

Dairyman

JULY 2009



YC'ERS VISIT DC
NMPF Summer Meeting



Published Monthly by:

**Swiss Valley Farms
Cooperative**

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At Midwest Ag Meeting
VILSACK SHARES IDEAS

by Don Boelens

Along with other Midwest ag professionals, I recently met with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack in Cedar Rapids to discuss the struggles the dairy producers are currently facing. I would like to share some of the main points that Secretary Vilsack touched on at this meeting.



CEO Don Boelens

◆ Vilsack reported on results from a recent Ag Census. He identified some key trends that his department wants to reverse from five years ago. Please note that this information includes ALL agriculture, not just dairy.

◆ Small ag producer numbers, producers who make less than \$10,000 in revenue per year, are increasing. These are primarily fruit, vegetable and nut producers with about 108,000 new producers in this category. This is good news for agriculture and local economies.

◆ Large-sized producer numbers, between \$500,000 and one million in annual revenue per year, are also increasing at about 41,000 new producers per year. Again, this is good news for local economies.

◆ On the downside of this, mid-sized producer numbers are decreasing. These are producers with between \$100,000 and \$500,000 in annual revenue per year. There are about 80,000 fewer of these ag producers.

◆ Ninety percent of the over 2 million ag producers need some type of off farm income, mainly to get health coverage. 900,000 said they required a full-time, off-the-farm job in addition to farming to make ends meet.

◆ The producer's average age has increased from 55 (5 years ago) to 57.

◆ There has been a 30% increase in ag producers who are 75 years old or older.

◆ On the flip side of this, there is a 70% decrease in producers who are younger than 25 years old.

Here are some key things that Vilsack says his administration wants to promote to curtail and/or support these current trends.

◆ Vilsack said the contemplated cow tax that has been threatening dairy producers for the past few months now has no legs on it. So we can stop worrying about that.

◆ He wants to promote the notion of local consumption of local production. In other words, support small operations by helping them grow products and get them to local markets like schools, food lines, etc. Help these small operations grow in number and in size.

(Story continues on Pg. 15)

Swiss Valley Sells DUBUQUE PLANT TO PRAIRIE FARMS

milk supply agreement in place

In what will be a “win/win” for two long-standing, regional dairy cooperatives, Swiss Valley Farms sold its Dubuque, Iowa milk bottling plant to Prairie Farms on June 1.

“As our customer base continues to consolidate to gain market share and improve operating efficiencies, our dairy beverage business has been challenged to supply customers who have a significant regional or national market presence,” said Don Boelens, CEO, Swiss Valley Farms.

“Having only one bottling plant, it becomes more and more difficult to supply and serve customers that are consolidating and getting bigger themselves,” he said. Customers, such as Wal-Mart, were continually expanding their markets, and Swiss Valley Farms has been challenged to supply customers like this who have a significant regional or national market presence, Boelens pointed out.

A Swiss Valley Farms brand licensing agreement with Prairie Farms will maintain the standards and labeling of this regionally strong brand, which will continue to be available in the market place. “As a result of this sale, Swiss Valley Farms’ products will be well positioned for future growth and success in significant regional and national markets,” Boelens said.

“The important thing is that our excellent producer-owners and our loyal customers shouldn’t notice any changes to the high quality dairy products that they have purchased in the past,” he said. “Our co-op members’ milk will continue to be shipped into this excellent bottling facility in Dubuque. Our co-op’s business model is still very strong. This transaction will allow us to place additional resources and focus on our cheese business as well as

any future promising growth possibilities for Swiss Valley Farms.”

“The Dubuque bottling plant is now a part of a larger network of facilities owned by Prairie Farms, another successful farmer-owned co-op. Prairie Farms operates 24 plants and 13 joint venture plants throughout the Midwest and Mid-South. The Dubuque facility now ranks as one of that co-op’s bigger bottling plants.

Headquartered in Carlinville, Ill, Prairie Farms produces a wide variety of fluid milk products, juices and drinks, ice cream and cultured dairy products. All the employees at Dubuque, along with the Swiss Valley Farms fluid milk sales department, became Prairie Farms employees when the ownership changed June 1.

For all of our 50-year history, Swiss Valley Farms has been and remains farmer-owned; we’re involved in the communities in which we serve, and our heritage is very much about people and delivering a premium product to consumers. None of that will change,” Boelens said.

Boelens mentioned the strong relationship that Swiss Valley Farms shares with Prairie Farms, which includes the critical aid they supplied to this co-op when Swiss Valley’s cultured plant in Cedar Rapids was flooded last June. “The day after our cultured plant went under water, Prairie Farms quickly jumped to our aid and began producing cultured products for us and seeing that our good customers didn’t miss a beat in their delivery schedules.”

Since that flood and the subsequent closing of the Cedar Rapids plant, Prairie Farms has produced the Swiss Valley

Farms brand cottage cheese and yogurt.

