

Dairyman

DECEMBER 2007



Young Cooperators Attend National Dairy Summit



AWARDS AT NMPF

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Swiss Valley Farms Cream Cheese was impressive at last month's National Milk Producers Federation annual Dairy Summit in Orlando, Florida. Swiss Valley Farms Cream Cheese produced in Luana, Iowa took First Place in Open Class Category. It was one of the sampling highlights of the Cheese Award Reception. Swiss Valley Farms Regular Swiss Wheel produced in Platteville, Wisconsin received a score of 96.5 and took at First Place in the Baby Swiss Category. The Neufchatel made from Luana took Second Place. Finally, our Regular Swiss made in Luana took a Second Place.

In the Communication competition at the Summit, Swiss Valley Farms took First Place in the website division with www.swissvalley.com. In addition, SVF took home a Third with its 2006 annual report.

Nancy Feeny received a Second Place in the photography category with her "DIVCO Memories" photo that ran in the October 2006 issue. Karen Bohnert received Second Place with her "Grassroots" cover design featured in the July 2007 issue. Kaianne Hodorff from Second Look Holsteins graced that cover. Karen Bohnert and Scott Peake took a Third Place ribbon with the Swiss Valley Farms Procurement Booth design in the special purpose project category. Also in this category, Scott Peake took a Third Place with the dip relaunch project.

Tom and Julie Kaiser, Cuba City, Wis., representing Swiss Valley Farms on the National YC Advisory Board, helped facilitate the YC meetings. Young Cooperators Mark and Jill Lamborn, Luana, Iowa also represented Swiss Valley Farms at the



Joan Horbiak puts YC'er Mark Lamborn's media communication skills to the test in a mock interview during the YC portion of the NMPF annual meetings in Orlando.

BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE

national milk annual meeting



Swiss Valley Farms Board of Directors and Executive Staff pose beside the cooperative's cheese table at the NMPF Cheese Reception in Orlando. Pictured include (L-R): Don Desjarlais, Vice President of Procurement & Finance; Steve Klug, Spring Grove, MN; Loyde Beers, Eastman, WI; Gordy Toyne, Co-CEO; Bill Strief, Farley, IA; Don Boelens, Co-CEO; Pam Bolin, Clarksville, IA; Pat Schroeder, Lancaster, WI; Eugene Smith, Clinton, WI; Don Berlage, Elizabeth, IL; G. Joe Lyon, Toledo, IA and Jeff Nimtz, Monticello, WI.

NMPF annual Dairy Summit.

The theme of this year's Dairy Summit was "Building a Better Future." In the YC portion, the two main speakers were Ron Hansen and Joan Horbiak. Ron Hansen talked to the Young Cooperators about business ownership succession issues for dairy farm families. Hanson talked about the many issues that confront farm families in working through the transition in a reasonable and expedient manner without disturbing the daily operation of the dairy farm business. Next, Joan Horbiak who presented an interactive presentation on how to talk to the media about

important dairy issues. This workshop taught YC'ers how to speak up and address difficult questions that dairy producers could be confronted with in their hometown or on their farm.

In the general dairy session, guest speakers included Pat Williams, Senior Vice President and Co-Founder of the Orlando Magic, who talked about the seven steps to leadership in the 21st Century. Also, former Senator Bob Graham addressed the group regarding America's immigration laws. An interesting industry roundtable panel talked about the changing products for a changing marketplace. The panelists included: Marty Margherio, Farmland

Dairies, Mike Krueger, Shamrock Foods, and Nak-Kyung Kim, Burger King. The panelists talked about how the changing demands of consumers are changing how processors and marketers source, produce and offer their products. The panelists discussed how the connection between on-farm production and food processing is making their dairy offerings more appealing to today's and tomorrow's consumers.

ON THE COVER:

YC'ers Mark & Jill Lamborn, and Tom & Julie Kaiser represented Swiss Valley Farms at the Summit.

