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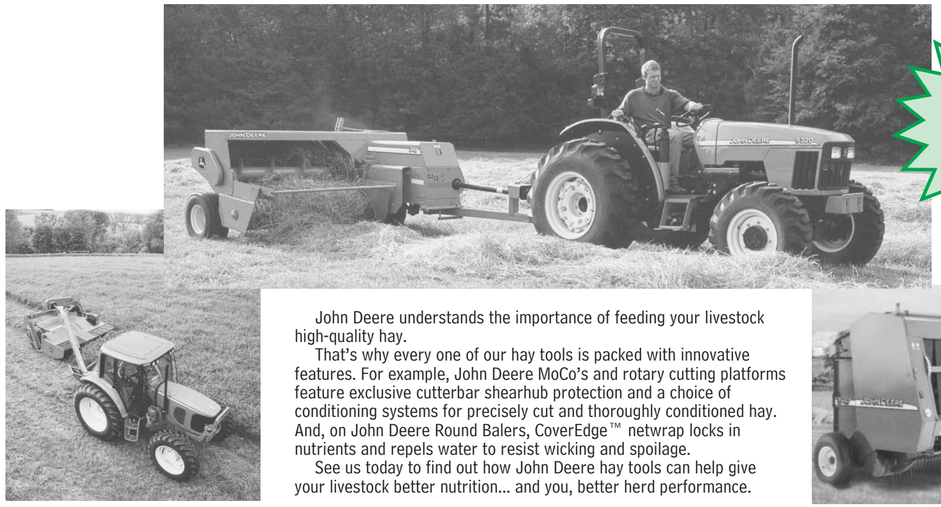

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June is DAIRY MONTH

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE WINCHESTER PRESS

Imports vital concern: Dundas Milk Committee

by Meghan Duncan
Press staff

BRINSTON – This year's Dundas Milk Committee (DMC) is made up of seven dairy farmers from throughout Dundas County. The group, which meets about seven or eight times a year, is a forum for local opinions to be heard and carried up to the next level – the Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO). The group also participates in regional and provincial conferences.

"There may be different viewpoints, but everyone has the same concerns," said Ted Hendriks, chair of the DMC, of dairy farmers' opinions across the province. This year marks Hendriks' fourth year as chair of the committee.

As for dairy producers in Dundas, Hendriks explained that imports from Europe and New Zealand are the largest, growing concern. These imports make up the greatest percentage of butteroil and sugar blends coming into Canada.

"The ironic thing is the U.S. is being affected in the same way," said Hendriks. "They're being flooded with these products."

But Canada's dairy producers are trying hard to swim through the flood.

"These imports have taken away 47 per cent of the ice cream market," explained Hendriks. "Nationally, it's costing us $2 billion per month in lost income. That's why we're lobbying to try and stop these products from coming in."

Dairy farmers have been lobbying the same cause on-and-off for about seven years, explained Hendriks.

"It's an escalating problem," he said. "Initially it was thought that these products would cause a maximum of 25 per cent the ice cream market lost. But now it's almost double that, and its still climbing."

Hendriks said that farmers should not be the only ones concerned with these cheaper products making their way into the Canadian food system.

"It's not just about the dairy producers," said Hendriks. "The consumers are being misled." Hendriks said that a good percentage of the ice cream available at grocery stores is not necessarily made from cream or dairy, but rather from these composite concentrate products from Europe and elsewhere.

"The consumer has to look at the ingredients," he warned. "It's both a quality issue and a price issue. They're selling a cheaper product for the same price."

Hendriks explained that a butteroil-sugar blend is made up of 49 per cent butter and 51 per cent sugar, and therefore can be brought into Canada tariff free. Anything below 50 per cent dairy proportion is deemed non-dairy.

Nick Thurler, secretary for the DMC, said that he too feels the import problems keep escalating.

"We're trying to push the government to stop imports from coming in and putting pressure on the quota system; that's the main thing," said Thurler.

Quota remains one of the major concerns in the dairy industry. A wide-spread sentiment is the need to cap the price of quota.

Thurler explained that in May 2005, one kilogram of butter fat quota cost the farmer about $29,211.

"That's how much it takes to milk one cow," said Thurler. "It would take one kilogram of your quota to ship that milk."

Other members of this year's DMC executive include Gerry Westenbroek as vice-chair, and Henry Hofer, Andy Puenter, William DeJong and Kevin Scheepers as members.

Gordon Johnson is the Dairy Farmers of Ontario board member for Dundas, Stormont, and Ottawa-Carleton.

"As a committee we're supposed to be a representation of the dairy producers in the county," said Hendriks. "I think we do that very well. The group is made up of a good cross-section of producers."

The members, who own a wide variety of dairy operations, want to keep the DFO up-to-date with their concerns.

"That's important," said Hendriks. "If we don't tell them [DFO] what we want, how will they know?"

The next meeting will be at the beginning of July at the old clerk's office in Brinston. "Everyone is welcome," said Thurler.

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DFA holds regular monthly meetings in the Dundas Meeting Hall, Chesterville, on the first Wednesday of every month, (no July meeting), at 8:00 p.m. Please bring any questions or concerns you may have and we will do our best to help.

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Sept. 7: DFA Regional Meeting, Chesterville
Nov. 2005: OFA Convention, Toronto

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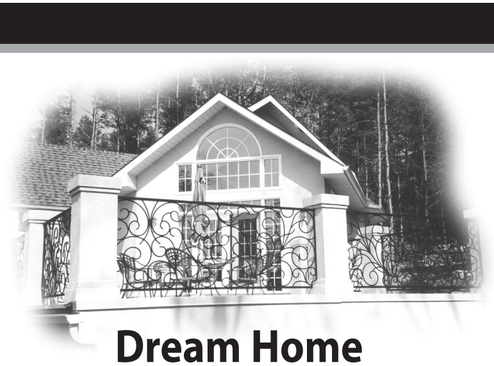

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Helpline critical to Ontario's farmers

CHESTERVILLE – The Ontario Farm Women's Network launched The Farm Line, a toll-free telephone helpline for Ontario farmers and their families, on Nov. 27, 2000. Five years later, in the wake of the BSE crisis and commodity price upsets, the Farm Line is now more crucial than ever.

"Farmers have a lot of stress to deal with," said provincial co-ordinator for the helpline Susan Klein-Swormink, a Chesterville resident. "They don't feel comfortable calling a distress centre."

Klein-Swormink explained that the counselling available through the Farm Line is individual and specific to the agriculture community, which makes farmers more comfortable with using the service.

The confidential helpline provides personal, career and financial information, support and help for farmers and their families, as well as easy access to a network of professionals who provide services to farm families. The Farm Line also arranges for critical incident stress teams for on-site debriefing and counselling services to help people deal with their reactions to accidents and deaths on the farm.

"At the moment, commodity prices and the BSE crisis are the biggest issues," said Klein-Swormink. "Some calls have been very serious. Plus local dealers are complaining. Not much equipment is moving."

Modeled after the 1-800 Farm Line created by the Saskatchewan Government in 1992, the Ontario-wide Farm Line will meet many of the same needs identified in Saskatchewan in the early '90s.

Ontario farmers have faced many challenges including the pork crisis and the Ice Storm of 1998. Also, with the closure of many of Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs rural offices, farmers have lost the one-to-one support once provided by OMAFRA's local field staff and offices.

The terrible weather conditions and poor crops caused by the Ice Storm left many cash crop farmers in dire financial straits. Other issues such as the tragedy in Walkerton caused farmers to take a hit. Multinational Corporations are rapidly gaining ground and threatening the viability of the family farm.

The Ontario Farm Women's Network partnered with organizations including the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Farm Safety Association, the University of Guelph and Kemptville College after a need was discovered for a communication tool in times of stress specific to the agricultural community. From a fatal farm accident, a barn fire, commodity market collapse, intergenerational issues, or natural disasters, the Farm Line counsellors are there to help those in the agricultural community through their stress. The Farm Line provides help to people when they need it most.

In addition, a critical incident team can be dispatched to deliver debriefing and counselling services on-site after a serious incident – a team of professional and peer counsellors will come to the site of a serious farm accident or tragedy. They can assist loved ones in dealing with their emotional and physical reactions to the horrible event.

Klein-Swormink said that the province-wide phone line makes sure to match up counsellors based on where the caller is located because agriculture practices and concerns vary across the province. There are local volunteers who give their time to the farm line as well.

"We're serving the whole province," said Klein-Swormink. "No matter what the issue is."

In dozens of calls received every week, the Farm Line deals with stress caused by finances, marital and family breakdown, poor health, farming difficulties and other factors. Farm Line staff provide primary support, referring more complex cases to the appropriate agencies. After working with a contractor to handle calls, the Farm Line eventually became its own entity.

"We decided that, since the Farm Line has the network's name behind it, we should have a direct involvement," Klein-Swormink said. "This is a crucial service which must be maintained at maximum efficiency."

The ultimate objective of the Farm Line is to help ensure a stable, confident, productive, fully-supported Ontario farms and strong rural communities.

The Farm Line is open from 8:30 am to 8 pm Monday to Friday. The toll free number is 1-888-451-2903. It is a completely bilingual service. For more information, visit the Farm Line Web site at www.thefarmline.ca or contact Klein-Swormink at 613-448-3436.

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Gloucester Fair (Gloucester Agricultural Society), June 16 - 19, www.gloucester-fair.on.ca.

Maxville Fair (Kenyon Agricultural Society), June 24 - 26, www.maxvillefair.ca/index.htm.

Avonmore Fair (Roxborough Agricultural Society), July 15 - 17, www.cnwl.igs.net/~ndrkorn/ fair.html.

Kars Fair (Kars Fair), July 15 - 17, www.kars.ca.

Williamstown Fair (St. Lawrence Valley Agricultural Society), August 5, www.williamstownfair.com.

Navan Fair (Cumberland Township Agricultural Society), August 11 - 14, www.navanfair.com.

Vankleek Hill Fair (Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society), August 11 - 14.

Merrickville Fair (Merrickville Agricultural Society), August 12 - 14.

South Mountain Fair (Mountain Township Agricultural Society), August 18 - 21, www.southmountainfair.ca.

