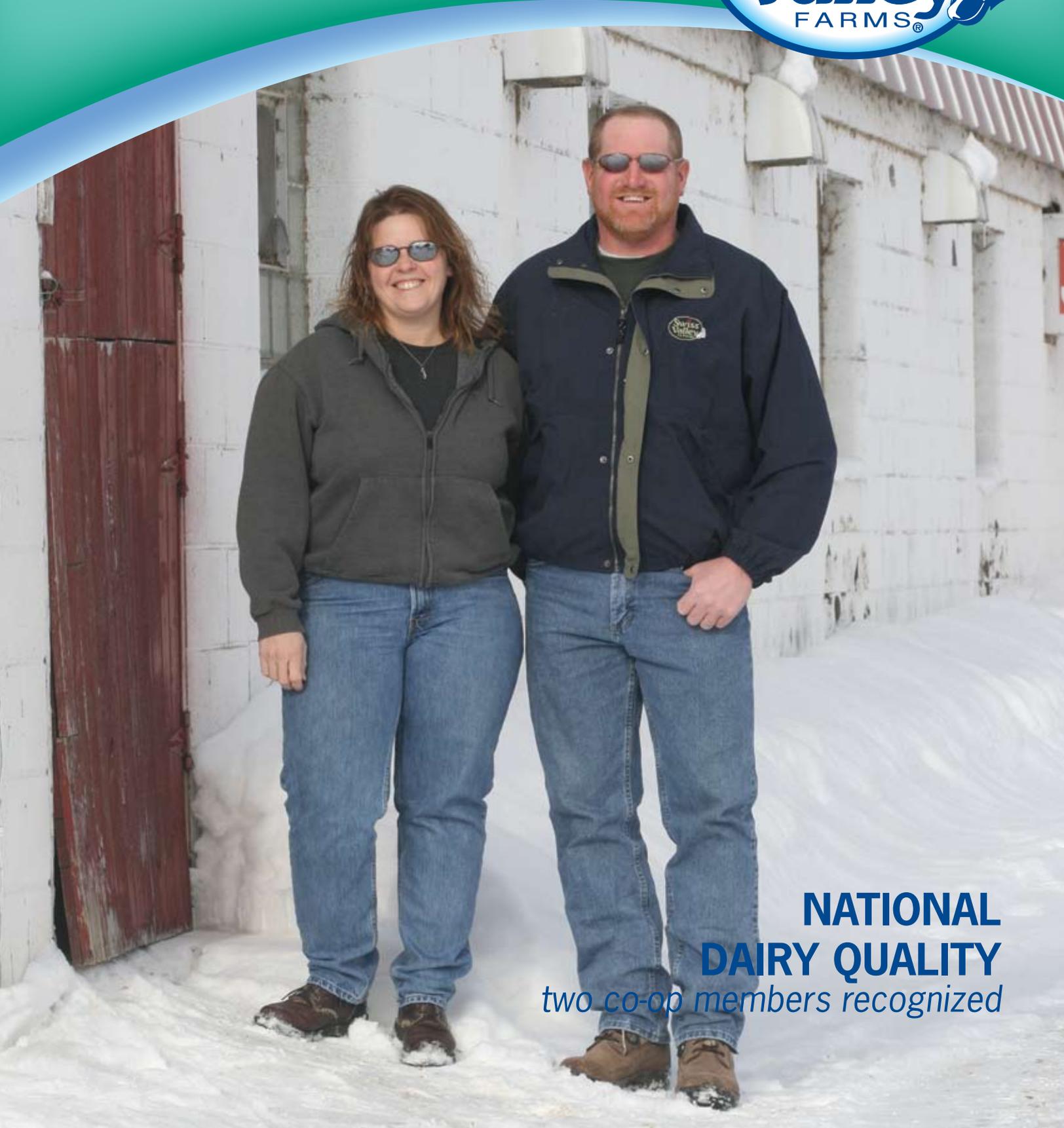


# Dairyman

MARCH 2009



**NATIONAL  
DAIRY QUALITY**  
*two co-op members recognized*



ceo corner

# CHALLENGES AHEAD

by Don Boelens

Published Monthly by:  
**Swiss Valley Farms**  
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Swiss Valley Farms, Co. will produce, distribute and sell value-added, quality products for our:

- Customers & Consumers
- Owner/Members
- Workforce

## Swiss Valley Board Officers

- Chair**  
 Pam Bolin.....Clarksville, IA
- Vice Chair**  
 Randy Schaefer.....Blue Grass, IA
- Assistant Secretary**  
 Jeff Nimtz.....Monticello, WI
- Assistant Treasurer**  
 James Schmitt.....Sherrill, IA

## Swiss Valley Directors

- Loyde M. Beers.....Eastman, WI
- Steve Klug.....Spring Grove, MN
- Dale Humpal.....Ridgeway, IA
- Francis Leibfried.....Cuba City, WI
- G. Joe Lyon.....Toledo, IA
- Patrick Schroeder.....Lancaster, WI
- Eugene Smith.....Clinton, WI
- William Strief.....Farley, IA

Soon, you will be receiving your 2008 Annual Report from Swiss Valley Farms. I encourage you to review it at your convenience.

Although 2008 is behind us, it should be noted that this coming year will surely be one full of challenges as well! Conducting business in a world-wide recession will be one among many.

More and more companies are announcing their decision to go rBST-free. The latest companies to make this declaration are General Mills, who just announced they will make their entire line of Yoplait yogurt rBST-free by August 2009, and Dannon yogurt, who plan to phase out using milk from rBST-treated cows by the end of the year. Agri-Mark Inc. dairy cooperative (Cabot branded product), New England's largest dairy cooperative, will no longer take rBST-free milk after August 1. Also, Wapsie Valley, an Iowa dairy company, recently announced that they will also be going rBST-free this fall. These are the most recent companies to join the dozens of others nationwide who are no longer accepting milk containing rBST.

It seems that this national trend continues to gain momentum. As you know, Swiss Valley Farms announced in October that we would be going rBST-free this summer. Our Dubuque, Iowa bottling plant is now 100% rBST-free.

