer, and the lifestyle advantages for dairy farmers.

When it comes to feeding cows in automated barns, some of the grain fed to the cows is provided separately in the robot during milking to stimulate return visits to the robot by the cow. This also offers the opportunity for precise feeding of individual animals based on their specific milk production. Feeding that is tailored to each cow allows for efficient use of expensive feed ingredients, as each cow is close to what she requires for nutrients. The robot gives an approaching cow "permission" to be milked and proceeds to do so with a robotic arm, or otherwise directs her to an area to rest or feed, if the robot detects she's not yet ready to be milked. The robot computer integrates each cow's milking data and can adjust the amount of grain supplement dispensed in the AMS, as well as the milking frequency for each cow with a goal of achieving optimal production. Some newer technologies can also analyse a sample of milk from each cow to help the farmer identify health and production issues, such as when to breed the cow or to tell him if the cow is pregnant.

Robots are a significant investment, and the farmers have to have a desire to work with the technology because it requires a different approach to dairying. With this in mind, each producer must weigh the costs and benefits of implementing an automated feeder, due to the costs associated with purchasing a robot, expanding a barn or building a new one, as well as the willingness to fully adopt a new management strategy.

Dr. Tom Wright, at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Ministry of Rural Affairs, along with colleagues Dr. Vern Osborne and Dr. John Cant at the University of Guelph are conducting a nutritional and production survey of the province's automated farms this summer to provide some benchmark data on the current nutritional practices. Dairy producers interested in participating in the survey this summer can contact Wright at 1-519-824-4120 extension 56281.





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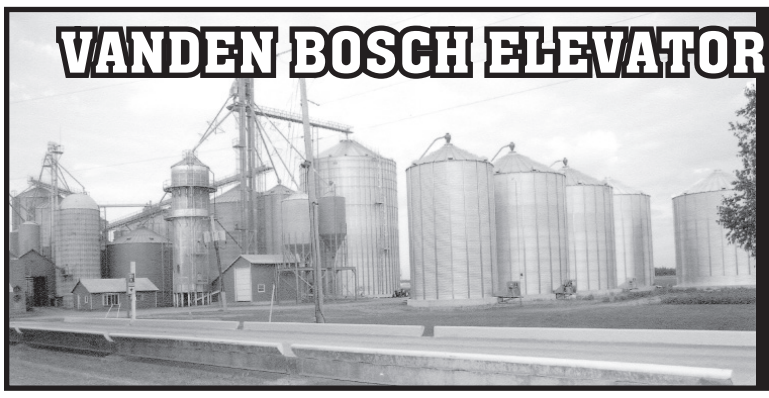

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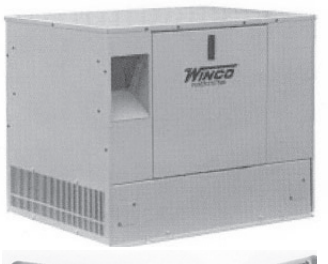



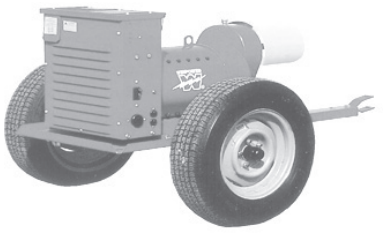

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Cornell University findings

Lifetime milk production can be influenced by rationing

by Mario S. Mongeon, OMAFRA

ALFRED

In recent years the topic of intensified milk feeding has become a focus of attention by the research community. Several aspects have been studied such as how to best manage the nutrition and nutrient intake, and weaning of the calf.

There is consensus among researchers on the value of providing a greater supply of nutrients from milk or milk replacer. There are also arguments for improving welfare status by following the same concept. This higher plane of nutrition implies that we need to feed calves for a specific rate of daily gain, much higher than previously considered.

Earlier this year, interesting research findings were published in the *Dairy Science Journal.* A group of scientists from Cornell University examined data collected throughout a 10 year period from two different herds, and involved a total of approximately 1,900 heifers.