Central Canada Exhibition (Central Canada Exhibition Association), August 18 - 28, www.ottawasuperex.com.

Chesterville Fair (Chesterville & District Agricultural Society) August 26 - 28, www.chestervillefair.com.

Riceville Fair (Riceville Agricultural Society) August 26 - 28.

Stormont County Fair (Stormont Agricultural Society), September 1 - 5, www.stormontfair.ca.

Shawville Fair (Shawville), September 1 - 5, www.shawvillefair.ca

Russell Fair (Russell Agricultural Society), September 8 - 11, www.russellfair.com.

Spencerville Fair (Spencerville Agricultural Society), September 8 - 11.

Richmond Fair (Richmond Agricultural Society), September 15 - 18, www.richmondfair.ca.

Carp Fair (Carp Agricultural Society), September 22 - 25, www.carpfair.on.ca.

Metcalfe Fair (Metcalfe Agricultural Society), September 29 - October 2, www.metcalfefair.com.

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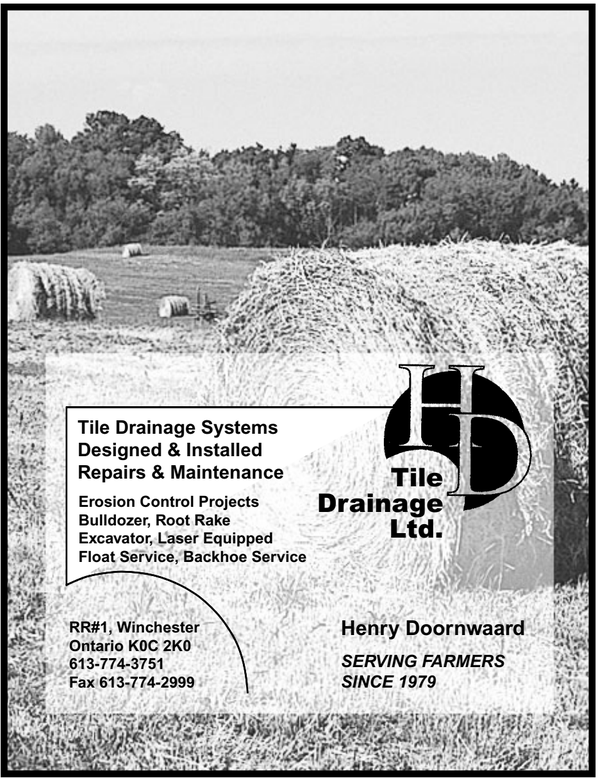
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Farming done right

Dundas County's top DHI farmers talk about the trick of running an efficient farm, the beef crisis, and their basic day

by Amanda Smith-Millar
Press staff

WINCHESTER – The 2004 results for Canwest DHI – the Dairy Herd Improvement Association – are in. With 11,600 farms participating in their programs nation-wide, the DHI program is still running strong after 20 years.

Canwest DHI is a non-profit milk and cow health recording service. Farmers can take the information and use it to make their herds more efficient and healthier.

There are two categories in which DHI divides herds. The first is High Production Herds by BCA – which, simplified, means how much milk each cow produces in the herd.

The second is herd management. Half of each farmer's score depends on quantity of milk each cow produces, on average. The second half looks at scores pointing to the health of the cow – for example, how low the somatic cell count is, age when the cow first gives birth, and the health of each cow's udder.

So what is the secret to managing an efficient farm? Most farmers will say that consistency and staying on top of little things is key.

The DHI data gives farmers precise, concrete data on how their cows are doing. They can use this to make their herds as efficient as possible.

Winchester's Verspeek Farms, owned and operated Peter and Charmaine Verspeek, placed second in the milk production division. Like most top DHI members, the Verspeeks stress that farmers shouldn't cut corners when it comes to caring for their cows.

"Cow comfort, it's huge," said Peter Verspeek.

"I guess the biggest secret is we feed four times a day," Verspeek considered, adding he uses high-quality food. "Consistency is a big thing for the cows."

He also said he uses tunnel ventilation in his barn, creating a steady breeze during the summer to keep his cattle cool and content.

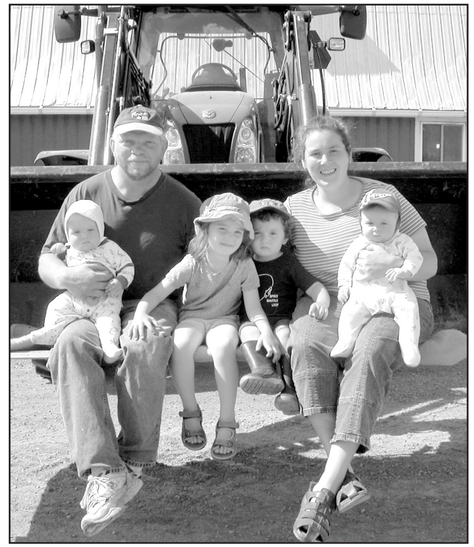
The Byvelds family operate Nation Valley farms in Chesterville, which placed second in the Dundas County herd management division. They said having a good working relationship with their veterinarian is important.

"I work very closely with my veterinarian to make sure my cows get pregnant on time," said Jim Byvelds, whose vet does regular herd checks every six weeks. "Reproduction is one of the most critical management things."

Having a good team, stressed Byvelds, is also important.

"My wife and kids are all involved with the farm," said Byvelds. The family said they don't hire help. While the odd friend might occasionally lend a hand, the five-member team does the majority of the work.

The three Byvelds children – Stephanie (18), Dan (16), and Josh (14) – all do their part.



Farming family
Seated in their front-end loader is the Verspeek family of Winchester. Their farm placed second in the DHI milk production listings for 2004. From left to right: Logan (6 months), Peter, Mikayla (4), Jacob (2), Charmaine, and Logan's twin brother, James. Press Photo – Smith-Millar

"They've been going to the barn pretty much every night since they were 10," said Byvelds. "There's nothing like your own family to work with."

Byvelds' wife, Carol Ann, takes care of the calves. Her husband takes pride in the fact that Carol Ann's careful monitoring keeps most of the young animals alive and healthy.

"I don't have the patience to do something like that," said Byvelds, stressing that Nation Valley Farms is a success because his family works as a unit. That, plus the DHI information, makes Nation Valley an efficient operation.

"It's like getting a report card every month," said Byvelds. "If you take the time to study them, you can do so much."

The Puenter farm puts forth a strong group effort, too.

• continued on next page

DHI Top Scorers – 2004

DUNDAS COUNTY

High Production Herds by BCA Average

1st Place: Rosayre Farms – Ken and Shirley Rose, Mountain (264.3 BCA)

2nd Place: Verspeek Farms Ltd. – Peter and Charmaine Verspeek, Winchester (253.3 BCA)

3rd Place: Big Horn Farm – Andy and Ruth Puenter, Chesterville (241.3 BCA)

Herd Management Score

1st Place: Big Horn Farm – Andy and Ruth Puenter, Chesterville (881 points)

2nd Place: Nation Valley Farms – Jim and Carol Ann Byvelds, Chesterville (866 points)

3rd Place: Westergreen Farm – Gerald and John Westervelt, Brinston (850 points)

CARLETON COUNTY

High Production Herds by BCA Average

1st Place: Marvellane – Theo and Maria Nyentap, Russell (278.0 BCA)

2nd Place: Oakstone Farm – Todd and Carolyn Styles, Kinburn (264.3 BCA)

3rd Place: Topfarm Holsteins – Gerald and Janet VanBokhorst, Osgoode (261.7 BCA)

Herd Management Score

1st Place: Alexerin – Ron and Todd Nixon, Manotick (928 points)

2nd Place: Topfarm Holsteins – Gerald and Janet VanBokhorst, Osgoode (886 points)

3rd Place: Gruen Valley Farm Ltd. – Thom and Wilma Mueller, Vernon (880 points)

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Kids and more kids

Ruth and Andy Puenter sit with four kids – their two children, Fabienne (3) and baby Rachel (5 months), along with their two baby goats. Big Horn Farm, located in Chesterville, placed in the top three on both DHI lists this year. They came in first for herd management and first for milk production.



Meet the Byvelds

Nation Valley Farms of Chesterville had the second-highest herd management score in Dundas County this year. Jim and Carol Ann Byvelds, owners of the farm, say their family works as a team to keep Nation Valley running efficiently.

Press photos – Smith-Millar

DHI winners

• continued from previous page

"We've just got a good team here," said Andy Puenter, who runs Big Horn Farm in Chesterville with his wife, Ruth.

Puenter said he took on a new employee, a high school student, to do the evening milkings, and that has made management much easier. Big Horn Farm made the top three in both categories this year, placing third in milk production and first in herd management.

Since Puenter immigrated to Canada in 1996, he has used DHI and usually places in the top three on at least one list.

"We're not that big of an operation," said Puenter, adding that with 70 head, he can oversee his farm himself. "You can keep an eye on those little things, that's important."

The farms still achieve success despite the American border closure to beef. Currently, the Canadian market is flooded with heifer cows because they cannot be sold to the states. Cull cows – animals sold for meat if they are no longer productive – are also no longer sold to America.

As a result, Canada has an abundant supply of heifer and cull cows. Due to the reality of supply and demand, the animals are worth a fraction of their pre-border closure cost. Both beef and dairy farms are seeing thousands of dollars lost in net revenue.

Puenter looks forward to the day the border will re-open, but plans to sit tight for now.

"I think we, as dairy farmers, shouldn't complain," said Puenter, who said he feels lucky not to be a beef farmer. "We can't change much."

Puenter said he tries to make his farm run as efficiently as possible.

• continued on next page

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2005 Holstein shows

JUNE 24: Maxville Holstein Show, 10 am, Maxville Fair, Judge - Brent Walker.

JULY 5: Leeds County Holstein Show, Lansdowne Fair, Judge - Cameron MacGregor.

JULY 22: Ontario Summer Show, Lindsay.

AUGUST 6: Glengarry County Holstein Show, noon, Williamstown Fair, Judge - Dean Warner.

AUGUST 12: Prescott County Holstein Show, 10:30 am, Vankleek Hill Fair, Judge - Gary Bauers.