As it was reported at our December district meetings and also in my report in the January DAIRYMAN, the Swiss Valley Farms Board did not declare a dividend for the past fiscal year, due to a loss on the Swiss Valley Farms patronage business – a loss caused by the Cedar Rapids flood, the severe downturn in the whey markets and the general economic downturn.

The co-op's \$2.1 million profit was based on the success of its Rochester Cheese operations, which do not use



member milk. Since there was no patronage dividend declared, there will not be a check for the cash portion of patronage earnings this March. The co-op will, however, be revolving allocated equities from 1998 this July.

Due to the patronage loss, Swiss Valley Farms will not be able to pass the "Domestic Production Activities Deduction" credit back to our member-owners, given that all of our pre-tax and net earnings were generated by our non-patronage business activities. We explored every avenue with our tax advisors in an attempt to make the deduction available. However, IRS rules regarding patronage versus non-patronage earnings are very rigid and we were not able to make the 2008 deduction available.

On a more positive note, we finished the first quarter of this fiscal year with a positive bottom line and ahead of budget in terms of profitability. We believe dairy product demand should start to recover in light of the low prices we are experiencing. The pace of the economic recovery will play a large part as to when and where the demand starts to materialize. We will be carefully monitoring market trends to ensure Swiss Valley Farms is positioned to take advantage of the opportunities.

As winter begins to wrap up, we wish you well on your farms.

# BOARD REORGANIZATION

**A**t the February 24th Swiss Valley Farms Cooperative Annual Reorganization Meeting, the Executive Committee was elected, a new director was seated and several directors were recognized for their Board longevity.

Pam Bolin, Clarksville, Iowa, was re-elected Chair of the Board of Directors; Randy Schaefer, Blue Grass, Iowa, was re-elected Vice Chair of the Board. Jeff Nimtz, Monticello, Wis., was elected Assistant Secretary and Jim Schmitt, Sherrill, Iowa was re-elected Assistant Treasurer. Once again, Swiss

Valley Farms Board of Directors appointed Swiss Valley Farms staff members Tom Stontz, Vice President of Information and Technology, to the Secretary position and Greg Rexwinkel, Vice President of Finance, to the Treasurer position of the Board.

Also at this meeting, G. Joe Lyon, Toledo, Iowa; Dale Humpal, Rideway, Iowa and Eugene Smith, Clinton, Wis., were re-elected to the Board's Executive Committee.

Three directors were recognized for their Board longevity. G. Joe Lyon, Toledo, Iowa, received an award

marking his 20 years of service on the co-op's Board of Directors. Both Jim Schmitt, Sherrill, Iowa and Pat Schroeder, Lancaster, Wis., were recognized for five years of service to the Board.

Newly elected director for District 16, Ken Schmitz, Norwalk, Wis., was seated at this meeting. Ken and his wife Marlus received National Dairy Quality Awards for the last two years. They have three children: Taylor, Katelyn and Matthew. For more information on the newest Board member and their National Dairy Quality award winning, turn to page 6.



20 Year Longevity Award:  
G. Joe Lyon, Toledo, Iowa



5 Year Longevity Award:  
Jim Schmitt, Sherrill, Iowa



5 Year Longevity Award:  
Pat Schroeder, Lancaster, Wis.



Newest Board member:  
Ken Schmitz, Norwalk, Wis.

# annual meeting set for DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

The 2009 Swiss Valley Farms District Representative Meeting is set for Thursday, March 12 at the Holiday Inn, Dubuque, Iowa. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. with refreshments.

The day is loaded with lots of informative speakers and topics, so you won't want to miss any of it. The business portion of the meeting will get underway at 10:00 a.m. sharp with comments from your Board Chair Pam Bolin, Clarksville, Iowa. CEO Don Boelens and the Management Team will give reports on the company's performance.

The featured speaker after lunch will be Phil Plourd from Blimling & Associates. Phil will discuss the dairy market forecast and the futures' market, a topic of interest to everyone. Tim Prichard, Director of Technical Services for Swiss Valley Farms, will explain our process to achieve certification against a global food safety standard.

There will be plenty of time for you to ask your questions throughout the day. Lunch will be served at noon and the meeting will be adjourned no later than 2:00 p.m.

District representatives should bring any questions they or their neighboring members might have. Swiss Valley Farms members should relay any question they have to their district representatives, who will then ask them at this meeting.

A list of the Swiss Valley Farms District Representatives, along with their addresses and phone numbers, appears on the next two pages. District Representatives were mailed meeting announcements and postage-paid return reservation cards. The reps should fill out and return their cards to be counted in the meal reservation total.

## DISTRICT 1

Patrick Schroeder, Director  
S & S Farms  
3945 Hypoint Road  
Lancaster, WI 53813  
608/943-6509

1. Doug Adams  
204 S Adams  
Lancaster, WI 53813  
608/723-4497

2. Paul Adams  
5203 Lincoln Road  
Lancaster, WI 53813  
608/723-2771

3. Gerald Breitsprecker  
6461 Bluff Road  
Lancaster, WI 53813  
608/723-6232

4. Arlyn Henkel  
4363 McGhan Road  
Fennimore, WI 53809  
608/822-6755

5. Mike Meier  
8172 Diamond Grove Rd.  
Glen Haven, WI 53810  
608/694-2302

6. Roy Mumm  
11583 Settlement Road  
Cassville, WI 53806  
608/725-5699

7. Dan Pagenkopf  
4613 County Hwy A East  
Lancaster, WI 53813  
608/723-4017

8. Tom Parrish  
11347 Highway 61  
Fennimore, WI 53809  
608/822-6462

9. Bill Schier  
12484 Rock School Road  
Glen Haven, WI 53810  
608/794-2437

10. Reggie Schier  
12621 Rock School Road  
Glen Haven, WI 53810  
608/794-2437

## DISTRICT 2

Francis Leibfried, Director  
Leibfried Farms  
1849 Hy View Road  
Cuba City, WI 53807  
608/744-2600