In both of these herds, heifer calves were fed large quantities of high quality milk replacer. The milk replacers used during the period of these observations were both commercially available. The overall objective of the calf nutrition program in both herds was to double the birth weight of calves by weaning, which took place at around 56 days of age. Several parameters were recorded, such as birth weight, date of birth, average daily gain, health, treatment, weaning weight, age at first calving, milk production for first, and subsequent lactation just to name a few. The analysis of the data was designed so that it would accommodate the fact that conditions vary from herd to herd, as well as from environment to environment, and conditions change over time within a herd.

The results indicate that increased growth rate before weaning triggers changes in the expression of the genetic potential of the animal. It is clear that an increased plane of nutrition in the first few weeks of the life of a heifer has positive effects on lifetime lactation milk yield. This study identifies nutrition and management of the pre-weaned calf as major environmental factors influencing the expression of the genetic potential of the animal, at least for milk yield.

The key here is the density and quality of nutrient in the milk replacer. Data from this study indicates that the digestibility, protein quality, and protein level of the milk replacer along with total energy intake appear to be critical to generate the milk response. Furthermore, during the colder months of the year it may be beneficial to increase volume or energy content of the milk replacer to compensate for greater energy requirements.

Several early life events appear to have long-term effects on the performance of the calf. Efforts should be directed to minimize anything that negatively affects the ability of the calf to achieve superior average daily gains, especially before weaning. This study emphasizes the fact that there is some potential profit in spending more time and resources on the animal at this early stage of life. Furthermore, timing seems to be critical.

To have a positive influence on lifetime performance:

- Use high quality milk replacer or whole milk to feed the calves
- Feed milk or milk replacer for at least five weeks
- Pre-weaning average daily gains should be high, around 820 grams per day.
- During the colder months, feed more or increase energy content of feed to compensate for greater energy requirements.



Achieving optimum pasture results

by Jack Kyle, OMAFRA

KEMPTVILLE

It is at the beginning of the pasture season that you can take the steps to optimize pasture performance on your farm.

Pasture is the lowest cost feed source available, and the opportunity for improved production is significant on most farms.

A well-managed pasture will be very competitive with any other crop use that you might consider for that land base if the forage and livestock are both well managed with a good rotational system.

The keys to maximize both forage and livestock production is to manage the forage for optimum growth, and optimum bite size for the animals grazing.

To get optimum growth from the forage plants they need to be in a rapid growth state for as much of the growing season as possible. Maintaining a grazing forage height between 10 centimetres (4 inches) and 30 centimetres (12 inches) will allow the plants to maintain good growth, and capture all the available sunlight to drive photosynthesis.

This plant height will maintain a substantial root system that will be able to gather water and nutrients from the soil throughout the summer, and minimize a summer dormancy period should hot dry weather occur.

To maintain this level of forage growth the pasture manager needs to move livestock to fresh grass every couple of days. If too much pasture is offered at a time, then selective grazing will take place and the less desirable plants will not be grazed, become mature and over a number of years, dominate the pasture.

After a plant is grazed it needs time to rest and re-grow, this is the key point of pasture management – rest and recovery.

Maximizing bite size is the key to good animal productivity. Cattle bite at a rather constant rate, and for about eight hours each day. As the pasture manager, you have control of the bite size.

Providing pasture that is the optimum size for the animal to bite is the first big step to maximize intake.

The second step is to have fresh forage on offer at all times. Livestock are not going to eat forage that has been laid on or fouled with manure or urine. The longer the animals are in a given paddock, the greater the percentage of forage in that paddock that is going to be unpalatable because of what has been done to it, thus the importance of frequent moves to fresh pasture.