AUGUST 25: Renfrew County Holstein Show, 7 pm, Cobden Fair, Judge - Garry Vanderpost.

AUGUST 26: Dundas County Holstein Show, 7 pm, Chesterville Fair, Judge - John DeVries.

SEPTEMBER 3: Lanark County Holstein Show, 11 am, Perth Fair, Judge - DeVries.

SEPTEMBER 3: Stormont County Holstein Show, 11 am, Newington Fair, Judge - Alain Leduc.

SEPTEMBER 8: Grenville County Holstein Show, 7 pm, Spencerville Fair, Judge - Bruce Mode.

SEPTEMBER 16: Frontenac County Holstein Show, 7 pm, Kingston Fair, Judge - Cameron MacGregor.

SEPTEMBER 22: Carleton-Russell County Holstein Show, 11 am, Carp Fair - Judge - John Crowley.

OCTOBER 14: Eastern Ontario Western Quebec Championship Show, 9 am, Kemptville, Judge - Roger Turner.

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• Did you know that the average cow produces 55 pounds of milk each day? A typical dairy cow weighs 1,400 pounds and consumes about 50 pounds of dry matter each day. It drinks about a bathtub's worth of water each day.



• Did you know cows have an acute sense of smell and can smell something up to 6 miles away?

• Did you know that most cows chew at least 50 times per minute? The average cow spends 10 hours a day chewing its cud in order to produce saliva, which buffers their rumen (the first of four parts of the stomach) to a pH of 6.0.

• Did you know that the behavior of animals says a lot about how the cow is feeling? Researchers at the University of Guelph are developing techniques to ask animals what they feel about the conditions under which they are kept and the procedures to which they are subjected.

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DHI winners

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Mistakes made while regulating a cows' pregnancy cycle would cost more, said Puenter, than what farmers lose each time they sell a cull cow in Canada.

"You milk a cow every day but you only kill her once," said Puenter. "If you don't get her bred on time, you lose more money than [her worth as] beef. You just don't see it on paper."

Byvelds said it's frustrating to raise a calf for two years and then sell her for a fraction of her worth. But, he said that Canada is starting to adapt to the crisis in some ways.

He pointed out that years ago, Canada was far more developed on the beef processing side. However, American slaughterhouses have since bought out Canadian ones and Canadian beef was sent to the states for slaughter.

Now, with the American border closed, Byvelds said these same U.S. slaughterhouses are seeing a massive drop in revenue. Canadian slaughterhouses, Byvelds pointed out, are starting to bounce back.

"Canada's taking on the processing side," he said. "I think we're going to come out ahead."

He also pointed out that the use of radio tags has drastically improved Canada's cattle tracking system.

"With that, we're going to have one of the safest products in the world," said Byvelds.

All high-scoring DHI farmers stress the same things – efficiency, consistency, and general commitment to the job.

"I don't think I do anything special," said Peter Verspeek, which is pretty much what all the high-scoring DHI farmers say each year.

"If you like to do what you do, then you do a good job," said Puenter.



Westergreen Farms

John (left) and Gerald Westervelt, featured here, own and operate Westergreen Farms in Brinston. Westergreen placed third this year in DHI's 2004 herd management listings.



Lookin' good

Sporting an EBI cap, a calf from Westergreen Farms stubbornly refuses to let go of his master's hand. Westergreen Farms participates in the programs of DHI, the Dairy Herd Improvement Association. DHI is a non-profit service that measures the health and milking efficiency of Canadian dairy farms. Farmers can use the information they get from DHI to improve the overall health and and milking capabilities of their herd. Press Photos – Smith-Millar

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Rosayre Farm: at the top of its class

by Meghan Duncan
Press staff

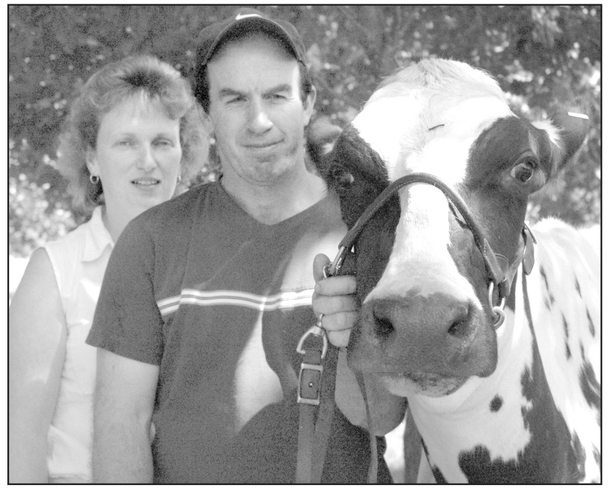
WINCHESTER – Black and white Holstein cows are the breed generally associated with milk production. On a drive through eastern Ontario, chances are you'll find more dairy operations using Holstein cows than any other breed. Though Holstein is arguably the most popular dairy cow, what about the other breeds?

For the Rosayre Farm, an Ayrshire dairy operation just west of Winchester, the red and white cows have made a name for the family for four generations.

Rosayre Farm placed first in milk production throughout Dundas County this year, according to the Dairy Heard Improvement Association, which isn't surprising coming from a farm whose top cow was reserve all-Canadian and Champion Senior Three-year-old at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto this past year. Not to mention that the farm also took home the premier exhibitor and premier breeder awards.

"Holsteins are more popular," said Shirley Rose. "But Ayrshires have better feed efficiency – they convert feed to milk more efficiently. They also have easier calving, and they're generally a heartier breed."

Shirley and her husband Ken's 40 to 45 head dairy operation has won best milk production in the county for at least three of the last four years.



Shirley and Ken Rose of Rosayre Farm just west of Winchester show off their champion Ayrshire. Rosayre BB Reisling, who was reserve all-Canadian at this year's Royal Winter Fair in Toronto. *Press Photo – Duncan*

"It's usually a fairly close race," said Ken.

But producing quality milk is just one of the things in which the farm excels.

"We had champion at the Royal last year," said Ken, who has been going the Toronto fair all his life. And what makes a champion Ayrshire?

A large size, good udders, strong feet and legs, a large milk capacity and an overall pleasing appearance.

The Rose's four-year-old champion is known as Rosayre BB Reisling, and has been nominated each year as all-Canadian in her category. Ken is sure that the farm's champion will compete for at least another three or four years.

"Usually the ones that do win have good milk production," Ken explained. "Judges won't choose a cow that can't pay the bills, and no one wants to keep poor producers just for showing."

Out of nine Rosayre cows entered in different categories at the fair this year, the Roses walked away with four red ribbon firsts. They had champion in the Senior Three-year-old category, summer young, interme yearling, and the progeny of dam, as well as being recognized as premier exhibitor and premier breeder.

"It's changed a lot," said Ken of the fair he remembers attending with his father as a child. "Everybody's there to win. It's no longer a social event because there's a lot on the line. If your cow wins, that means a lot of extra income."

The Royal is more than just a chance for the Roses to win ribbons – it's an advertising opportunity.

"You gotta go to the bigger shows," said Ken. "You let people know what you have to offer."

• continued on next page

Quota management

• continued from previous page

Make sure forage is available during the cool nighttime hours to help keep the fat test up.

If the herd is on a high-protein diet, lowering the total protein level in each ration will reduce milk protein. But since a deficiency lowers milk production it is not wise to take this too far. Shift the ration to include more fibre, decrease the amount of grain, and increase the amount of forage.

Dairy nutrition is a complicated science and producers should seek specific advice from their herd nutritionist.

Since ratio problems are all about milk composition, finding the cows that contribute most to the problem requires individual cow analysis for fat and protein.

Starting June 1, DHI customers enrolled in the cow monitor option can receive SNF:BF ratio for individual cows as one of their four optional columns by requesting it on test day. Basic Service herds can upgrade to the cow monitor option for an additional fee of $4.50 per month. Dairy Comp 305 customers can print a special report which will list all cows with ratios above 2.4. Since DHI does not test for lactose and minerals, their calculation of solids-not-fat is the total of the tested value for protein plus the provincial average for other solids.

DHI began calculating the value of milk produced such as dollars-per-day of life, dollars-per-kilogram of quota used, and net dollars after quota ownership 15 years ago. All of these calculations assume you will be paid for all the components shipped, so starting in August, these calculations become less valuable for high-ratio cows in herds above a ratio of 2.35.

The other recent policy change, which introduced heavy penalties for over-quota production, also hinges on milk composition because quotas are based on kilograms of butterfat shipped and not on volume of milk. Based on recent experience, it is expected that as many as 200 to 300 producers per month will receive these penalties in June and July. Since quota is based on kilograms of butterfat, a higher fat test means you can ship less milk, and with a penalty in the form of a fine of about $73 per hectolitre of over quota milk shipped, the consequences of over-production are severe.

Over-quota penalties are at least three times greater than the penalties associated with high SNF milk. Multiplying current Kg/Hl butterfat times the volume of milk shipped in the month is the only way to be sure you are not going over-quota.

Perhaps when the dust settles on this issue, a thorough review of long-term trends and market needs can help us define if new directions in sire selection and breed improvement are warranted.

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New policies

Milk composition critical to quota management

by Jack Rodenburg
Dairy Specialist,
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food

TORONTO — New milk supply management policies introduced by Dairy Farmers of Ontario in May will make it more critical then ever for dairy producers to monitor and manage the composition of the milk they produce. New rules for over-quota milk and the ratio of solids-not-fat to butterfat could make a big difference on the milk cheque.

Milk as produced on the farm consists of about 87 per cent water and four main groups of solids – butterfat (about 3.9 kilograms in each hectolitre of milk), protein (about 3.2 kilograms per hectoliter), lactose, (about 4.7 kilograms per hectolitre), and minerals (about 1.1 Kilograms per Hectolitre). Some of these components are reported individually on the milk cheque and others are grouped together.

BF stands for the average number of kilograms of butterfat in each hectolitre of milk shipped in each month. PT stands for the average kilograms of protein per Hectolitre. OS or "other solids" is the average kilograms of lactose and mineral combined.