THE SIMPLE LIFE

by Karen Bohnert

Swiss Valley Farms cooperative member Steve Helmuth has always loved dairy cattle. Steve's love for dairy cows goes back to his childhood. "My father worked for Eldon C. Stutsman Inc. tending to beef cattle and farming back in the 60's," Steve said. "They (Stutsman) milked cows and sometimes I'd go along with dad to work. I would watch the guys milk cows and I was simply fascinated. The whole milking process amazed me." The childhood liking eventually grew to his passion and pride and today the Helmuth's own and operate a small dairy farm in Kalona, Iowa.

The Helmuth family just celebrated fifteen years of milking on their Kalona dairy farm. In 1993, they came back to Iowa to take over

Steve's father Leon's farm. They started milking cows in November 1993. Prior to that, they milked with his in-laws in east central Illinois. Today, Steve and his family milk in a 30 cow tie-stall barn and generally milk between 30 to 45 Holstein cows.

"We built this dairy ourselves," Steve said. "This was the year ('93) that the rain wouldn't stop." Helmuths had the cement forms ready to go and then they received four inches of rain in one night. "It was a mess," he adds. They put plywood down and wheel barrowed the cement in to fill the forms. "This was a nightmare, but neighbors all worked together and managed to get it done," Steve said.

Steve and his wife, Lorene knows what its like to work together. After all, they have eight children ranging

in age from 17 to a few weeks in age. Their children: LaWayne, 17; Renita; 16; LaVern, 13; LaVon, 8; Gary, 6; Merlyn, 4; Jeremy, 2 and baby Delmer, 5 weeks—all play a role in the family farm. "All the children, except the youngest two, help out with the chores," Steve said. "The oldest boy helps feed the cows and hogs and our only daughter loves to milk cows. She also is great help to her mother in the kitchen. The younger boys help feed calves."

The Helmuth family is Amish. "Old order Amish," Steve explains. They have no electricity on their farm. They drive a horse and buggy to get to town. Their children go to a one-room, Amish school-house and are educated through the eighth grade. Also, the children walk nearly





four miles roundtrip to get to school every day. “When the weather is bad, we will drive them in our horse and buggy,” Steve adds. They have no electricity in their home either. “We try not to bring the temptations of having modern things into our lives,” Steve said. “If we had electricity, we’d have a lot of things we don’t need.” Like many Amish, the Helmuths try to practice being good stewards with money. They strive to teach their families good work ethics and that you have to work for something to achieve it. “We instill value, hard work and what comes with it to our children,” Steve said.

The Amish roots carry into the dairy operation. The farm has no electricity. Its source of energy comes from a diesel power unit. “It runs the barn,” Steve said. “This is the first diesel we brought from Pennsylvania.” The unit is on its third engine and has clocked in over 90,000 hours. They do have a back-up plan in case the engine would ever die. “Our back-up is a gear box that you hook up with a PTO to the tractor,” Steve said. “Nothing breaks when you’re not using it.”

The farm has a 50,000-pound steam railroad car tanker that holds their air supply. It is filled by a 20 horse power air compressor. “It holds 16,000 gallons,” Steve said. This runs the pump well and the agitator among many other things. In addition, the farm has two bulk tanks in the milk house. “It has its advantages,” Steve said. “If you have a hot cow and by mistake put her in the tank, you can switch tanks and not loose the entire

“If we had
electricity, we’d
have a lot of things we
don’t need.”



member profile

THE SIMPLE LIFE

by Karen Bohnert

milking.”

Currently, Helmuth is milking 28 cows, of which half are registered. Last year they sold a third of the herd, including heifers. This is the third time they’ve done this. “We only have so much room and have no plans to expand at this time,” Steve said. Culling the herd often allows them to improve the look of the herd.

Helmuth’s cows average around 70 pounds of milk. His breeding focus is strength, open rib—which allows cows to eat more forages and makes more milk and he aims for wide rumps, to help with calving ease. He uses mostly Canadian bulls.

The herd is fed four times a day with a portable mixer. They raise all their own hay and feed it to the herd. “We do purchase some corn,” Steve said. “I’d rather purchase corn; it’s hard to buy good hay.” Helmuth’s farm 110 tillable acres.

In addition to the dairy farm, Helmuth’s finish out 1,000 hogs a year. “We’ve done this before we even had cows,” Steve adds.