1. Rick Althaus  
28300 Center Drive  
Cuba City, WI 53807  
608/348-3248

2. Tony Busch  
9769 S Galena Road  
Cuba City, WI 53807  
608/744-3502

3. Julie Kaiser  
29975 County Hwy H  
Cuba City, WI 53807  
608/744/3444

4. Jay Stauffacher  
16639 Hwy 23  
Darlington, Wis 53530  
608/776-4173

5. Phil Schneider  
17264 Ridge Road  
Sterling, IL 61081  
815/625-1953

6. Donald Berlage  
5598 S. Pleasant Hill  
Elizabeth, IL 61028  
815/858-2396

7. Tom Kunkel  
1784 Kirkwood  
Cuba City, WI 53807  
608/744-2053

8. Bernard Runde  
Pleasant-View Dairy Farm  
2504 Hyview Road  
Cuba City, WI 53807  
608/744-3527

## DISTRICT 4

James Schmitt, Director  
12788 Lovers Lane  
Sherrill, IA 52073  
563/552-2314

1. Marvin Ambrosy  
14275 Circle Ridge  
Sherrill, IA 52073  
563/552-2396

2. Mark Bischoff  
24155 Hwy 52  
Garnavillo, IA 52049  
563/964-2720

3. Robert Deutmeyer  
1968 325th Ave  
Dyersville, IA 52040  
563/875-6112

4. Loras Gerner  
31384 Ironwood Road  
Garber, IA 52048  
563/255-2574

5. Jim Pfeiler  
23343 Flanagan Road  
Holy Cross, IA 52053  
563/870-4885

6. Ken Steffen  
19701 Hickory Valley  
New Vienna, IA 52065  
563/870-5695

## DISTRICT 5

William Strief, Director  
26306 Farm Lane  
Farley, IA 52046  
563/744-3997

1. Neal Hoeger  
TNJ Dairy  
3240 225th Street  
Worthington, IA 52078  
563/875-2093

2. Richard Kauffmann  
551 7th Ave. N E  
Farley, IA 52046  
563/744-3052

3. Rick Cook  
32479 Rockville Rd.  
Worthington, IA 52078  
563 855-4205

4. Leo Kluesner  
5922 K & K Road  
Worthington, IA 52078  
563/855-5925

5. Jim Ostwinkle  
8451 Rt. 136 N.  
Worthington, IA 52078  
563 855-3255

## DISTRICT 6

G. Joe Lyon, Director  
2621 K Avenue  
Toledo, IA 52342  
641/484-3129

1. Jim Becker  
7372 26th Ave. Road  
Watkins, IA 52354  
319/223-5818

2. Kevin Blood  
RR2 1131A 245th Street  
State Center, IA 50247  
641/483-2734

3. Mike Dilly  
1371 290th Street  
Montour, IA 50173  
641/492-6131

4. Ronald Franck  
6667 28th Avenue  
Newhall, IA 52315-9609  
319/223-5273

5. Doug Kenealy  
Iowa State University  
123 Kildee Hall  
Ames, IA 50011  
515/294-6021

6. Bob McNulty  
2545 75th Street  
Watkins, IA 52354  
319/227-7613

7. Lyle Nunnikhoven  
1524 Hwy 92  
Oskaloosa, IA 52577  
641/672-2605
8. Richard Holst  
1952 W Ave  
Dysart, IA 52224  
319/476-3192

#### **DISTRICT 13**

Randy Schaefer, Director  
1713 Yankee Avenue  
Blue Grass, IA 52726  
319/381-4361

1. Keith Blake  
15380 240th St  
Eldridge, IA 52748  
563/285-5409
2. Marvin Helling  
2722 Ave C  
Fort Madison, IA 52627  
319/372-5662
3. Roger Holdorf  
6821 225th Street  
Walcott, IA 52773  
563/282-4665
4. Scott Bohnert  
1522 18th Ave Ct.  
Silvis, IL 61282  
309/781-4416
5. Dean Miller  
2717 520th Street S.W.  
Kalona, IA 52247  
319/683-2566
6. Steve Sywassink  
P.O. Box 393  
Grand View, IA 52752  
319/729-5400
7. Steve Gingerich  
2938 WW Ave.  
Parnell, Iowa 52325  
319/646-2012

#### **DISTRICT 15**

Loyde M. Beers, Director  
25577 Breezy Lane  
Eastman, WI 54626  
608/874-4201

1. Roger M. Dahlberg  
55247 Dahlberg Road  
Eastman, WI 54626  
608/874-4265
2. Gerald Opprieht  
23707 Morning Glory  
Eastman, WI 54626  
608/874-4492
3. Terry Steger  
34796 St Hwy 27  
Prairie du Chien, WI 53821  
608/326-6709

4. Carter Thompson  
S5943 A Thompson Rd.  
Viroqua, WI 54665  
608/675-3575
5. Keith Wright  
15005 Uglum Road  
Ferryville, WI 54628  
608/734-3243
6. Dustin Payne  
62951 Prew Lane  
Eastman, Wis 54626  
608-608-874-4451

#### **DISTRICT 16**

Kenneth Schmitz, Director  
19291 Mesa Ave.  
Norwalk, WI 54648  
608/823-7526

1. Jeff Berg  
W3439 Hwy M  
LaCrosse, WI 54601  
608/786-1732
2. Todd Clark  
RR 1 Box 282  
Wilton, WI 54670  
608/435-6503
3. Brian Schmitz  
24272 Lamplighter Road  
Norwalk, WI 54648  
608/654-5235
4. Julie Larson  
W4260 CTY Hwy Q  
Mindoro, WI 54644  
608/857-3619
5. Andi Rynes-Radtke  
21130 Cty Hwy T  
Norwalk, WI. 54648  
608-823-7311