SNF/BF is the newest addition to this table and starting in June will be important for payment purposes. SNF – solids-not-fat – is the combined total kilograms per hectolitre of protein and other solids, or all the solids except fat. It is divided by the kilograms per hectolitre butterfat to give the SNF ratio. The ratio is actually the combined number of kilograms of protein and other solids that are found in the same amount of milk as one kilogram of butterfat. It is calculated as SNF/BF = (PT + OS) / BF.

In Canada, when we produce enough milk to supply the butterfat needed, there is protein and other solids (combined as SNF) left over. This surplus has become worse in recent years, partly because unrestricted imports of these components have reduced the market, and partly because prices paid to producers and fat-based quotas have encouraged higher protein and lower fat milk production. In order to encourage producers to change the composition of their milk to more butterfat and less solids-not-fat, producers whose milk has a SNF/BF ratio greater than 2.65:1 will not be paid for the solids-not-fat above this level in June and July.

For example milk with 3.3 Kg/Hl butterfat, 3.4 protein, and 5.7 other solids has a SNF/BF ratio of 2.75. Prior to the penalty, this milk had a value of approximately $63.96 per Hectolitre. When the ratio is applied, this milk has a total of 9.1 Kg per Hl solids-not fat, so only 96 per cent (8.75 divided by 9.1) of the protein and other solids will be paid for. The result is that this milk is sold as if it had tested 3.3 fat, 3.27 protein, and 5.48 other solids, making it worth $62.62.

Although it varies, the penalty for a ratio above 2.65 in June and July will be about 13 cents per Hectolitre for each .01 ratio units above 2.65. Producers above 2.65 should look at feeding changes and minimizing heat stress this summer, but the size of the penalty would not justify drastic steps such as culling high ratio cows or switching breeds.

Starting in August, the maximum SNF/BF ratio that results in full payment for all components will be 2.35. This policy change will likely affect a quarter to a third of all producers.

High-protein, low-fat milk has been more profitable for the last 15 years, and many well-managed herds have spent years selecting bulls and cows that put them above this ratio. Using a 2.35 ratio, the milk in the same example from above, which was worth $63.96 without penalty and $62.62 with the 2.65 ratio, will be worth $59.00 per hectolitre in August.

To determine the probable affect of this policy on your bottom line in the next dairy year, check your rolling 12 months SNF/BF ratio below the table on your milk cheque. If it is above 2.35, and you don't take steps to change it, the value of your milk will be discounted by 12 to 13 cents per hectolitre for each .01 above 2.35.

If last month's rolling twelve months ratio is above 2.65, you will want to work at lowering it immediately since there will be small penalties in June and July. If it is between 2.35 and 2.65 you need to start taking steps to deal with the problem from August on.

Lowering the ratio involves decreasing the solids-not-fat or increasing the butterfat. The former is quite difficult, but increasing the fat test is the simplest way to change the ratio. The solution hinges on changing management practices at times of the year that show a higher ratio.

Make sure cows limit their intake of lush pasture. Reduce heat stress by providing shade and fresh water to pastured cattle or cooling fans, sprinklers or tunnel ventilation in the barn.

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Rosayre BB Reisling, the champion three-year-old Ayrshire, eyes her pen-mate at the Rosayre Farm just west of Winchester. The fourth-generation farm was first in milk production according to the Dairy Herd Improvement Association.

Press Photos – Duncan



Rosayre Farm

• continued from previous page

A lot of people want a piece of a champion dairy cow, and the Rose's offer it – for a price.

"We sell embryos for embryo transplant," explained Ken. "Actually, two sisters of our champion won the International Spring Show in Quebec recently."

Shirley explained that the border closure has affected their business significantly.

"We used to sell a lot to the states," said Shirley. "The border closure hurt us a lot."

The Roses are focussing on selling their embryos nationally, with the majority going to Quebec farms, some for showing purposes and some for commercial milk production.

About five years ago, the Roses even sold embryos to a farm in South Africa. Representatives of the farm were on a tour through Ontario and spotted the Rosayre Farm.

"I guess they saw something they liked," said Ken, explaining the many steps it takes to ensure the safe and legal transportation of embryos across the ocean.

"It's another way to make money besides milk," said Shirley. "But it's a hit or miss thing, too. You flush a cow and you might not get any embryos, while another time you'll get 15. It's the roll of the dice."

Rosayre Farm was settled by Ken's ancestors four generations ago.

"Originally, this was crown land," Ken explained. "The original deed is here."

Ken and Shirley bought the farm from Ken's father in 1994, and their son Jeremy, 13, and daughter Geena, 10, help out with the chores.

The annual trip to the Royal Winter Fair is a family affair, but whether or not Rosayre Farm will continue into a fifth generation has yet to be decided.

For now, though, the Roses remain at the top of their class and make Dundas County proud each time they are recognized for their achievement in the dairy industry.

The debate between Holstein and Ayrshire will forever be ongoing – but Rosayre Farm makes a strong case for the red and white breed.

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Environment, diet important

When it comes to mastitis, prevention is key

by Amanda Smith-Millar
Press Staff

WINCHESTER — Unfortunately, most dairy farmers have to deal with mastitis sooner or later. It's virtually impossible to go through one's farming career without having it affect the herd.

The most farmers can hope for is to catch mastitis early, before it spreads to other cows and devastates the herd.

Mastitis can be contracted not only by cows but by any mammal, including humans. It is an infection of the mammary glands caused by bacteria. The disease ruins the affected cow's milk and, although some cows' immune systems do fight off the bacteria, not all are able to. In some cows, the consequences can be quite serious – they can get quite sick or in some cases, die.

Currently, antibiotics are usually used to treat mastitis, but many organic farmers use homeopathy, a mixture of natural ingredients. Some are administered orally, while others – such as the tea tree oil-based product Udder Comfort – are rubbed directly onto the udders.

But organic farming columnist Robert Wallbridge said dairy farmers should focus less on cures. Instead, they should focus on prevention.

"A lot of health problems, including mastitis, are linked back to environment and diet," said Wallbridge.

He said all cows should get high quality, nutritionally complete feed and proper supplements. Proper nutrition, stressed Wallbridge, is essential so that cows have a strong and stable immune system.



Got mastitis?

While antibiotics and homeopathy are used to cure mastitis, prevention is key, says agricultural columnist Rob Wallbridge. Proper nutrition and sanitation will go far in preventing the disease.

Press Photo — Smith-Millar

Instead of asking what is wrong with the cow, said Wallbridge, you should ask what is wrong with the cow's environment.

To prevent mastitis, milking equipment should be kept as clean as possible. At the first sign of elevated somatic cell or bacteria counts, said Wallbridge, the pipeline, milkers, and vacuum system should be checked out for potential problems.

Pasture access, pasture management, stress prevention, good housing, and keeping a closed herd are important factors.

"Conditions have to be right for the disease to strike," said Willbridge. "The bottom line is creating a healthy, stress-free cow and environment, where problems don't have a chance to gain a toehold."

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Udder Comfort tops the charts

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After two to four days, mastitis treatment is typically no longer required, and the blue color quickly disappears with udder washing. Farmers say it helps ensure repeat applications of the lotion are consistently made over the treatment period, even with several milkers working.

The key ingredient besides tea tree oil that makes Udder Comfort effective is peppermint oil, distilled from fresh or partially dried flowering tops of several varieties of peppermint plants. While peppermint oil is largely used for flavoring, it has considerable medicinal value – easing intestinal cramping, reducing gas production, as well as being a muscle relaxant.

Lanolin, another ingredient, is a natural fat found in sheep's wool. It is composed of esters, alcohols, and fatty acids. Its ready absorption by the skin makes lanolin a highly valued commodity – particularly for the preparation of pharmaceutical ointments and lotions, as well as for general skin and hair care products.

There are many common ailments that Udder comfort can help to soothe, including udder edema, mastitis, and high somatic cell counts.

Mastitis may be one of the most common ailments afflicting dairy cows. It causes a change in the physical properties of the cow's milk – flakes or lumps, watery, bloody, stringy, or otherwise abnormal. Other symptoms may include a hot, swollen, and often painful udder, significantly reduced milk flow, fever, lack of appetite, and lower somatic cell counts.

The Williamsburg product has just been launched in the U.S., and Udder Comfort is now approved for use on organic farms across America. It is also growing in popularity around the world.

For more information about udder ailments or the natural ingredients used in Udder Comfort, visit www.uddercomfort.com, or call Udder Comfort toll-free at 1-888-749-7133.

Udder Comfort is available at Dundas Feed and Seed in Winchester in 300 millilitre and 110 millilitre increments. Some customers buy it as a liniment hand lotion for themselves. The store has been selling the product for a while, and employees maintain that it's a very popular product.

"I've had some ailments of my own," explained Prost. "You put this stuff on and within 24 hours it's gone. It genuinely works like a charm."

Udder Comfort is also available at H&I Country Supply in Brinston and Cotnam Country Depot in Chesterville.

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Udder Comfort tops the charts

WILLIAMSBURG – Over the years, public health departments in countries around the world have placed increasingly high standards on the quality of milk produced by commercial dairy farmers. In Canada, the somatic cell count has been adopted as an important measure of milk quality.

Home-grown quality

Cell count screening is done on a pooled sample basis representing all cows in the herd. In other words, if only one cow in a large herd has a high somatic cell count, the pooled milk will very likely still meet a given standard. However, if just a few cows have recently freshened, or have sub-clinical mastitis that goes undetected, their collective high cell counts could lead to costly consequences – an entire shipment of milk being rejected.

Mastitis is the leading cause for low somatic cell counts, but a simple udder-cream can help reduce mastitis and other common ailments, resulting in a healthier dairy herd. Udder Comfort, manufactured in Williamsburg, is popular among dairy farmers across Ontario, the U.S. and even internationally.

"Tea tree oil has to be the most effective ingredient," said Alar Prost, who's brother Mart Prost of Williamsburg patented the product. "It's one of the few natural antibacterial oils."

Tea tree oil is a natural product known for its antiseptic, anti-fungal, and anti-bacterial qualities, and immunity boosting properties. It's an effective remedy for early-stage mastitis and contains lanolin to moisturize and sooth dry, cracked skin. Recent research has found the oil can inhibit or even destroy Staphylococcus aureus – bacteria that have become resistant to several antibiotics including methicillin.