Helmuth owns and operates a shop, which is open to the public six days a week. “We’ve had this since 2000 and sale air compressors,” Steve said. “We specialize in air compressor repair.”

They also take electric tools and make them run by air. “We do whatever the need is,” Steve said. “We work with woodworkers, for bakeries, whatever.” Leon works full-time in the shop doing repair work and also does installation of power units.

Today, Steve and his family very much enjoy milking cows and running their farm operation. The hard work, pride and strong work ethic shine strong for this Amish cooperative member. “I’d love it if my children want to come back and farm,” he said. “There is no pressure. I want them to succeed in whatever path they decide to take.”

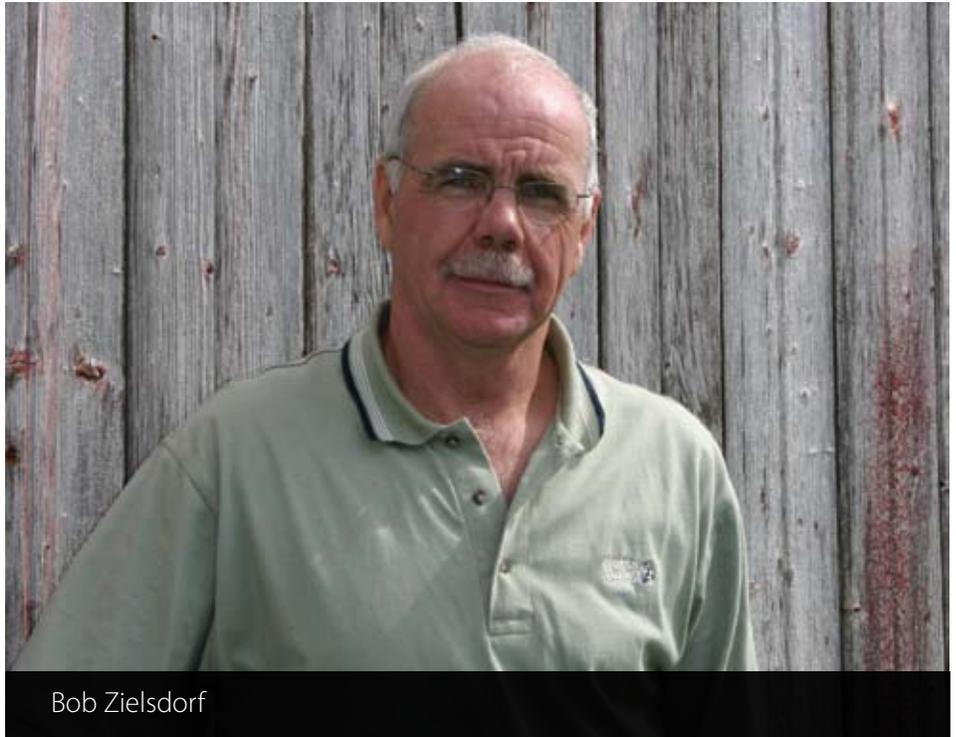


Swiss Valley Farms Field Representative Bob Zielsdorf has been with the cooperative nearly nine years. "I really enjoy working outside with the dairy producers. They are hard working, innovative and honest people," Bob said. "Every day presents an opportunity—and with the great milk prices we've had this last year, it's made my job even more enjoyable."

Bob's history in the dairy industry is rich. His love for dairy began at an early age. He was born and raised on a dairy farm. "I grew up with Registered Guernsey cattle in Melrose, Wis.," Bob said. Growing up on a Wisconsin dairy farm, Bob was extremely active. When asked what he had to do growing up on his family dairy farm, Bob chuckled and said, "I had to do everything!" Besides the required chores on the farm—milking, feeding, cleaning—Bob was also very active in 4-H and FFA. "I showed dairy cows, was on the county dairy judging team and received the Wisconsin State Farmer degree," Bob said.

After high school, Bob went onto college at Western Wisconsin Technology School in LaCrosse and graduated with an Associates degree in Dairy Equipment in 1976. Right out of college, he began his long career with Surge as a Dairy Equipment Specialist in Western Wisconsin. "I put in stanchion barns, and as the years went by, I put in more and more parlors." After his 21-year career with Surge, Bob went to work for Universal Milking Equipment, installing and servicing dairy equipment.