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Large bale harvesting equipment safety guidelines

The biggest hazard in working with large bale harvesting equipment is their physical nature. Large bales of hay or straw can weigh from 225 kg to 1300 kg and these can create additional risks. Here are some guidelines for safe operation of this equipment:



Pre-harvest

• Thoroughly clean baler to remove crop residues, mouse nests, and any other debris
• Lubricate according to manufacturer's specifications
• Check for loose or missing nuts, screws, guards, or bent teeth
• Replace missing or damaged guards and shields
• Inspect belts and chains for evidence of wear or breakage
• Replace bent or missing pickup teeth
• Maintain belt tension according to manufacturer's specifications
• Ensure that hydraulic hoses are clean, in good repair and are hooked up correctly
• Check twine feeding and cutting mechanisms for proper operation
• Check slip clutch, roll scraper, and rear gate latch to make sure they are properly adjusted and functioning according to manufacturer's recommendations
• Check for smooth functioning of the slip clutch, roll scraper, and rear gate latch
• Check lights, reflectors, and slow moving vehicle (SMV) emblem
• Ensure there are fully charged fire extinguishers mounted on the trailer and baler

Operating the machine

• Adjust the pickup to allow for adequate ground clearance
• Keep in mind the safety precautions when operating the (power take-off) PTO and hydraulic operated machinery
• Harvest material must contain 20% or less moisture content
• Travel at a speed the machine can handle keeping in mind the size of the windrow
• Avoid driving across a slope
• Drive slow and carry the bale low
• Avoid turning or stopping suddenly
• Conventional balers have a flywheel which keeps the machine operating even after the power is disengaged
• **Do not** turn the flywheel manually to view the knotter if someone else is working on the knives or other moving parts

Moving large bales

• Keep other workers and bystanders well clear of bale handling operations
• Ensure the tractor is large enough and equipped with sufficient counterweight to handle the weight of the bales
• Set wheels at maximum width to increase stability
• Front-end loaders: always use a grapple hook (or proper bale handling device)
• Note that a rear-mounted loading spike is ideal – it eliminates the danger of roll-back and does not block the operator's front vision
• Keep the load as low as possible to prevent backward or side overturn of the tractor
• Lifting round bales with a front-end loader is discouraged unless a proper bale restraining device is used

Keep in mind

• Moving machinery is much faster than human reaction time
• Wear close fitting clothing
• **Never** hand feed any material, including twine, into the baler
• **Never** leave the tractor seat with the engine running
• When ejecting bales, ensure that the area behind the baler is clear; do not eject on a downward slope
• Riders should never be allowed on the tractor or baler
• Always keep children well away from the baling operation
• If storing high stacks of hay, bear in mind that removing bales from heights could be hazardous
• Use recommended hand signals when using harvesting equipment especially when loading bales manually
• Match ground speed of the harvesting equipment with field conditions
• If the machine has a cutterbar (sickle cutterbars, rotary disk cutterbars, field combines), keep clear of the cutterbar when the machine is running and use the mower safety curtain or cover when the machine is in operation.

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Selecting replacement: developing a strategy

by Mario S. Mongeon, OMAFRA

ALFRED

When visiting dairy farms, I am often surprised to see the number of heifers raised. In many cases, pretty much all females born on the farm will be raised and eventually milked.

I often ask why such and such an animal was raised, and the reasons given are often vague. It usually involves what I call the "insurance factor."

Examples of insurance factors have included keeping everything in order to try them out, and making sure that this potentially outstanding milker stays in the herd. Selection based on actual results and not prediction is more appealing to many farmers. This insurance factor can involve more requirements in terms of labour, barn space, feed, and so on. In the long run, the insurance factor becomes quite costly. What if only the best animals would be raised? This objective can be met if a plan is put in place, and a selection strategy implemented. The outcome can translate into substantial financial and labour savings, and superior replacement animals.

Selection and culling is a balancing act between economics, milk production, and genetic progress. In order to implement the best strategy, one needs to identify goals. Genetic progress goals will determine selection intensity and vice-versa. In order to achieve a fast genetic gain, the selection needs to be more intense. As the selection intensity increases, only the best cows and superior heifers will be selected to give rise to replacement animals, and only the best bulls will be used as sires for replacement heifers. Calves from the remaining animals in the herd will not be kept for replacement purposes.