Udder Comfort also contains Oriental peppermint oil and menthol – oils used for centuries to provide a cooling and relaxing sensation to sore muscles by stimulating the skin's cold receptors and increasing blood flow to capillaries.

The process to make the cream is a tricky one – and the Williamsburg labratory's doors will remain closed to ensure the secret recipe stays just that.

In a test case, Udder Comfort was used on an older cow with a 3.7 million somatic cell count and a young cow with a 4.5 million cell count, twice a day for three days at a cost of approximately $10 per cow.

The Somatic Cell Count (SCC) reading of the older cow was reduced to 1.9 million – a 48 per cent reduction. The younger cow's SCC was reduced to 614,000 – an 88 per cent reduction.

Farmers have said that milking time is cut in half, and that the lanolin allows for less wasted product because it spreads over a big surface area. Others use the product to remove swelling from udders and to make them soft and pliable.

"We use Udder Comfort before any other mastitis treatment on our herd of 210 cows," said Nick Thurler of Brinston. "We apply it on hard quarters or flare-ups, and some 80 to 85 per cent of the time the problem is gone within a couple of days. Our cost is about $4 per cow and because Udder Comfort provides a natural remedy, we even keep the milk in the system.

There is no milk withdrawal when using the product, and it works quickly to get rid of hardness from mastitis.

"Drugs don't work like they used to for mastitis, if mastitis occurs and is treated, it often returns and you lose milk again with even more drug use," said Paul Ropars of Winchester. "But Udder Comfort works great ... We've had clinical signs of mastitis on six recent cases and it cleared them all up."

Ropars had nothing but good things to say about the product.

"Yes, mastitis may return occasionally, but with Udder Comfort I don't have the headache of milk withdrawal," he explained. "In fact, saving your milk means you are making money, and that's better than what you get with drug use. I'd recommend anyone to try it. It's a great alternative to mastitis drugs."

Udder Comfort may also be used in conjunction with any antibiotic treatment.

Another appealing aspect is Udder Comfort's new "Blue Marker" formulation. It allows dairy farmers to easily follow a mastitis case once a milker has found the presence of mastitis.

Udder Comfort has brought an effective choice between synthesized chemicals and natural-source products. While final health outcomes may be similar, natural products often mean dramatically lower initial costs, plus the benefit of no discarded milk.

Udder Comfort's complex formula not only provides this soothing relief, it actually gets to the root of the ailment.

"We were running a 90 per cent Mastitis treatment success rate with Original Udder Comfort," said Thurler. "But with the new blue marker lotion, we haven't even needed to use antibiotics in the past three months. Our cost is about $5 per treated cow and because it's natural, we can even keep the milk in the system. We actually make money using Udder Comfort."

The Blue Marker lotion leaves a blue hue on application areas to indicate a need for follow-up treatment.

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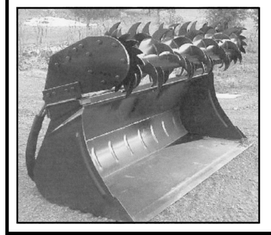

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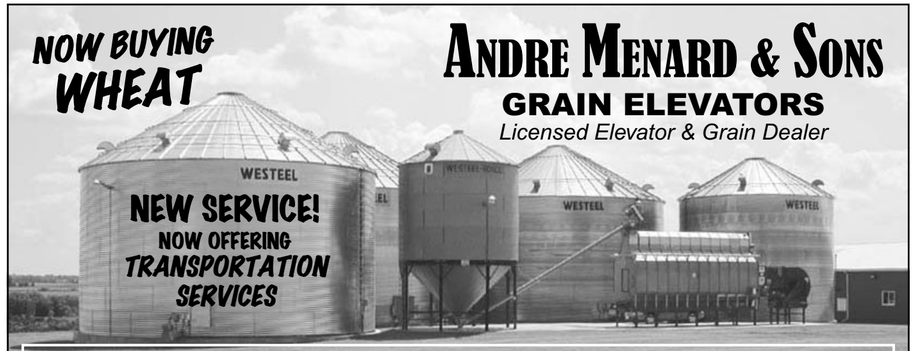

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Fence clinic with a cause

WINCHESTER – A representative from Gallagher Electric Fence Systems was on hand May 14 to demonstrate how to properly install high tensile fencing.

Annual event benefits 4-H

The fence clinic, which saw about eight participants take part, was held at Dundas Feed and Seed in Winchester where Ross Giles is the owner.

"This is an annual event," said Giles, the area dealer for Gallagher fencing. "We do it to make sure people can install their fence correctly."

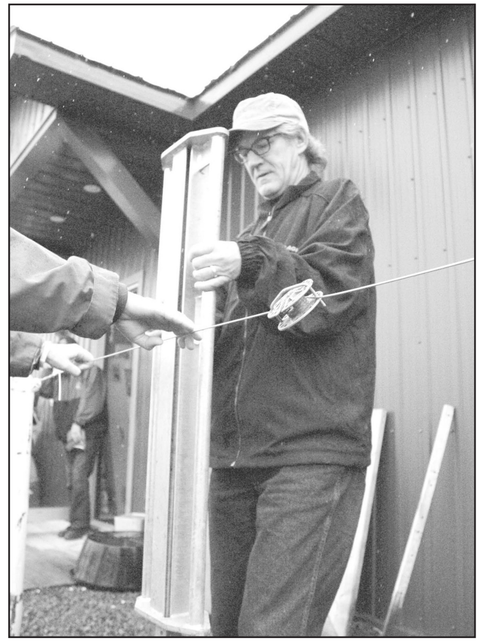
Ross explained that high tensile electric fencing is used to contain all types of livestock.

"Every year, Gallagher donates a portion of the sales to 4-H Canada," said Giles.

Gallagher has the goal of donating $25,000 to the program.



Darl McCulloch shows Terresa McIntosh how to set up a fence.



Darl McCulloch, area manager of Gallagher Power Fence Systems, shows the basic steps to make a fence at his clinic on Sat., May 14 outside Dundas Feed and Seed in Winchester.

Photos – Meagher

Gallagher Canada helping Cuban farmers increase milk production

CUBA – Ontario company Gallagher Power Fencing along with the generous support of Gallagher Group Ltd. of Hamilton, New Zealand, is providing over $5,000 in power fencing equipment to Cuba for a grazing project.

Enhancing Sustainable Dairy Production Capacity in Cuba is a demonstration project in the province of Havana, Cuba. Canadian dairy farmers will have the opportunity to share experience in herd management with Cuban farmers to potentially increase milk production from sustainable, pasture-based dairy units. This project is an extension of the Canada-Cuba Farmer to Farmer Project that began in 1999.

Cuba's milk production remains low – only around five to seven litres per cow per day. Cuba has a nutritional target of one litre of milk per child under 12 per day, but low milk production cannot allow the population to meet this ambition.

After visiting Cuba and examining the farm options, Canadian dairy farmers say that they believe the key to solving the low milk production problem is rotational grazing – it will promote milk increases of two to three times the current country's level. Canadian farmers said they feel they can boost Cuban dairy production to over 20 litres per cow.

The project is said to have the potential to significantly impact urban poverty through increased nutrition in urban children and increased income from greater milk production in rural areas.

Rotational grazing is environmentally and economically sustainable.

Enhancing Sustainable Dairy Production Capacity in Cuba is supported by ANAP in Cuba and the Cuban government, and in Canada by Vancouver-based International Centre for Sustainable Cities, the Canadian government (CIDA) and Canadian farmers participating in the Canada Cuba Farmer to Farmer Project.

Gallagher Power Fencing became involved after being approached by Canadian farmers on the project team.

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Kemptville College: dedicated to education, research

KEMPTVILLE – The Kemptville College dairy barn was built in 1928. It is where agriculture students get hands-on experience milking and evaluating dairy cattle. On-going research projects with milking dairy cows are also carried out on a daily basis.

Kemptville, the first college of agricultural technology in Ontario, was established in 1916 to demonstrate and teach modern methods of agriculture.



Since that time, the college has expanded to include research stations at Winchester, New Liskeard, Thunder Bay and Emo. In 1997, the college became part of the University of Guelph.

With 12 hectares of manicured grounds and gardens and a campus of nearly 400 hectares, this college acts as an outdoor lab for landscape plants and plant identification.

Research programs at Kemptville College focus on the agronomy, dairy, and horticulture industries that exist in Eastern Ontario.

In the 1960s, Kemptville College led the corn revolution in Eastern Ontario. In the '70s and '80s, it provided the technology for growing soybeans, utilization of surplus Holstein bull calves, and general diversification of farm production. Since the 1990s, research has concentrated on sustainable and environmentally safe crop and animal management systems.

The Kemptville Dairy Unit includes a 32-cow tie-stall dairy barn, 50 and 120 head conventional pole barns, a 30 head calf barn, two 35 head heifer and dry-cow barns, and approximately 35 calf hutches. A slatted floor beef feedlot has been converted into a free-stall barn with the capacity to hold 55 cows, heifers, or steers.

The dairy unit has the capability to conduct research in a broad range of areas. Studies over the past few years have focused on applied management relating to housing, nutrition, and reproduction of high-producing dairy cows, which focuses on embryo transfer technologies.

Nutrition studies assess alternatives to haylage or corn silage in diets for cattle, among others. A single group total mixed ration for use in a high producing dairy herd continues to be modified.

Housing studies include the assessment of alternative types of four-season calf hutches in Eastern Ontario and alternative feed manager floor surfaces.

Animal health studies primarily focus on mastitis prevention. Researchers are presently involved in a collaborative study assessing the effect of dry cow teat sealant on the ailment.

Field crop research takes place at the Kemptville campus, the Winchester Research Station, and a number of off-station sites. The campus, located on Grenville sandy loam, represents much of the Precambrian-based soils west of the College.

The Winchester research station comprises 150 acres located on North Gower clay loam and represents approximately one million acres in the Ottawa and South Nation river valleys.