As a field representative for Swiss



Bob Zielsdorf

Valley Farms, Bob takes care of 80 farms. He also travels throughout the co-op's four-state member region, helping his colleague field reps and Swiss Valley Farms members with cleaning problems and/or somatic cell problems.

"Bob's expertise in dairy equipment has been very valuable to our members. In most cases, dairy equipment failure is the cause of high bacteria or high P.I. counts. Bob has been able to quickly identify or fix those equipment failures, which save our members time and money," said Ron Brenner, Swiss Valley Farms Field Supervisor. "He also has been able to share his experiences with the other field people and assist them as well. Bob is an important part of our team."

Bob is very active with the National Dairy Quality awards

and he is very proud that some of the past winners are not only Swiss Valley Farms members, but also farms he represents. He has had two platinum winners, one gold winner and five of his farms are in the finals this year for the NDQ awards. "Swiss Valley Farms prides itself on quality and we have a lot of good quality farms out there that deserve this kind of recognition," Bob said.

Bob is married to Leona. He has one daughter, Sarah, 26, and one new puppy he is proud to highlight, Graci, who is a nine-month old, lhasa apso shitzu mix. Leona has five daughters and 10 grandchildren. Away from work, Bob's main hobby is woodworking and, most recently, he remodeled his daughter's house. He also likes to watch and attend sporting events and cheer for the Wisconsin Packers!

READY FOR YOUR CLOSEUP?

photo contest winners

1st



Bill Dairy Farm *strawberry point, ia*

This picture was chosen as the winner of the first annual Swiss Valley Farms photo contest. We chose this as the winner because of its beautiful color contrast and composition. Little Hannah Bill loves to help out by feeding the calves.

2nd



Deutmeyer Dairy *strawberry point, ia*

Our second place winner went to Deutmeyer Dairy. This picture captured an intimate moment between the Deutmeyer sisters in a very warm and loving way. We also felt it portrayed the family feel at milking time.



Bechtel Dairy

richland center, wi

This beautiful landscape was chosen as our third place winner. We felt that it was vibrant with color and represents the serenity of cows grazing in the pasture...a perfect fall photo.



Fink Dairy

fort atkinson, wi

Our fourth place winner went to Fink Dairy. This picture simply showed the beauty and calm of freshly fallen snow. Its creative lighting made it a stand-out and was perfect for our December page.



READY FOR YOUR CLOSEUP?

photo contest winners

Thanks to all who participated!

Here are some more of our favorite photo entries. There were many more great entries that we didn't have room to run here. Thank you all for such a successful photo contest! We look forward to seeing more of your great pictures next year!



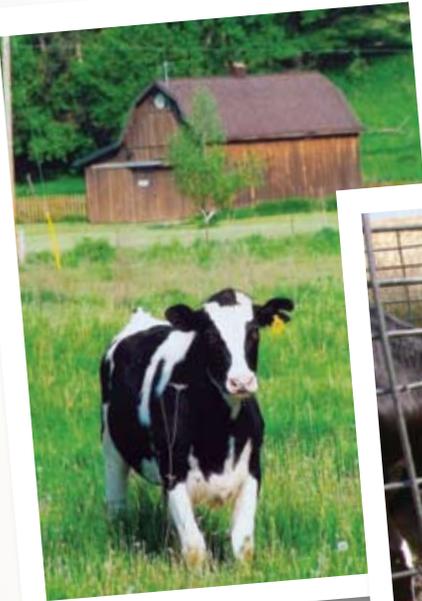
*submitted by:
Jill & Mark Lamborn
luana, ia*



*submitted by:
Cedar Valley Dairy
atalissa, ia*



*submitted by:
Gaul Dairy
colesburg, ia*



*submitted by:
Bechtel Dairy
ft atkinson, wi*



*submitted by:
Dave & Pam Bolin
clarksville, ia*



*submitted by:
Fink Dairy Farm
ft atkinson, wi*

LEADERSHIP BEGAN WITH YC'S

by Nancy Feeney

This third generation dairy producer began his leadership journey with Swiss Valley Farms through the co-op's Young Cooperator program. Now, he serves as Chairman of the committee that helps to shape that program.