TABLE 1: Number of replacement animals kept annually for a hundred cow herd*

Age at first calving (Months)	Replacement rate (per cent)		
	25 per cent	30 per cent	35 per cent
24	26	31	36
26	28	33	39
28	31	36	42

* Mortality rate from weaning to calving: 2 per cent

The selection process can start by ranking animals based on a simple number – their Lifetime Profit Index (LPI). This index is a valuable overall genetic selection tool and considers factors such as production, durability, health, and fertility. LPI values can be found for any registered animal. On a regular basis, CanWest DHI will provide a genetic inventory report of your herd. LPI aims to identify animals that are expected to transmit superior genetics to their progeny, which makes them more profitable. For heifers, the LPI value is based on parentage only as no specific data exists for a heifer that has not yet begun milking. There is a new tool that can be used to increase the accuracy of predicting the genetic potential of an animal used to make the selection decision – genomics. Genomic testing looks at specific DNA markers of genes that influence key production traits. These markers are distributed across the chromosomes that compose the genetic makeup of a specific animal. Genomic testing panels come in different sizes based on the number of markers analyzed. Using genomics to select heifers increases the rate of LPI progress made versus traditional selection methods. Genomic testing can be done on dairy calves at an early age, giving valuable information on the genetic value of a potential dairy replacement heifer.

Once the cows and heifers are ranked from highest to poorest LPI value on a piece of paper, the breeder is better equipped to visualize the selection process. Three groups of animals should emerge from this list – the keepers, the maybe's, and the goners. Other factors might be used to move cows from one group to another, such as temperament or other characteristics not accounted for by the LPI index.

The keepers group consists of cows and heifers with LPI values above the herd average. Replacement animals should mainly come from these dams. They should be bred with excellent sires in order to optimize genetic gain. Using sexed semen for this group can be beneficial since it can shift the sex ratio of live calves from the standard 50-50 to an average of 90 per cent females and 10 per cent males, or a 90-10 ratio. This can prove invaluable to optimize the number of females born from the best individuals of the herd. Since the fertility of sexed semen might be reduced, it is advisable to privilege its use on heifers.

The maybe's group includes animals with average LPI values and may, if needed, give rise to some replacement animals. The number of replacements raised from this group should be kept to a minimum.

The goners group is the tail group, LPI wise. Although you will want the milk from these animals, you do not want to keep any heifers as replacements. Since the decision to not keep the calf is already made, breeding should be made accordingly.

Once you know the composition of the keepers group, it is important to define how many heifer calves will be kept annually for replacement purposes. A good starting point is to have a look at Table 1. This table gives the number of replacements to keep annually for a 100 milking cow herd, according to different replacement rates and age at first calving. Find the situation that best describes your farm and look at the number of heifers you should have in your barn at any given time. How does that compare to your actual numbers?

- Limit the number of heifers raised on your farm
- Raise only the best ones, it makes economic sense
- Define your objectives and develop a selection strategy
- Use new tools such as sexed semen and genomics wisely to improve your strategy
- Pay attention to calving dates in order to distribute replacements over the whole year
- Stick to your plan

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DAIRY MONTH RECIPE

Mile-High Coconut Cream Pie

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Ingredients

1 9-inch (23 cm) deep dish pie crust
2 ½ cups (625 ml) milk
1 cup (250 ml) flaked sweetened coconut
¾ cup (180 ml) sugar
¼ cup (60 ml) cornstarch
2 eggs
2 tsp (10 ml) vanilla extract
1 cup (250 ml) 35% cream
2 tbsp (30 ml) toasted flaked sweetened coconut for garnish

Preparation

Bake pie shell according to package or recipe directions. Let cool.
In saucepan, heat milk and coconut over medium heat until steaming. In large bowl, whisk ½ cup (125 ml) sugar with cornstarch; whisk in eggs until blended. Gradually whisk hot milk mixture into egg mixture in thin, steady stream. Return to saucepan.
Cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, for about 10 min or until thickened to pudding consistency. Transfer to bowl; stir in vanilla extract. Place plastic wrap directly on surface; refrigerate until cool.
In bowl, using electric mixer, whip cream with remaining sugar to soft peaks. Set 1 ½ cups (375 ml) whipped cream aside. Fold remaining cream into cooled filling; spread into pie shell. Using piping bag with star tip or a spoon, garnish top with reserved whipped cream. Sprinkle with toasted coconut. Refrigerate for 1 hour or until set or for up to 1 day.