#### **DISTRICT 17**

Dale Humpal, Director  
2667 Townline Road  
Ridgeway, IA 52165  
563/562-3848

1. Don Brincks  
1501 150th Ave  
Ossian, IA 52161  
563/532-9163
2. Kent Franks  
18551 Big Spring Road  
St. Olaf, IA 52072  
563/562-3895
3. Darryl Humpal  
2638 210th Street  
Ridgeway, IA 52165  
563/563-3928
4. Rich Klosterman  
30591 Kale Road  
West Union, IA 52175  
63/422-9518

5. Brian Lantzyk  
24359 X Ave  
Waucoma, IA 52171  
563/429-2000
6. Dan Moon  
19475 155th Street  
Monona, IA 52159  
563/739-4562
7. Jeff West  
22956 200th Street  
Farmersburg, IA 52047  
563/783-7701

#### **DISTRICT 19**

Eugene Smith, Director  
6305 S Smith Road  
Clinton, WI 53525  
608/365-5697

1. Don Damrow  
W5378 Eagle Road  
Juneau, WI 53039  
920/386-2351
2. Cathy Mess  
N 8485 County Road Q  
Watertown, WI 53094  
920/261-7537
3. Tom Oberhaus  
W309 S630 Maple Ave.  
Waukesha, WI 53188  
262/968-2573
4. Bruce Peterson  
N10241 CTY W  
Malone, WI 53049  
920/795-4117

#### **DISTRICT 20**

Steve Klug, Director  
18863 Dairy Road  
Spring Grove, MN 55974  
507/498-5170

1. David Vanderzee  
R.R. 1 Box 77  
Dakota, MN 55925  
507/643-6319
2. Donald Ingalson  
19996 County 28  
Caledonia, MN 55921  
507/498-5250
3. Matt Hendel  
14913 Gap Drive  
Caledonia, MN 55921  
507/724-5689
4. Ray Pick  
RR 1 Box 264  
Elgin, MN 55932  
507/876-2689
5. Dwain Sexton  
RR 1 Box 21  
Millville, MN 55957  
507/798-2329

6. Dale Mill  
30001 County Road 109  
Lewiston, MN 55952  
507/523-3506
7. Jim Oelfke  
35603 170th Street  
Hamburg, MN 55339  
952/467-2661
8. Pat Stuewe  
14775 Co. Road 153  
Cologne, MN 55322  
952/466-3855
9. Katie Olson  
20501 30th Ave. NE  
Atwater, MN 56209  
320/974-3213

#### **DISTRICT 21**

Pam Bolin, Director  
30707 180th Street  
Clarksville, IA 50619  
319/278-4288

1. Allen Blasberg  
1637 Midway  
Tripoli, IA 50676  
319/882-4721
2. Duane Johnson  
33813 Martin Avenue  
Parkersburg, IA 50665  
319/346-1578
3. Dan Duitscher  
30495 – 465th St.  
Rolfé, IA 50581  
712/848-3954
4. Rick Meyer  
19121 135th Street  
Iowa Falls, IA 50126  
515/648-5359
5. Darrell Robinson  
1118 180th Street  
Plainfield, IA 50666  
319/276-3407

6. Larry Wehling  
1205 Usher Ave.  
Sumner, IA 50674  
563/578-8854
7. Eduard Reuling  
24570 Royal Ave  
Clarksville, IA 50619  
319/885-4225
8. Gerben ten Hoeve  
18313 Butler Ave  
Waverly, IA 50677  
319/939-8673

#### **DISTRICT 23**

Jeff Nimtz, Director  
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Monticello, WI 53570  
608/527-5732

1. Nick Miller  
W7506 Farmers Grove Rd.  
Monticello, WI 53570  
608/527-2901
2. Dale Worley  
7151 Rt 173  
Poplar Grove, IL 61065  
815/765-2683
3. Leslie Wundrowe  
6460 Randall Road  
Poplar Grove, IL 61065  
815/737-8772
4. Matt Scott  
21125 Old Q. Road  
Blanchardville, WI 53516  
608/214-3394
5. Alice Dierickx  
W3605 Co. C  
Monticello, WI 53570  
608/938-4165
6. Peter Parker  
4233 W. Hanover Rd.  
Janesville, WI 53545  
608/757-1118

welcome

## **NEW MEMBERS**

**Larry Sullivan**  
Viroqua, Wisconsin  
**Dean Peterson**  
Viroqua, Wisconsin  
**God's Green Acres Inc.**  
Mayville, Wisconsin

## *national dairy quality winners*

# KEN & MARLUS SCHMITZ

*by karen bohnert*

**W**inners of the 2008 National Dairy Quality Award were announced in late January at the National Mastitis Council Annual Meeting held in Charlotte, North Carolina. Several awards were handed out, including a Gold level awarded to Swiss Valley Farms members, Ken and Marlus Schmitz, Norwalk, Wis. This is the second year in a row that the Schmitz have received this prestigious award.

The young cooperators milk 84 cows in a tie-stall and stanchion barn. Their rolling herd average is right around 26,000 pounds of milk with 3.65% butterfat and 3.0% protein tests. Their average cell count for the national survey was 84,000 and their plate count was 1,000. Schmitz's Swiss Valley Farms Field Representative Bob Zielsdorf nominated the Schmitz for this award again this year. "Cow comfort and cleanliness is the key for this young dairy couple," says Bob Zielsdorf. "They really take pride in their farm and cows."

Right after graduating high school, the Schmitz began dairying the summer of 1992. They purchased Jersey cows from Ken's parents and began renting a dairy farm in Norwalk. Three years later, they bought their current dairy farm and the Holstein cows. The previous owners were ready to retire and personally asked Ken and Marlus if they wanted to buy it.

The Schmitz mission is to produce quality milk, which is one reason that they've been able to receive national dairy quality two years in a row. "We pay very close attention to detail and take the time to do things right," Marlus said. "Keeping a low somatic cell count is important to us. We feel that if you're going to do the job, you should do it right. Also, Swiss Valley Farms pays well



Ken & Marlus Schmitz with their son Matthew.

for low somatic cell count milk."

They detect mastitis by paying close attention to the cow's udders at milking time and throughout the day. They are on official DHIA test, which helps them monitor individual cow's somatic cell counts.