Jeff Nimitz' involvement with the YC program began when he and his wife Julie volunteered to help out on the YC Steering Committee. They were then elected Swiss Valley Farms Outstanding Young Cooperators in 1996 and attended two NMPF Dairy Summits and served on the National YC Advisory Board. In 2003, Jeff was elected director from District 23 and last winter he was elected as Board Secretary. He is now chairman of the Board's Industry and Member Relations Committee, which oversees the co-op's YC program.

Jeff and Julie's journey with Swiss Valley Farms began in 1989 when Swiss Valley Farms acquired Hampshire Milk Producers, a small Illinois milk co-op. The couple joined Swiss Valley with that acquisition. A few years later, the couple stayed with Swiss Valley after they purchased a 184-acre dairy farm in Monticello, Wis. "We packed up everything we owned and moved 80 miles, Jeff says. "Our families thought we were moving to the other side of the world!"

Their farm's registered prefix is Longrow Registered Holsteins and they milk 50 cows with a rolling herd average of 23,000 pounds with 3.8 Butterfat and 3.0 Protein.

Over the years, the Nimitz' clan has grown and all their children have their own farm jobs. Ashley, 17, helps with herd vaccinations, registration papers and ear tags. Aaron, 13, helps



Ashley, Julie, Jeff, Aaron, Andrew and Austin Nimitz.

with driving machinery, raking and mowing hay and getting the cows up from pasture while driving the 4-wheeler. Andrew, 8, helps by keeping every one hydrated during the summer and playing with his littlest brother, Austin, 4, while every one else is busy. Austin just likes to be in the barn with Dad. All the older children show their registered animals at the local and state fairs.

For the past 14 years, Julie has worked four days a week as a preschool teacher in New Glarus. During the summer, she's on the farm helping with the field work.

According to Jeff, their dairy's mission statement is to strive to improve milk quality and production while achieving higher milk components.

"We've earned Swiss Valley Farms milk quality awards for 16 years, along with the State of Wisconsin milk quality awards," Jeff says. "We raise all of our own replacement heifers from newborn calves to milking-age cows. All bull calves are sold to market and a few neighbors. We have a closed herd because we grow our registered herd from within. We do this as a part of our herd health management."

Jeff says over the next few years, he plans to update his heifer housing and possibly add a milking parlor. "I'd like to build an open heifer shed that will hold all ages of heifers," Jeff says. "I strive to keep production costs in line and labor costs to a minimum while reinvesting in the dairy facility to allow for future growth."

SALES ITEMS



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 M – XL **\$14**

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 S – XL **\$11.50**

T-Shirt in Two-Tone Brown.
 M – XL & 2XL **\$14**

Blue Denim Long Sleeve Shirts look great anytime. Logo embroidered left front pocket.
Adult: 2XL \$20 XL & S \$18

White Plastic Cheese Wire with two cutting sizes. SVF logo on the handle. **Price: \$2**

White Plastic Cutting Boards 9 by 7 inches plus 5-inch handle. **Price: \$5**

SVF Stocking Cap warm, knit stocking caps, navy blue with red stripes & SVF name woven into cuff.
Price: \$5

Brown Hooded Sweatshirt with SVF name across front
 M, L **\$22** XL **\$23** 2XL **\$25**

SPECIALS

Light Blue Golf Shirts SVF Logo embroidered on left front.
Price: Adult 3XL, 2XL ~~\$25~~ NOW \$18
 S, M, L, XL ~~\$22~~ **NOW \$15**

Junior T-Shirts in Two-Tone Blue with capped sleeves. Great for the young ladies. These sizes run VERY small.
 S - XL ~~\$9~~ **NOW \$7** 2XL ~~\$10~~ **NOW \$8**

"Swiss Valley Sunrise" note cards featuring the Bonnie Mohr print: 10 cards in a pack. Great for "Thank you's" and invitations.
Price: 3 PACKS FOR \$5

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| Two-Tone Orange | | | | |
| Light Blue Golf | | | | |
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| Stocking Hat | | | | |
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During the Month of October,
these Swiss Valley Farms
Members averaged below
100,000 for their
somatic cell count.