For the Adventurous: Pina Colada Pie: Fold 1 to 2 tbsp (15 to 30 ml) dark rum into whipped cream and fold ½ cup (125 ml) drained crushed pineapple to filling with whipped cream. *Source: Dairy Farmers of Canada*

DAIRY MONTH RECIPE

Easy Creamy Mac'n Cheese

Macaroni and cheese is the perfect comfort food. This recipe is filled with lip-smacking goodness, starring lots of cheese, cream and milk.



Ingredients

1 lb (450 g) macaroni pasta
2 tbsp (30 ml) Butter
2 tbsp (30 ml) all purpose flour
2 cups (500 ml) 18% cream
1 cup (250 ml) milk
2 tsp (10 mL) Dijon mustard
1½ cups (375 mL) Canadian cheddar, shredded
½ tsp (2 ml) ground, nutmeg
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Topping:

½ cup (125 ml) dried bread crumbs
½ cup (125 ml) Canadian white cheddar, shredded

Preparation

Cook pasta in a large saucepan of boiling water for 10 to 12 minutes or until tender; drain well. Heat butter in large saucepan over medium heat. Add flour and stir for one minute. Remove from the heat and gradually stir in cream and milk. Return to medium heat and stir until sauce boils and thickens. Simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, for five minutes; remove from heat. Stir in remaining ingredients and macaroni. Spoon into a buttered large oven proof casserole dish. Combine topping ingredients in a small bowl. Sprinkle over top of macaroni. Brown under preheated broiler for two to three minutes or until golden. *Source: Dairy Farmers of Canada*

DAIRY MONTH RECIPE

Make-Ahead Berry Breakfast Parfaits

Make your own beautiful breakfast parfaits in the evening and you've got a nutritious and delicious breakfast ready to go in the morning. The oats soften perfectly as the parfaits sit in the refrigerator overnight.



Ingredients

1 cup (250 ml) large-flake rolled oats
¼ cup (50 ml) chopped almonds, pecans or walnuts
1 tbsp (15 ml) ground flax seeds (optional)
3 cups (750 ml) 2% plain yogurt
3 tbsp (45 ml) granulated or packed brown sugar
1 tsp (5 ml) vanilla extract
2 cups (500 ml) blueberries, sliced strawberries and/or raspberries

Preparation

In a skillet over medium heat, toast large-flake rolled oats and nuts (if using), stirring constantly, for two to three minutes or until golden and fragrant. Immediately transfer to a bowl and let cool. Stir in flax seeds (if using).
In a bowl, whisk together yogurt, sugar and vanilla. Alternately layer oat mixture, yogurt and berries in four individual 1½ cups (375 ml) reusable containers with lids or tall glasses. Seal with lids or cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least eight hours or up to two days.

Tips: You can use fresh berries or frozen berries. If using frozen, do not let thaw before assembling the parfaits.