Their milking procedures include them wearing gloves, wiping dirt off from the udder, pre-dipping and leaving it on for 20-30 seconds, wiping off with paper towels and waiting one minute for the cow to let her milk down before putting the machine on.

Ken and Marlus have three children who are involved in the family's dairy operation. Taylor, 12, drives skidloader, mixes feed and helps feed calves. Katelyn, 8, feeds calves and the cats. The youngest, Matthew, 5, is also known as

the boss around the farm yard. The farm hires one full-time employee to help with milkings.

"It has been a tough year," Ken said. "We have farmed for 14 years and have dealt with the fluctuation of milk price, but this year is going to be one of the most difficult years with the low milk price and the high input costs."

At the end of the day, Ken and Marlus hold their heads high and take pride in what they have. "It's a great bonus to be able to be your own boss, own a farm and land and teach your children hands-on what true responsibility is," Marlus says.

The Schmitz say it is a true privilege to be recognized for their quality milk. They are proud to represent Swiss Valley Farms.

## *national dairy quality winners*

# KEVIN & DONNA CAROLAN

*by nancy feeney*

**D**onna has been married to Kevin Carolan, a lifelong dairy producer, for 20 years and together they milk 35 Holsteins on their Calmar, Iowa, farm. That's not too bad for a young woman who spent her early childhood years on a dairy farm and swore she would never marry a dairyman! It just goes to show, you should never say "Never"!

The couple is obviously doing something right with their dairying routine, since they were once again named a National Quality Award Winner by the National Mastitis Council. Their Swiss Valley Farms Field Rep Jim Murphy nominated the Carolans for this honor. "They take a lot of pride in producing a quality product."

This year, the Carolans received a Silver Award. Two years ago, they received a Gold Award.

The couple shares the milk chores as a team. "We both have certain cows we milk," Kevin says. "Donna has her side of the parlor and I have mine." They milk in a double-six parallel milking parlor. "The cows know what side to come in on."

They have twin daughters, Jessica and Brittany, who are in the 5th grade. The girls help with some barn chores once their homework is completed. The twins help feed the calves as well as scrap manure and lots of little jobs around the barn.

The Carolans are currently milking 36 Holsteins, down from their usual 60 to 70.

Some breeding problems caused the decline in numbers, Kevin explained. "We eventually want to get back up to milking 60," he says.

With a SCC average an amazing 54,000 for the year, it is no wonder they placed so high in national competition. Their rolling herd average of 23,242 lbs. of milk with a 4.1% butterfat and a 3.2% protein tests.

How do they achieve this remarkable SCC average? Their free stall barn is scraped and bedded with straw twice a day. Alleys are scrapped every day. "We have the east end of our barn partially open with large



Donna & Kevin Carolan with their twin daughters, Jessica and Brittany.

doors on the north and south, with windows for natural ventilation," Donna says. "In the summer time, the cows are on pasture and under trees for shade."

"Our dry cows have their own shed. The front is open and they are bedded with straw. They also have their own feed ration recommended by our nutritionist," Kevin says.

Before milking, the Carolans thoroughly clean and dry the cows' teats with soft clothes. They visually check for mastitis before attaching the milkers. When it comes to detecting mastitis, they use the CMT paddle on all fresh cows to help de-

tect what kind of mastitis it is. They also rely on DHIA test sheets to help determine problem cows.

After the cow has finished milking, they hand strip her, post-dip with Udder Gold Plus or IBA Derma Soft n' Dry powdered dip when very cold. The Carolans try to maintain a regular routine, keeping cows clean and dry. They watch their SCC and PI counts and try to keep their cows healthy.

When asked why SCC is important to them, they said, "We get paid a nice premium for it. Low SCC also means more milk in the tank."



From Left to Right: YC'ers Mark & Jill Lamborn, Luana, Iowa chat with Cindy Lundin, Bellevue, Iowa between sessions. Roy & Shiloh Johnson, Parkersburg, Iowa work on their table's discussion question.

The speakers at this year's Swiss Valley Farms YC Spring Break had some very timely and useful messages for the young dairy producers who attended the two-day conference, held over Valentine's weekend in Dubuque, Iowa. Some of these messages responded to the world-wide drive to "Go Green." Others explored the explosion in global internet use and how we can all learn to spread the good news about dairy using the many new on-line tools, which are free and available to everyone through computers and even cell phones. The wrap up speaker stressed the importance of being kind to your family and yourself during tough economic times.

While the world grows increasingly interested in the size of the "carbon footprint" of its food, Dale Thoreson, a Dairy Field Specialist for Iowa State Extension, presented many good ideas to the YC'ers on how to make their dairy operations more environmentally sustainable and also save themselves money over the years. Thoreson noted the pay back time on these items in relationship to the size of the dairy herd.

On his list of energy-saving ideas were:

- Variable speed vacuum pumps
- More effective ventilation
- High-volume, low-speed fans
- Livestock waterers that are heated using geothermal power
- Milk pre-coolers that use well water
- Extra ways to reuse your wash water and the water that goes through your pre-coolers
- Refrigeration heat recovery units
- Manure nutrient recycling

One afternoon was spent with two Midwest Dairy Association representatives as they explored the ever expanding world of on-line media communications and how dairy producers can favorably position themselves in that medium.

Donna Moenning and Sherry Newell impressed upon the YC'ers the importance of getting the good dairy message out on the internet as well as in their local communities.

Even an act as simple as creating a brief "tag line" for your dairy and placing it after your name on every e-mail or letter you send out. Examples

of a tag line are: "Raising Healthy Kids and Cows on Our Farm", "Preserving the Land and Our Dairy Tradition", "Producing Quality Milk for Your Family . . . and Ours!", "Loving the Land and Our Family", "Dairying is Our Way of Life and We Love it!"

"Anytime you can make a positive statement about your dairy or your farming tradition, it is a step in the right direction," Donna says. "As we like to say, 'Every conversation counts!'"