| | |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Chad Breuckman | 81,000 |
| George & Judy Cadden | 78,000 |
| Kevin & Donna Carolan | 82,000 |
| Be Fong Deutmeyer | 99,000 |
| Robert Deutmeyer | 99,000 |
| Richard & Vanessa Devore | 59,000 |
| Delbert Devries | 94,000 |
| Randy Dreier | 99,000 |
| Larry Gilbertson | 76,000 |
| Andy Gingerich | 74,000 |
| Roger Hagedorn | 84,000 |
| Hendel Farms | 78,000 |
| Hodson-Dirksen Farms LLC | 71,000 |
| Dallas & Pat Hofmeister | 85,000 |
| Robert & Patricia Horst | 70,000 |
| Brian Hoskins | 89,000 |
| Koty Laufenberg | 80,000 |
| Cheryl Meier | 64,000 |
| Mike Meier | 64,000 |
| Meyer Farms Dairy LLC | 99,000 |
| Randy Mikshowsky | 92,000 |
| Oat Hill | 69,000 |
| Weldon Peterson | 84,000 |
| Kenneth & Marlus Schmitz | 65,000 |
| Harry Weier | 78,000 |
| Leighton Yoder | 60,000 |

Somatic Cell Range % of **A** Farms

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| 0 - 100,000..... | 3 % |
| 100,001 - 200,000..... | 19 % |
| 200,001 - 300,000..... | 28 % |
| 300,001 - 400,000..... | 24 % |
| 400,001 - 500,000..... | 12 % |
| 500,001 and above..... | 14 % |

Somatic Cell Range % of **B** Farms

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| 0 - 100,000..... | 4 % |
| 100,001 - 200,000..... | 20 % |
| 200,001 - 300,000..... | 16 % |
| 300,001 - 400,000..... | 12 % |
| 400,001 - 500,000..... | 19 % |
| 500,001 and above..... | 29 % |

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SPEAKING UP FOR ALL

washington, dc

Glen and Melissa Schmitt traveled to Washington DC in June 2006 to participate in the National YC Advisory Board planning session. While there, they had good success with their Capitol Hill visits. So when it came time for the 2007 NMPF sponsored September Fly-In, the Schmitt's were asked again to come to DC to visit with their local Senators and Representatives on the upcoming Farm Bill.

The NMPF Fly-In is when Young Cooperators from across the country are literally flown in to D.C. for a quick two-day trip for the sole purpose of visiting their Congressional representatives to give dairy's views on pending legislation. "While we were there, we were able to discuss Farm Bill issues such as Forward Contracting and Import Assessment with Sen. Tom Harkin and his staff, Sen. Chuck Grassley's aides, along with Rep. Tom Latham," Melissa said.

Key Messages that NMPF wanted the Schmitt's to convey to their Congressional representatives were:

1. Dairy producers prefer the House-based Farm Bill
2. Stress the importance of implementing an import assessment
3. Urge the forward contracting provision be included only if producer safeguards are also included.

"Dairy Forward Contracting is an issue of giving the farmers the resources they need to control their financial risk and manage their budgets," Glen says. "NMPF wants the Farm Bill draft to give permission for continuance of forward contracting. However, it also contains all the safeguards requested

by NMPF, such as a sunset clause and to give the Secretary of Agriculture authority to review complaints".

The issue of Import Assessment comes from the 2002 Farm Bill passages agreeing that farmers in Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico do not have to pay funds into the National Dairy Promotion and Research Program. The Schmitt's asked that these entities not be exempt from paying this promotional check off. If all dairy producers in

the United States pay into this check off, then other countries who import dairy products into the United States will have to pay it, too, through this import assessment. As it stands now, the House version of the 2007 Farm Bill has the import assessment; the Senate bill is not expected to have it.

The Schmitt's encourage other fellow dairy producers to voice their concerns and opinions with their own congressmen. "A little voice does make a difference," Melissa says.



Glen and Melissa Schmitt, Ft. Atkinson, Iowa visited with Senator Chuck Grassley on the dairy issues in the Farm Bill.



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