Yields 4 servings *Source: Dairy Farmers of Canada*

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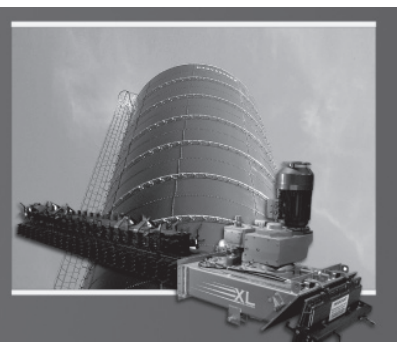

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DAIRY MONTH RECIPE

Cheddar Cheese Scones



Ingredients
2 cups (500 ml) all-purpose flour
4 tsp (20 ml) baking powder
½ tsp (2 ml) salt
¼ tsp (1 ml) cayenne pepper
¼ cup (60 ml) cold butter
1 cup (250 ml) Canadian old cheddar shredded
1 cup (250 ml) milk
Topping:
½ cup (125 ml) shredded Canadian old cheddar

Preparation
Preheat oven to 425 °F (220 °C).
In large bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, salt and cayenne. Using pastry blender or two knives, cut in butter until mixture is crumbly. Stir in cheese. Pour in milk; stir with fork until soft, sticky dough forms.
Turn out dough onto lightly floured surface and shape into ¾-inch (2 cm) thick square. Cut into 2-inch (5 cm) squares or rounds and place, touching each other, on ungreased baking sheet.
Topping: Sprinkle with cheese. Bake for 12 to 15 min or until golden.
Variation: Fruit Scones: Add 2 tbsp (30 ml) sugar in place of cayenne and 1/2 cup (125 ml) currants or raisins or dried cranberries in place of cheese. Add grated rind of 1 lemon or orange if desired in step 2.
Yields 10 to 12 scones.
Time-Saving Tip: In food processor, combine dry ingredients (without cheese). Using on/off motion, cut in butter until crumbly, then blend in milk and cheese just until moistened and dough sticks together.
Source: Dairy Farmers of Canada

DAIRY MONTH RECIPE

Decadent Dessert Smoothies



Peanut Butter Cup
2 cups (500 ml) milk or chocolate milk
¼ cup (50 ml) peanut butter
¼ cup (50 ml) chocolate syrup
3 scoops chocolate frozen yogurt
1 tbsp (15 ml) miniature chocolate chips (topping)

Blueberry Cheesecake
2 cup (500 ml) milk
1 cup (250 ml) fresh blueberries or frozen
4 oz (125 g) cream cheese, cut into cubes
13 tsp (5 ml) granulated sugar
3 scoops vanilla frozen yogurt
2 tbsp (30 ml) graham cracker crumbs for topping (optional)

Hawaiian
2 cups (500 ml) milk
1 frozen banana, broken into chunks
1/2 cup (125 ml) drained canned crushed pineapple
2 tbsp (30 ml) sweetened shredded coconut
3 scoops vanilla frozen yogurt
1 tbsp (15 ml) toasted chopped pecans for topping (optional)

Preparation instructions:
In a blender, combine milk, fruit and other flavouring ingredients (as called for) and blend until smooth. Add frozen yogurt and blend until smooth. Pour into 2 to 4 chilled glasses and sprinkle with topping ingredients.
Source: Dairy Farmers of Canada

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Dennis McKnight is one of the master cheesemakers now working at Upper Canada Village in Morrisburg. He is pictured here showing a group of visitors' annatto, the dye used to colour the cheese orange.



Pictured above is the rennet, the annatto, and the style of box (made of Elm veneer) used to house the finished product. At right, the original vat, with some modern alterations, that came from the original co-operative cheese house near Ingersoll. Press Photos – Casselman



Dairy industry began with cheese

by Sandy Casselman
Press staff

MORRISBURG

Today, anyone can walk into a supermarket and purchase one of more than a dozen types of cheese, but for our ancestors things were a bit different.

At Upper Canada Village (UCV) in Morrisburg, a living museum exemplifying what life was like for pioneers in the 1860s, the history of cheese and cheesemaking comes to life.

"Cheese has a very important history," Dennis McKnight, UCV cheesemaker, said. "In my opinion, it started the dairy industry."

McKnight explained that, during this time period, there wasn't a market for milk, as it was impossible to store the product without spoiling.

"This was a way to preserve milk so it could be sold [but] in a different form," he said.