Donna and Sherry encouraged the YC'ers to build a website for their dairy and fill it with positive images of their cows and their family involved in the dairy. "Set up a 'blog' about your dairy operation," Donna says. "A new blog is created every second! Imagine the power of this on the internet worldwide! Any blog that sends out positive images about dairying, dairy products and farming is a plus and could potentially reach thousands of people across the country and the world."

Both speakers encouraged the young producers to consider par-

SWISS VALLEY FARMS **DAIRYMAN**



Gerarda Lahey-Keppler gave an inspiring presentation called “Let’s Feed the Good!” Randy Cook, Worthington, Iowa, delivers feedback from his YC break out group while Stephanie Kauffmann looks on. Speaker Sherry Newell from Midwest Dairy is in the background.

ticipating in “The People Behind the Product” where you work with Midwest Dairy to make dairy farming presentations before social groups in your community. For more information on this, visit [www.midwestdairy.com](http://www.midwestdairy.com).

CEO Don Boelens kicked off the conference with a question and answer session regarding Swiss Valley Farms and its programs and policies. Two Swiss Valley Farms members participated in a Producer Panel. Jim Schmitt of Sherrill, Iowa and Mark Lamborn of Luana, Iowa showed slides of their operations and pointed out areas of interest on their dairies.

The conference was wrapped up on Saturday by speaker Gerarda Lahey-Keppler, a Psychology Instructor at Northeast Iowa Community College in Peosta. Gerarda gave an uplifting talk on feeding the good thoughts and ideas when times get tough. “If you dwell on the negative side of your situation, that is what you will get,” she told the YC’ers.

Raised on an Iowa farm, Gerarda expressed her great love for agriculture and raising families on farms. Gerarda

had many interesting stories to illustrate her points. “While the coming year will no doubt be challenging for everyone in the country, if not the entire world, you should use the time to grow closer to the ones you love and value your time together as a family,” she told the YC’ers. “Spend time with your children, because what you miss now you will never have again.”

She pointed out the importance of husbands and wives taking time out of their busy lives to focus on each other. “Do you think you can’t afford to hire a babysitter and go out to dinner or a movie together? Then find a friend with children, too, and arrange to swap baby sitting chores with each other. Send the children to that friend’s home for the night. Eventually, you will return the favor for your friend.”

Past YC contests winners told attendees about their trips to national dairy conventions and encouraged everyone to participate in the Outstanding Young Cooperator Contest.

Mark and Jill Lamborn shared the following note with the YC group.

“We have enjoyed our experience

with the NMPF YC program thoroughly. What better opportunity to meet a lot of great people and to be able to share ideas and information about your dairy operations. We were able to bring home great ideas and suggestions for our farm, not to mention the memories of our trips and the places we were able to visit. We love that we had the chance to represent Swiss Valley in Orlando, Florida and Nashville, Tennessee. Our trip to Washington, D.C. was also very interesting. Who better to tell our representatives what concerns we are facing than us! We again would like to thank Swiss Valley for having the YC program. We would also like to encourage anyone who hasn’t run to give it a thought and really consider it as a great opportunity to better yourselves and your operation.”

Jeff Nimtz, Monticello, Wis., chair of the Board’s Industry and Member Relations Committee, announced that an Outstanding YC Contest will be held sometime this summer to select candidates to attend the 2009 NMPF Dairy Summit, which will be held in Dallas, Texas.

ag in the classroom

# SPREADING THE WORD OF DAIRY

by karen bohnert



Throughout much of the history of the United States, agriculture and education have been closely related. During the decades when most Americans lived on farms or in small towns, students often did farm chores before and after school. The school year was determined by planting, cultivating and harvesting schedules.

Boy o' boy, times have sure changed. Brenda Gudex, Director of Agriculture Programs for Fond du Lac (Wis.) Area Association of Commerce, knows first hand that more and more children are removed from agriculture. Brenda has worked with the Association for over three years and is constantly reminded how important agriculture education in the classroom is. "Even in agriculture rich areas like Fond du Lac County—kids are really removed from agriculture today," Brenda said. "I find maybe two kids per classroom that have grown up on a farm."

Gudex, whose father, Don Damrow, is a long-time Swiss Valley Farms member-owner could not imagine a differ-

ent profession. She loves the interaction that Ag in the Classroom brings. "I love watching the kids grow and learn and for it all to really sink in," Brenda said. "The end result makes it all worthwhile and makes a big difference."

The big difference is that these children go home and spread the word about agriculture, they consume more dairy products and stimulate the dairy economy.

Brenda's position requires her to focus on Ag in the Classroom about 75 percent of the time. "We reach out to around 14,000 kids a year," Brenda said. The remainder of her time is spent coordinating Breakfast on the Farms and producer showcases to talk about agriculture.

Brenda grew up in a large household, having nine brothers and sisters. Her parents had "off the farm jobs" and Brenda, along with her siblings, took the lead on doing the chores, including the twice a day milking. "I guess we never really thought much of it," Brenda said. The Damrow's milked registered cows; a

“love watching the kids grow & learn,”

colorful mix of Milking Shorthorns, Ayrshires and Holsteins. Their summertime fun included attending and showing at many county shows throughout Wisconsin. "We won the Herdsmanship award a few times and we were always so proud of that," Brenda said.

Stemming from a proud heritage allows Brenda to get up each and every morning with energy and excitement to spread the good word about agriculture, including dairy. She uses "Extra Cheese, Please" and "Out and About on a Dairy Farm" books to incorporate the importance of consuming dairy in your daily diets to the children in the classroom.

Brenda is a 2003 journalism graduate from the University of Wisconsin—Madison. She and her husband Tony are expecting their first child in June. They milk 50 cows in Brownsville, Wis.

# TOUR CO-OP MEMBER DAIRIES

Swiss Valley Farms producers Brent and Chad Koopmann, Epworth, Iowa and Bill and Matt Strief, Farley, Iowa hosted 14 Israeli dairy producers on a farm tour, sponsored by Diamond V feed. The group was touring several farms in Minnesota and Iowa this fall in conjunction with the World Dairy Expo.