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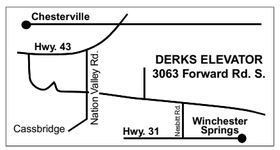

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Excellent value, quality from Ontario dairy farms

Canadian milk and dairy products are always on store shelves providing excellent value and world-leading quality, yet many people know little about the marketing system and the dairy farmers that are such a large and vital part of our economy.

Milk is a better deal in Canada. Survey results show Canadians pay an average of 23 per cent less for their dairy products than their U.S. neighbors.

Canadians pay lower milk prices and farmers get fair prices without subsidies: DFO

A leading market research firm, ACNielsen, compared the retail price of popular dairy products – both brand names and store names in more than 80 stores in 10 American and 10 Canadian cities. A variety of dairy products, including cheese, milk, cream, butter, and ice cream, were purchased in stores in each city during the same week.

During times of international uncertainty, Canadians can take pride in the fact that they have a bountiful and secure supply of safe, nutritious, and reasonably-priced dairy products. They can feel secure that it is produced here at home by friends and neighbors they can trust.

Canadians spend less than two cents of each take-home dollar on dairy products, one of the lowest amounts in the world.

Dairy farmers have remained viable by increasing their efficiency more than 20 per cent in the last 10 years. Dairy farms in Ontario are among the most efficient in the world, with the average cow giving about 9,000 kilograms of milk each year.

Dairy farming is Ontario's largest agricultural sector. In total, Ontario dairy farmers received $1.5 billion for 2.5 billion litres of milk last year. At 19 per cent of farm gate receipts, dairy farming remains the largest sector of Ontario's agriculture economy.

In Ontario, the dairy business is co-ordinated by Dairy Farmers of Ontario, the non-profit marketing group which is owned, operated, and completely financed by Ontario's 5,200 dairy farm businesses.

This is part of a national system that operates effectively for dairy as well as egg and poultry production.

Given the history of price and supply instability in unregulated markets for these important consumer stables, Canada decided decades ago to take a different approach for farmers producing these commodities.

No subsidies for milk or poultry in Canada mean Canada's dairy, egg and poultry producers have to manage supply with legislative support. In these sectors, import tariffs largely restrict foreign competitors from dumping their subsidized surpluses in Canada. With these import controls in place, farmers can manage the domestic market and ensure that supply never outstrips demand. The result has been steady and reasonable prices for both farmers and consumers.

Many in the industry feel that trade loopholes must be closed to stop damage. Unfortunately, the import controls critical to the operation of this approach are being weakened by loopholes in international trade rules. Some of these loopholes are created by blending dairy ingredients specifically to circumvent the tariffs agreed to by all countries.

Others are created by imports of dairy ingredients that previously did not exist or attract tariff coverage. After these dairy ingredients evade tariffs under import rules, they are reassembled into dairy products made here and displace Canadian milk in those products.

The most significant examples of these products are butteroil-sugar blends and milk protein ingredients.

Butter is mixed with sugar so that it escapes both the butter and sugar tariffs that are in place internationally. Canadian processors already use these butteroil blends in about 50 per cent of the ice cream they make, and milk protein ingredients threaten to take big chunks out of our cheese markets.

Canadian dairy farmers are working with government to resolve these border control issues and reduce their future damage to Canadian farmers and consumers.

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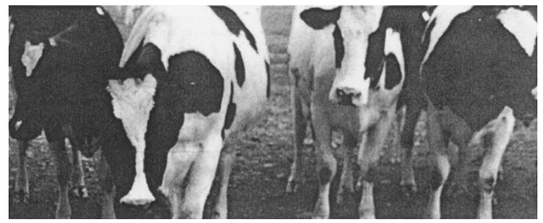

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Saudi Arabian farms

• continued from previous page

Two modern dairy plants on-site have a total capacity of one million litres a day of fresh milk. Four other projects have a total cultivated area of 40,000 hectares producing 100,000 tons of wheat, 130,000 tons of forage crops, 80,000 tons of tomatoes, and much more.

The beef market in Saudi Arabia is so strong that cows are only milked for three or four lactations before being slaughtered, Weagant explained. Cows in Saudi Arabia are kept younger and healthier.

"They [Nadec] have their own processing plant on site," Weagant said. "So all their products are ready to go when they leave the farm. And they're not the largest farm, either."

Weagant said that there are two larger farms, one of which has more than 80,000 dairy cows – Saudi Arabia is the home of the largest dairy farm, producing as much as 390,000 litres of milk a day.

As for the Nadec site, it's almost incomparable to farms in Eastern Ontario.

"It's in the middle of the desert, surrounded by sand," said Weagant. "They irrigate on a central pivot irrigation system, and so they're pumping water from 300 to 1,000 metres deep to be able to grow these crops."

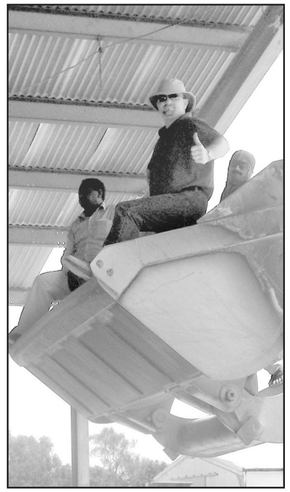
Weagant said he was surprised that the farm was able to produce such crops when surrounded by so much sand.

"They produce the lushest, greenest alfalfa," he said. "You really don't expect to see that in the desert."

The Nadec farm is about 250 kilometres away from the city of Rhiyadh.

"There are 1,200 employees," said Weagant. "It's like its own self-contained city. They produce their own power and pump their own water. We were totally surprised and had no idea what to expect."





Sittin' pretty

Above: Chuck Preston of Winchester's Weagant Farm Supplies gets a bird's eye view of the Nadec (National Agriculture Development Company) farm in Saudi Arabia. The farm, which is home to more than 25,000 dairy cows, is located in the middle of the desert. Two modern dairy plants at the Nadec site have a total capacity of one million litres of fresh milk – per day.

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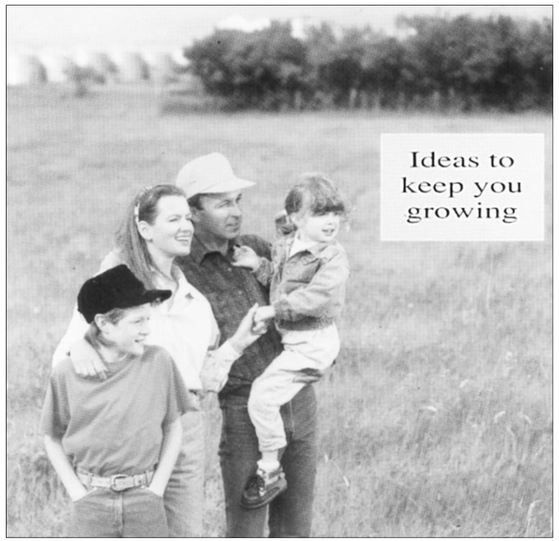

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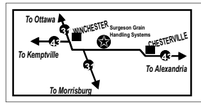

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Buy milk, get a soccer ball free?

by Amanda Smith-Millar
Press staff

WINCHESTER — For many students, their school milk program gives them more than enough incentive to consume at least two servings of dairy per day.

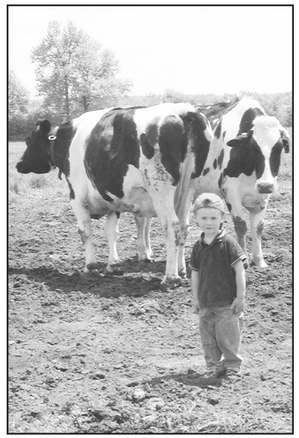
The Dairy Farmers of Canada's elementary school milk programs give kids the chance to win loot in exchange for drinking milk. The prizes can include milk stickers, hats, t-shirts, pens, pencils... even soccer balls.

Allison Whiteland is an educational assistant and milk program co-ordinator at Winchester Public School. Each month, WPS students go home with an order form for milk to drink at lunch hour.

"We order two per cent milk, and the students can order either white or chocolate," said Whiteland.

When the students return the order form, their name goes in a draw. Whiteland said she will give away about 150 milk prizes at an assembly this June.

"I think it's important for the community and the school because [milk] is nutritious," said Whiteland. "The children may not always get the milk at home, so it's nice that they can get it here at lunch."



Hangin' with Holsteins

Two-year-old Kristian McDonald, son of Darren and Julie McDonald, poses with a couple Holsteins on his parents' farm outside of Winchester. Darren, along with brother Shawn, operate McDonald Baling & Wrapping.
Press Photo — Rushford

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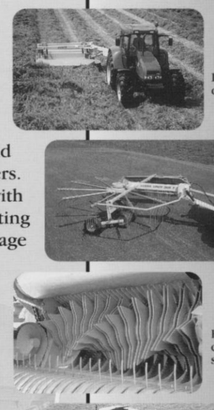

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Saudi Arabian farms incomparable to Ontario dairy operations

WINCHESTER – When Bob Weagant and Chuck Preston travelled to Saudi Arabia to deliver the Supreme 1400 ST feed mixer to a farm operation outside of Rhiyadh, they had no idea what to expect.

The National Agriculture Development Company (Nadec) farm was a sprawling operation – in the middle of the desert.

"It's immense, absolutely immense," said Weagant, president of Weagant Farm Supplies, of the farm that producers 40,000 tons of potatoes, 84,000 tons of alfalfa, and thousands of tons of other products yearly. Nadec supplies more than 60 per cent of potatoes to the Saudi market, but it's the dairy operations that make it stand out. "This company is just so immense. The farm has 25,000 cows. They milk three or four times a day."