The technology for making cheese came from the U.S., as did many of Upper Canada's early master cheesemakers, McKnight said. Originally, England had a contract with the U.S. to make and ship cheese overseas, but following the American Civil War the U.S. ended the contract, leaving England without a supplier. Upper Canada, with its perfect grass for feeding cows, McKnight continued, became a quality alternate supplier, and with many U.S. master cheesemakers out of a job, they emigrated north to Canada, bringing their knowledge, skills, and expertise with them.

At UCV, visitors are provided with an opportunity to see how cheese was made in a farming co-operative in the mid-19th century.

Generally, McKnight said, farmers, in groups of 30 to 50, joined together to form cheese-making co-operatives throughout Southeastern Ontario (Upper Canada). Together, these early businessmen would hire a master cheesemaker, pool their resources (milk, supplies, labour), and share in the profit. In fact, the new cheese industry, McKnight said, saw the inception of a cash-based economic system rather than the traditional bartering. With the increase in demand, more dairy cows were needed, thus sparking the dairy industry, he said.

The pioneer cheesemaking process has changed through the years, but the master cheesemakers at UCV try to keep things as close as possible to the way things were, provided it doesn't conflict with the many provincial regulations governing cheese production today.

In times past, using horse-drawn carts, Upper Canada farmers would haul 30-gallon containers of milk to the cheese factory, where it was then raised by a pulley, and poured through an opening in the factory wall straight into the vat. Cheesemakers used raw whole milk at the time, as the naturally occurring fat cells and bacteria found within the milk were needed to make the cheese. Today, raw milk is prohibited, and pasteurized milk is required.

At UCV, cheese is still made in large vats that heat the milk to 102 degrees Celsius, but they have been modernized to meet government regulations. Cheesemakers then add annatto, rennet, and bacteria cultures.

Dye extracted from the tropical annatto plant is added to produce orange-coloured cheese. In the 1860s, the contract with England required the cheese to be orange so the British could distinguish it from cheese made in their own country.

Rennet, which is an enzyme found in the stomach lining of calves, is used to curdle the milk, allowing proteins to join, making string-like threads. In pioneer co-operatives, each farmer was required to provide one calf stomach lining every 30 or more days. For this, McKnight said, farmers would use male calves, as opposed to females, because they were not needed to produce milk, or birth future generations of cattle.

Bacteria cultures are added today to put back what has been taken out during pasteurization, said McKnight. Bacteria are necessary in the making of cheese. Today, UCV uses only pasteurized milk. However, he added, there is good bacteria and bad bacteria. In fact, in the 1860s, some people died from tuberculosis picked up from eating fresh cheese with the wrong kinds of bacteria. It was discovered that letting the cheese dry (sit) for at least two months would make the cheese safe to eat. This was discovered as the Canadian cheese sent to England did not make the British sick, and the only difference was that the Brit's cheese was aboard ships for roughly two months on its voyage across the ocean.

Once the cheese began to form (milk coagulates), a contraption that resembles a french-fry maker was used to cut the cheese into curds, allowing salt to permeate the entire product. This was necessary to preserve the cheese, which was then placed in cheesecloth, and pressed into cylindrical slabs (wheels) before being stored in a dry room. The cheese was turned over several times for a period of days before being packaged into wooden boxes and shipped to England.

Cheese was traditionally made during the summer, in the dry, warm months, and stored in a clean, dry room in the cheese house. Ice was not used to refrigerate the cheese as it added harmful moisture, which would lead to additional moulds of a more harmful nature. Cheese sent to England generally formed a thick black rind of mould, which would later be trimmed off before eating.

Also, cheese at that time was all "old" cheese. In the past, it would take two months for cheese to become "old," whereas today it takes two years, McKnight said.

Today, UCV no longer stores cheese at the cheese factory where it is made, but, instead, refrigerates it in the main building where it is sold to visitors.

The first cheese factory in Ontario was built near Ingersoll in 1864, and was supported by the Dairy Farmers of Canada. One of the original vats from that factory is now housed and used at UCV's cheese house, McKnight said.

The village, which opened in 1961, officially started its operational cheese factory in 1964.

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