One of the things the Israelis enjoyed the most at the Strief's farm was all the John Deere equipment they saw. At the Koopmann's, there was an old antique tractor that captured everyone's attention. One thing everyone enjoyed for certain was the Swiss Valley chocolate milk that was served on the Strief's farm.

The farmers mentioned that in Israel, the dairies work with a government-monitored quota system that sets their milk price and can be adjusted every year. Their premium bonus can fluctuate every year depending on their standard of milk.

February and March are the peak milk production months there. The facilities in Israel consist of mostly open barns with some free stalls. Their main source of feed is wheat silage, as well as corn silage, hay and straw.



TOP: L-R: Chad Koopmann, Epworth, Iowa poses for a quick photo. Next the Israeli dairy producers visit Koopmann farms. BELOW: L-R: Matt Strief (pictured in brown jacket) talks to the Israeli dairy famers about his operation. Next, the Israelis enjoy a quick Swiss Valley Farms milk break.



## Cutting costs and staying fresh in a stagnant economy.

It's hard to turn on a television or open a newspaper these days without hearing about the poor state of the economy. In these uncertain times, it's important to look at things quite carefully and make decisions accordingly. We at Swiss Valley are making the most of the situation that we have been dealt.

There have been many factors that

was a simple conversation about updating the design of the labels to match the new direction of the Swiss Valley brand. As you may recall, there was a period where we were moving away from the mountains. The research that followed this test market convinced us to keep the mountains. Now it was a matter of looking at the mountains again and seeing how they could evolve in

of these new aspects, except the new mountain style. Now rather than the starburst, there is a sun rise, symbolizing the dawning of a new era within Swiss Valley Farms. There was also the addition of the large and clear product names. This concept was inspired by the "non-mountain" designs that went mostly unused. Originally it was intended to give a more clean feeling to the package, but a secondary benefit was discovered when they were adapted to a single label.

As these concepts were coming to the conclusion of their development, one idea that was still on our minds was the concept of using a single label on the gallons and half-gallons. Currently Swiss Valley gallons and half-gallons have a label on the front that is a brand and product description and the side label lays out the nutritional information. The idea was to combine these two labels. The cost savings and plant efficiencies of this concept were almost too significant to ignore. The main concern with this single label concept was that the Swiss Valley brand would be diminished and it would be more difficult to distinguish our products on the shelf. Design concepts were developed and it was decided that the difference wasn't significant enough to ignore the cost savings. Thus, the new Swiss Valley single labels and designs were born.

As this year goes by, you will start to see this new label concept start to appear across the Swiss Valley Farms' brand. These changes will happen over a fairly long period of time, to allow for our current inventories to run out and not create any extra cost.

Drop us a line and let us know what you think of our new designs. Send comments to [design@swissvalley.com](mailto:design@swissvalley.com). Please know that all comments will not be responded to, but as a co-op we love to hear your thoughts and input. Take care and let's all look forward to the approaching longer and warmer days of spring.

have prevented us from moving forward on new products. Some of those products were put on hold because of the unfortunate closing of the Cedar Rapids cultured plant. Also the need to cut back on more risky items has become more of a factor with continuing economic uncertainty.

There was, however, one project that was sped up because of the state of the economy. This was the decision to switch to a single label on gallons and half gallons of milk and orange juice.

Changing the designs or even the format of the labels on our gallons and half-gallons has been a topic of great discussion for about two years. In the early stages, it

was a more modern way.

After analyzing the current designs, it was decided that the mountains, as they were, seemed to be making the labels appear cluttered and heavy. Also the mountains were very stylized and the new thought was to make them a bit more realistic. The resulting new mountains are now mostly white with blue peaks, as opposed to mostly blue with white peaks. These reworked mountains were now the cornerstone of a new and clean look for Swiss Valley product labels.

The new dip designs reflected some



cash for caps

# SAVE A CAP AND GIVE BACK

by scott peake



**W**e are in the process of wrapping up the ninth year of Cash for Caps on March 31. So this is as good a time as any to look back on the program. Cash for Caps is a program where schools receive five cents for every Swiss Valley milk cap they save and return. Over those past nine years the program has grown to include well over 800 schools in four states. In the 2007-2008 school year Swiss Valley donated over \$53,000. Now in this economic climate the interest in Cash for Caps is higher than ever.

With state and school budgets being cut, it often becomes the responsibility of Parent Teacher Associations or Booster clubs to come up with extra funds for special projects or sometimes even everyday needs. This is where private companies can really lend a hand. Swiss Valley Farms is very proud to be a part of this kind of funding. A program of this nature is not only good for the school, but it's good for Swiss Valley in a number of ways.

More than anything it helps to

build loyalty for the Swiss Valley Farms brand. There are many people who will only buy Swiss Valley milk because they are saving caps. Also they may buy other Swiss Valley products, because they like the fact that Swiss Valley is the kind of company that gives money back to their community.

Cash for Caps also drives consumers to [www.swissvalley.com](http://www.swissvalley.com). Many people log on to get more information about the program and subsequently find recipes or other information that the website has to offer.

Over the years Cash for Caps has changed, but at the center of it, Cash for Caps is a simple program. It is focused on getting as much money in the hands of schools as possible. In the 2007-2008 school year there was a small town, private school that was able to raise over five thousand dollars. Granted this amount was a great exception to the average, but it goes to prove that even at five cents a cap a large amount is achievable. That school was able to fund a computer lab with the money from Cash for Caps that had been accumulated over a two-year period. Stories like this are a great testament to the

power of community. So how can you get your community involved?

To get started in the Cash for Caps program, visit [www.swissvalley.com/kids](http://www.swissvalley.com/kids) and download a registration form. Send that form in and you will be sent a packet that includes program information, ID tags and posters. Got Milk posters are also available for free, upon request.

Once your school has signed up, it's time to start saving caps. Have everyone you know buy and save Swiss Valley milk and orange juice caps. Only the caps on Swiss Valley gallons and half-gallons are eligible. The yearly deadline is March 31. After the deadline, the school will receive a check.