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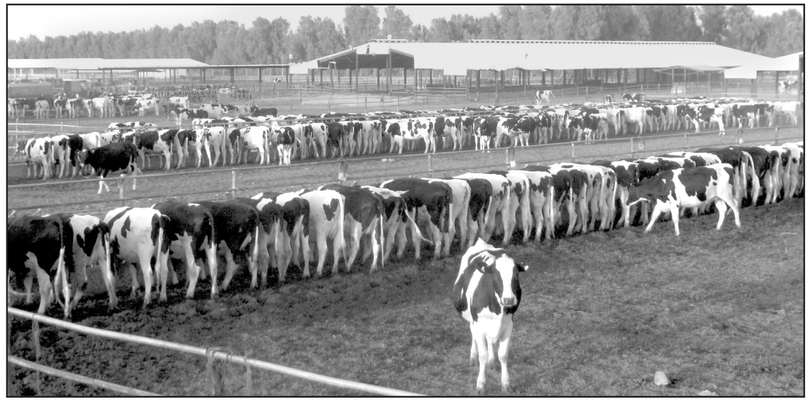



The National Agriculture Development Company (NADEC) farms in Saudi Arabia is a significantly different operation from any farm in Ontario. The site, located in the middle of the dessert, is home to 25,000 dairy cows, among other operations.

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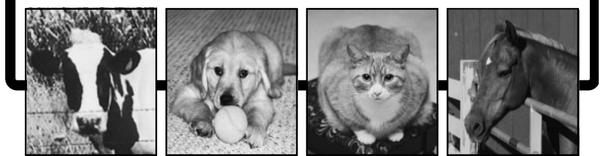


Consumers warned against raw milk

Ontario consumers are reminded that drinking raw milk is dangerous and illegal.

Several individuals have been hospitalized in the Barrie area with E. coli infection and raw milk consumption is suspected as the cause.

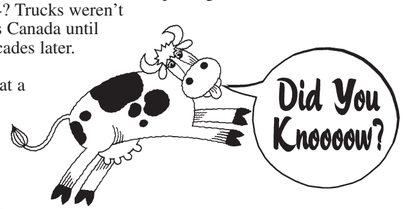
Preliminary information suggests the milk did not come from a licensed milk producer. Authorities are continuing to investigate.

The Health Protection and Promotion Act requires pasteurization through licensed processing plants of all milk and cream for human consumption.

There's always a chance raw milk contains harmful bacteria. These food pathogens include: salmonella, campylobacter, yersinia, coxiella (Q fever), listeria and E. coli. Pasteurization ensures milk is safe.

• Did you know that there are approximately 340 to 350 "squirts" in a gallon of milk?

• Did you know that tank trucks for transporting fluid milk were first introduced in 1914? Trucks weren't used widely across Canada until more than four decades later.



• Did you know that a Canadian bull can sire thousands of daughters that become prime dairy cattle in countries like China or Thailand? Frozen embryos are shipped all around the world everyday to ensure the top breeding in cattle. Soon, the very best animals will be reproduced by cloning or may have additional beneficial characteristics added by genetic engineering.

• Did you know that in 2003, total net farm cash receipts from the dairy sector generated $4.5 billion? This puts the industry in fourth place in the Canadian agriculture sector behind grains, red meats, and horticulture.

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Laurie Quinn (Quinndale Holsteins, Carleton County), Ryan Mount (Ayrvale Farm, Carleton County), Wayne Venables (Gilmer Farms, Dundas County) and Mike Vervoort (Arnverdale Holsteins, Wellington County) recently completed the Dairy Herdsperson Program in-class training.

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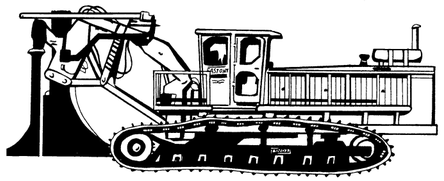

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Meet the Holstein dairy rep



Julie Anderson, fresh out of Guelph University, is the new Holstein Canada field rep for Eastern Ontario. Anderson, 24, has been on the job for approximately one year and said she loves it.
Press Photo – Smith-Millar

by Amanda Smith-Millar
Press staff

WINCHESTER – In June 2004, Holsteins Ontario welcomed a new Eastern Ontario field representative to their team. Guelph University Graduate Julie Anderson, 24, is now representing the dairy service and has eased into her job over the last year.

Holstein Ontario representative Julie Anderson talks about coming to grips with the BSE crisis, registering Holsteins, and the day-to-day basics.

Anderson said she spends most of her time visiting farms. Like all Holstein reps, Anderson acts as a liaison between Holstein Canada and its members. She tells farmers about Holstein Canada's services, record keeping, and problem solving, and gives them breeding advice.

Sometimes, Anderson will run seminars and barn meetings on hot farming topics. If she finds the time, she visits county holstein club meetings.

"Also in the summertime, the Holstein clubs put on twilight meetings – usually at an evening at a person's farm," said Anderson. "Usually, there's a dinner and some kind of educational speaker."

She also tries to go to 4-H clubs and the annual camps they hold every year.

"I try to attend as many youth events as possible," she said.

Last June, Anderson assumed the job that Lynn Boyd had held for about two decades. Anderson said she and Boyd worked together for nearly two months as she familiarized herself with the Holstein rep role.

"He was with me for two months when I started," she said. "He'd been doing the job for 20 years before me, so he was so familiar with everyone in Eastern Ontario. He knows where everybody lives."

Anderson laughingly recalls that Boyd used to joke during those two months, saying he was spoiling her. Boyd only had one day of training with his predecessor.

Anderson said she has learned much since becoming the Eastern Ontario rep. "It's an educational experience for me," she said. "You get to see many different types of operations."

Anderson said agriculture has always been part of her life. "I'm from a Holstein farm, so I've grown up with cows," said Anderson. "It's just kind of a passion of mine, I guess. I just wanted to stay in the industry."

When asked what farmers commonly ask her about during field visits, Anderson's answer was immediate.

• continued on next page

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Dairy rep

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"For sure, something that's very important is the BSE situation," said Anderson.

While the beef industry is recoiling the most from the U.S. Border closure, the dairy industry has been hit hard, too.

Cull cows – meaning older dairy cows that are too sick, too old, or just plain ready to leave the farm – are sold for meat. In the past, the Americans bought many cull cows. However, since the border closure, excess cull cows have flooded the Canadian market.

As a result, the cows' value has decreased drastically.

"They used to be able to sell them before for roughly $800 to $1,000 an animal," said Anderson. "A lot of them went to the states. Now they're selling for anywhere between nothing to the $300 or $400 range."

Sometimes, farmers end up losing money when they get rid of their call cows. "Basically, they're paying somebody else to take their animals," said Anderson. Sometimes, she said, farmers must pay for the cost of shipping and commission resulting from the cow going through the sale barn.

Also, farmers used to sell dairy replacement heifers to the U.S. Again, an increased heifer supply has flooded the Canadian market.

Anderson estimates that most farmers could fetch $1,500 to $3,000 for a heifer ready to produce milk. Now, she says, prices have dropped to the $400 to $1,000 range, or even lower in some cases.

In addition, it costs up to $2,000 to raise a heifer until they're able to calve and produce milk.

"Most farmers are seeing a loss of $25,000 to $50,000 in income for all these animals that they used to sell," said Anderson. "Depending on the farm, the numbers could be even higher in some cases."

Anderson said she has seen several farms close due to the BSE crisis. However, some can buy more quota to legally sell the extra milk.

"There have been a lot of farmers that have sold out because they just don't have the income," she said. "It's very difficult to stay in the business unless you get bigger."

Anderson said that many new farmers wonder how they can become Holstein Ontario members. Currently, it's optional for farmers to join the group.

Some, Anderson said, don't join because they are unsure where to start.

"It's surprising how many people don't know [about Holstein Ontario], and how many people are interested in registering their animals or becoming a member," she said. "Some people feel that with the market going down for the dairy cattle, it's not worth it to pay to register your animals, that you're not getting a return."

She said registered animals may become a crucial step in ensuring beef quality if or when the border open. She expects the U.S. government should want proof of each cows' birthdate. The paperwork will be important if the U.S. will allow cows in under 30 months of age.

"Basically, it's a passport to enter the states," said Anderson.

Anderson said that the industry is moving towards electronic identification tags. The radio tag, which goes in each ear of the cow, allows monitors to track the cow, no matter what farm she has been to.

In one ear is the electronic button tag, and in the other is the barcoded tag.

An identification button and barcoded tag costs $4.95 per set from Holstein Canada.

Anderson said that international countries who have shut their borders to Canadian beef suggest Canada adopt a national tracking system. Radio tags, said Anderson, would be useful for such a program.

"This is our path to doing that," said Anderson.

Currently, a law exists that requires each cow to have a barcoded tag in its ear. However, those tags are identified to the farmer.

"Eventually, I think each animal will be identifiable to herself, not to the farm," said Anderson, explaining that this is the advantage of the radio tracking system. "It's just a matter of time, I'd say."

Something Anderson does regularly is visit farms and help farmers become registered Holstein Ontario members.

"I'm more than willing to go on the farm and do all the paperwork," said Anderson. "Farmers are busy enough as it is."

For more information about Holstein Canada, contact Anderson on her cell phone (613) 795-1396 or j_and14@hotmail.com.

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Put the dairy back in the 'fest



WINCHESTER – Winchester is proudly known as Ontario's Dairy Capital. Each August, Winchester residents come out to celebrate friendship and community, as well as support the local dairy industry. This year, Dairyfest is scheduled for August 5, 6, and 7, and organizers have big plans for the celebration.

"We're in really good shape this year," said Janine Stevenson, a member of the organizing committee.

Friday night's kick-off event, the 106.9 FM BEAR bash, will feature entertainment from local band Black Cherry.

Saturday's events will include the Winchester merchants' sidewalk sale, and the beloved Holstein beauty contest – back for another year. Visitors will have the chance to fill out a ballot and decide which dairy cow they think is the prettiest; the owner of the winning cow will receive a cash prize. There will also be the children's calf contest where kids have the chance to guess the weight of a calf to win a prize.

Saturday will also feature the official opening ceremonies of Dairyfest, and the entertainment throughout the day will focus on the kids.

Luc Le Duc, the Duke of Magic, will perform twice on Saturday, at 11 am and 1 pm, and the Dundas County Players will perform *Jack and the Beanstalk* on the outdoor stage that afternoon. The Players will also be performing throughout the weekend at the Old Town Hall theatre.

All events on Saturday are happening outside, so visitors are reminded to bring their lawn chairs.

"That's something we've never done before," said Stevenson.

From 3 pm to 7 pm, local talent can strut their stuff on the stage at the arena during the Winchester Idol competition.