Caps can be turned in throughout the year in a number of ways. If the school receives Swiss Valley milk for their school lunch program, the caps can be left at the cooler for a Swiss Valley driver to pick up. If this isn't a possibility, caps can be taken to a store that sells Swiss Valley milk and held by the dairy department for a Swiss Valley driver to pick up. Caps can also

be sent to the Swiss Valley corporate office, although this method is strongly discouraged, as shipping the caps can be quite costly. An ID tag must be used to mark the caps, so we know what school to credit. It's as simple as that.

Now get out there and spread the word and save those caps. Any questions about the program can be directed to me by email at [cashforcaps@swissvalley.com](mailto:cashforcaps@swissvalley.com) or by calling

563.468-6679.



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During the Month of January,  
these Swiss Valley Farms  
Members averaged below  
100,000 for their  
somatic cell count.

Cary & Jennifer Bierschenk	98,000
Chad Breuckman	69,000
Thomas Brimeyer	79,000
Kevin & Donna Carolan	49,000
Mike Deaver	56,000
Delbert Devries	95,000
Randy Dreier	76,000
Loren Duwe	71,000
Jeff Fischels	86,000
Michael Gaul	82,000
Peter Gaul	82,000
Larry Gilbertson	59,000
Brent Hellenbrand	92,000
Hendel Farms	89,000
Hodson-Dirksen Farms LLC	65,000
Robert & Terri Ketchum	87,000
Neil Landt	70,000
Koty Laufenberg	66,000
Lester Leatherberry	88,000
Connie & Jim March	58,000
Brian Meier	73,000
Cheryl Meier	73,000
Mike Meier	73,000
Jeffrey Schaefer	76,000
Kurt Schaefer	76,000
Susan Schaefer	76,000
Kenneth & Marlus Schmitz	51,000
Paul & Jennifer Schumacher	98,000
Walter Selke	89,000
William Selke	89,000
Sexton Farms	94,000
Kevin Statz	92,000
Titus Stauffer	68,000
Larry & Liane Thompson	93,000
Bob Van Daalwyk	80,000
Jeff & Melinda Walz	80,000
Harry Weier	97,000
Leslie Wundrow	98,000

Somatic Cell Range % of **A** Farms

0 - 100,000.....	4%
100,001 - 200,000.....	22%
200,001 - 300,000.....	25%
300,001 - 400,000.....	19%
400,001 - 500,000.....	13%
500,001 and above.....	17%

Somatic Cell Range % of **B** Farms

0 - 100,000.....	3%
100,001 - 200,000.....	19%
200,001 - 300,000.....	5%
300,001 - 400,000.....	22%
400,001 - 500,000.....	5%
500,001 and above.....	46%

# field representative honored with **MERLE BAKER AWARD**



**W**ith a little over a half a century of experience working with dairy producers in Iowa, Jim Murphy of West Union was recently awarded the Merle P. Baker Sanitarian's Award by members of the Iowa Association for Food Protection. This award is presented annually to honor meritorious contributions to the field of milk, food or environmental sanitation to the Public Health and Welfare in Iowa.

Jim's career in the Iowa dairy industry began after his high school graduation in 1957 when he took a job at the Wadena Cheese and Butter Co. Working in dairy appealed to

Jim, who eventually settled into a 30-year stint as field representative and farm inspector for Meinerz Creameries in Fredericksburg. When Beatrice bought out Meinerz, Jim accepted a job opportunity as a field representative with Swiss Valley Farms. In his current job, Jim has continued to enjoy working with area dairy farmers, helping them all he can to produce quality milk on their many farms.

"I can't count the number of farms I've been on during my 37 years of inspecting, but I can tell you the area's milk producers are doing a great job."

Jim is also quick to give credit to his milk haulers. "Milk haulers have

**“I couldn't have found a better way to live my life than to be a part of the dairy industry.”**

contributed a lot to today's successful dairy industry. Life is easy when you have good milk haulers as partners.”

“I couldn't have found a better way to live my life than to be a part of the dairy industry,” he says.

“It is a huge honor to have Jim honored with this fine award,” Chris Hoeger, Vice President of Procurement said.

The dairy business has not only provided Murphy with a lifelong career, it provided him the opportunity to meet the love of his life, Ila Ann Ross, the 1960 Fayette County Dairy Princess, the fourth such royalty in county history.

The Murphys moved to West Union in 1975 and purchased 28 acres on the southwest edge of the city limits on Linden Street. “We couldn't have found a better place to raise our children,” Jim said. The Murphys have four children: Lisa, Jeremy, Thad and Rana.

Ila's presence is still felt in the Murphy home, which has been a gathering ground for dairy memorabilia that Jim has collected over the years.

Murphy says retirement is not on his “things to do” list. He has seen a lot of changes in his 50 years and will continue to see more changes.

swiss valley farms

# SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

Swiss Valley Farms Cooperative is pleased to again offer four agriculture scholarships in addition to one scholarship for a non-ag major.

Co-op members who are studying agriculture-related majors can compete for four scholarships . . . two for \$1,000 and two for \$500. These four scholarships are designed to promote the study of agriculture beyond the high school level. There is also offered a \$500 scholarship for students studying in any field.

To be eligible for any of these scholarships, an applicant must be a co-op member or a son or daughter of a co-op member, or the manager or operator of a farm for a Swiss Valley Farms Cooperative member, or a student whose family manages or operates a farm for a Swiss Valley Farms Cooperative member at the time of

submitting the scholarship application and when the cash awards are made.

Any high school graduate or any 2009 college student who meets these qualifications is eligible to apply for a scholarship. However, if you have won a Swiss Valley Farms scholarship in the past, you are ineligible to win another.

The applicant must be enrolled full-time in an accredited university, college or vocational-technical institution for a degree program or short-course program. To get an application, contact Nancy Feeney at 563.468.6600 or simply ask the Swiss Valley Farms phone receptionist for an application. Or e-mail [nancy.feeney@swissvalley.com](mailto:nancy.feeney@swissvalley.com). All applications must be mailed back to Swiss Valley Farms by July 15th, 2009.



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