The local beer gardens will be located at the Legion throughout the day, and the Saturday evening dance at the arena will feature Roadhouse.

The Township of North Dundas council members will be serving breakfast at the arena Sunday morning from 8 to 10 am. Classic cars will fill the arena field for the classic car show.

At noon, festival visitors can enjoy an old-fashioned picnic provided by the town merchants. Bands will be preforming throughout the afternoon and Little Ray's Reptiles will make an appearance – if kids can pull themselves away from the Airbounce playground that will be set up. A fireworks display will light up the Winchester skies on Sunday at dusk.

"Sunday's just going to be a ton of fun," said Stevenson, who has been involved in the organizing committee for three years.

There are five members on the Dairyfest organizing committee this year.

"From what I understand, the committee used to be a lot larger," said Stevenson. "Four of us are newer members. This will be the second year of the restructured Dairyfest."

Stevenson would like any local organization, group, or individual wishing to be involved in the festivities or organize an event to notify her by the end of June, as the advertising posters will be printed shortly thereafter. She can be reached at 774-0389.

Stevenson is excited about this year's events, and has been meeting with the committee every month since last year's event was over.

"We're going to make it bigger and better and put the community back into the 'fest," she said.

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Artificially-produced trans fats are the worst type of fat for the heart. They increase the risk of heart disease. These trans fats are created during a process called "partial hydrogenation."

This process transforms vegetable oil into a solid fat at room temperature. Artificially-produced trans fats are found in many margarines and all vegetable shortening, as well as the foods made with them, including many commercial snacks, baked goods and fried foods.

• Did you know that it is illegal to dye margarine yellow in Quebec? Dairy producers, and the provincial government, argue that it looks too much like butter. For decades, margarine in the province has been an off-white color. Unilever Canada, which makes well-known brands like Fleishmann's, Monarch, and Becel, tried to get the law changed in March 2002 but lost in court.



• Did you know that chocolate milk is just as good for you as white milk? Not only is it packed with the same bone-building nutrients as white milk, but it is a great source of calcium. Chocolate milk is low in fat (since it's usually made from 1 per cent milk), and it has about the same amount of sugar as unsweetened orange juice.

• Did you know that scientists have developed a use for excess colostrum, the first milk cows have after giving birth? Humans don't usually drink it, and after calves get their fill of the antibody-rich milk, farmers throw out the leftovers. But now, the Saskatoon Colostrum Company collects colostrum and turns it into powder. The resultant product, Headstart, can be bottled and given to calves without access to their own mother's colostrum.



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Minimize environmental impact

Benefits of contracting for liquid manure

by Amanda Smith-Millar
Press staff

WINCHESTER – When it comes to fertilizer, some farmers choose to spread it themselves. But contracting an expert with experience and legal knowledge is an option which some farmers choose.

Managed effectively, manure is a way for dairy producers to maximize profits and reduce input costs.

According to Wilfried Raats of Raats Irrigation Ltd., 80 per cent of his clients are dairy producers. Raats, who is in the manure business with his brother, Mike Raats, applies the fertilizer to crops.

The pair are contracted by farmers to take the manure from the farm's storage facility. The brothers usually pump the manure out to the fields with drag lines. If manure is too thick, or the field they must fertilize extends farther than the three-kilometre-long drag lines will reach, they use large tanks to transport the manure.

The brothers apply the manure in two ways. The first is through surface application, an option which reduces odors because it's applied closely to the ground using lower pressure.

Secondly, they can do injection services, which eliminates odors because the manure is put directly into the ground.

Not only can Raats Irrigation transmit dairy liquid manure, but liquid hog, beef, poultry, and runoff from milk-fed veal biosolids as well.

"As long as it's liquid, we can do it."

Poultry manure, he said, is challenging because of its gummy consistency. But with enough water, they can apply it as well.

Raats said animal manure is more effective than the store-bought kind. "There's a high value of nutrients," said Raats. "It will be very beneficial to the soil versus commercial fertilizer."

Of course, adding fertilizer should be done with research and care. People like Raats work with the farmer's crop consultant, who deals with nutrient management.

"We do the best job we can to minimize impact on the environment," said Raats.

Raats said farmers use his services for two main reasons. The first is cost of equipment.

"The reason why we can be in business is, we can afford the equipment [because it is] spread over a number of farms," said Raats. He said his machinery is top-of-the-line and can pump up to 70 thousand gallons per hour to the fields.

The second is timing. Farmers are busy with the day-to-day duties on their farm and cannot easily spread the manure themselves. "The timing is an issue," said Raats. 'We'll be at it for a day or an afternoon," said Raats, explaining that farmers applying manure themselves would have to do so between regular chores. As a result, the manure-spreading process would take a long time.

Raats said he and his brother compete with other manure and irrigation businesses in the area. But Raats pointed out that there's plenty of work to go around — in April and May, Raats Irrigation is usually busy.

"There's never going to be enough equipment in the countryside to accommodate the work there was two weeks ago," he said, but adds that being a new business, they can easily take on new clients.

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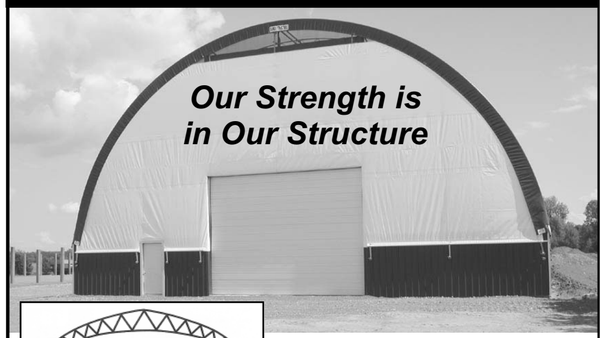

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Watch for our moving day news later this summer!

We would like to salute all of our dairy customers!

Are you drinking enough milk?

The Press went on location at Andy's Foodland in Winchester to see just how much milk the local residents are drinking. According to the Canadian Food Guide to Healthy Eating, children four to nine years old should be consuming two to three servings of dairy per day. Youth 10 to 16 years should have three to four servings, while adults should have two to four servings per day. Pregnant and breast-feeding women should consume three to four servings per day. One serving equals one cup of milk, 50 grams of cheese or three-quarters of a cup of yogurt. Dairy products provide protein, fat, vitamin D, and calcium.

Press photos – Duncan



Kristen Wells of Brinston

How much milk do you drink?

"We don't drink a lot, two or three litres a week," said her mom, Crystal.

How much milk do you think you think you should be drinking?

"That or more."

(Kristen obviously prefers Cheestrings.)



Margaret Ray of Winchester: Parmalat 2%

How much milk do you drink?

"I don't drink a lot."

How much milk do you think you should be drinking?

"A lot more than I am, I know that. But I always buy Parmalat."



Martina Lauer of Chesterville with four-year-old Allison: Parmalat 2%

How much milk do you drink?

"I myself, not enough. But the children drink a lot. We go though more than eight litres per week."

How much milk do you think you should be drinking?

"I think we do pretty well."



Isabel Baker of Winchester: Parmalat 2%

How much milk do you drink?

"I don't drink a lot, but I use a lot for baking — pies and puddings and so on."

How much milk do you think you should be drinking?

"Maybe a couple glasses a day? That should make my bones strong enough."



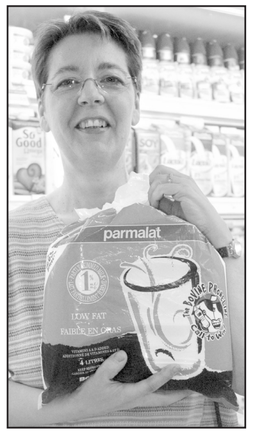
Cheryl Williams of Mountain: Parmalat skim

How much milk do you drink?

"As a family, lots. Probably about 12 litres per week."

How much milk do you think you should be drinking?

"I think we do well."



Barb Stewart of South Mountain: Parmalat 1%

How much milk do you drink?

"We go through about four litres a week for three people, but my mom drinks most of it. We're not big milk drinkers. We mostly use it in coffee and tea."

How much do you think you should be drinking?

"I'm not sure."



Kerri Anne Taylor, employee at Andy's Foodland, Winchester

How much milk do you drink?

"I drink a lot of soy milk."

How much milk do you think you should be drinking?

"Three glasses a day."



Tony Kerkhof of Winchester: Parmalat 2%

How much milk do you drink?

"We have about six litres each week, together. I'm not supposed to drink very much milk."

How much milk do you think you should be drinking?

"Two glasses a day."



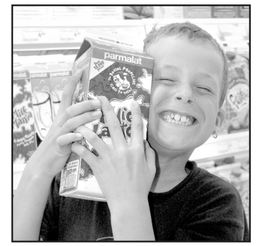
Brenda Thompson of Kingston: 2% and soy milk

How much milk do you drink?

"I recently switched to soy milk because I heard the cows were being pumped full of hormones. But I drink about four big glasses a day. Milk is my favorite drink."

How much milk do you think you should be drinking?

"I'll say four glasses."



Damian Whalenderby, 10, of Winchester: Parmalat 2%

How much milk do you drink?

"No clue."

How much milk do you think you should be drinking?

"No clue."



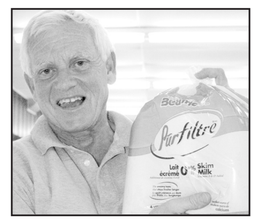
Tiffany Whitehead, 12, of Winchester: chocolate milk

How much milk do you drink?

"I drink a couple glasses a day."

How much milk do you think you should be drinking?

"Eight glasses a day."



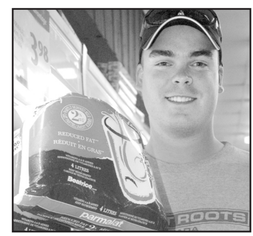
George Hollingdrake of Winchester: Beatrice skim

How much milk do you drink?

"I drink a big glass of milk a day, plus I have it on my cereal."

How much milk do you think you should be drinking?

"I think that's probably enough."



Ryan West of South Mountain: Parmalat 2%

How much milk do you drink?

"A half a litre a day."

How much milk do you think you should be drinking?

"A half a litre a day."

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