“This cultured product relationship, born out of the unfortunate circumstances of that flood, has developed into a rewarding business model for this cooperative and for our member-owners. With the sale of our fluid milk bottling plant, along with the brand licensing and milk shipping agreement now in place with Prairie Farms, our co-op members will continue to reap the benefits of this cooperative relationship.”

“I’m proud to say that our member-owners didn’t feel a ripple of disruption from this change,” said Chris Hoeger, Vice President of Procurement for Swiss Valley Farms. “The market we provide for their quality milk remains as strong and secure as ever.”

Hoeger pointed out that all lab processing and the Procurement Information office will remain at the Dubuque bottling plant. “Our Information office will continue to provide the same services it has always provided in the recent past.” The information on this office is below.

rapid milk

TEST RESULTS

Members who would like to get their milk test results can call our toll free number:

800.397.7669

Our Dubuque Procurement office is staffed with real people (no recordings) on Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon.

nmpf summer board meeting YC'ers Visit With Congressional Reps

It was a busy three days in Washington DC for YC Advisory Council members Tim and Karen Deutmeyer, Strawberry Point, Iowa.

The Deutmeyer's went to DC to sit on the National YC Advisory Board to help plan the 2009 NMPF YC meeting, which will be held in November in Dallas, Texas. While there, they also received extensive legislative updates from the NMPF staff and then went up to Capitol Hill to lobby their Congressional representatives. Tim and Karen visited with Sen. Grassley and three of his aides. They also visited with Susan Keith, General Counsel to Sen. Tom Harkin on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. Another appointment took them to Congressman Bruce Braley's office.

In all their visits, the Deutmeyer's spoke at length on the tough times the dairy producers are facing right now. They also addressed the Clean Water Act and how the term "navigable waters" was deleted

from the current form of the bill and it needs to be put back in to protect the ag sector from needless law suits and penalties. The Deutmeyers also brought up support of the AgJobs package for immigration reform. The overall consensus from the legislatures was that nothing will happen on immigration this year since it is such a hot potato and there is little consensus on what to do.

Also in DC was Pat Schroeder, Lancaster, Wis. who is Swiss Valley's representative on the NMPF Board. He and Chris Hoeger, Vice President of Procurement, met with Nick Wyatt, an aide to Sen. Grassley who specializes in tax issues. The purpose of the meeting was to point out why chocolate milk should not be included in with a tax on sugar-containing beverages, such as soda pop. Pat and Chris presented Wyatt with information on the solid nutrition value of milk and the importance of milk in a child's diet. Taxing milk would raise the cost of milk

for families as well as schools and consumption would go down. Milk should never be connected with empty-calorie sugar drinks like soda pop. "We learned at this meeting that the 3-cent tax on flavored milk appears to now be dead," Pat said.

ON THE COVER:

ON THIS MONTH'S COVER, YC'ERS TIM AND KAREN DEUTMEYER, STRAWBERRY POINT, IOWA, STRIKE THE TRADITIONAL POSE IN FRONT OF THE DOME OF OUR NATION'S CAPITOL.



Top right, Tim and Karen Deutmeyer pose with Rep. Bruce Braley. Above left, Patrick Schroeder, right, Swiss Valley's NMPF Board representative, stands with the Deutmeyers and Chris Hoeger, Swiss Valley Farms Procurement V.P. At right above, the Deutmeyers paid a visit to Sen. Chuck Grassley's office.

SWISS VALLEY GALS

Lots of Fun on Fall Agenda!

"A Funny Thing Happened While I Was At Work"

The Swiss Valley Gals are in for a rare treat at their Fall meetings! Life is full of fun and quirky moments and your co-op's Member Relations Department has experienced plenty of them in the past 40 years.

Retired Member Relations Director Richard Walgrave will be teaming up with Nancy Feeney, the current Member Relations Manager, to resurrect some of the funnier and more unique moments that occurred while they were on the job for Swiss Valley Farms. A special crowd-interactive style will be used so you can help them bring these moments to life. So come on down to the meeting and join in the fun! If you know either Dick or Nancy, then you know they can get themselves into some interesting

situations! You won't want to miss this meeting!

Any woman who belongs to Swiss Valley Farms Cooperative or who works for a co-op member is eligible to attend this meeting. Be sure to talk to your other area co-op members to see if you can arrange to car pool to the meeting. You can save on gas and have even more fun visiting with other Swiss Valley Gals.

Pick out the date of your favorite meeting place, mark in on your calendar and make plans to attend one of these luncheon meetings. In your August milk check, you will be seeing your green Swiss Valley Gals return reservation post card. Fill it out and mail it back so you will have your place reserved for this round of meetings.

Hope to see you there!

2009 Fall Swiss Valley Gal Meeting Schedule

Tuesday, Sept, 15 – Betty's Bread Basket, Manchester, Iowa

Wednesday, Sept 16 – Huckleberry's Restaurant, Prairie du Chien, Wis

Thursday, Sept. 17 – Pickwick Mill Restaurant, Pickwick, Minn.

REGISTRATION: 11 AM LUNCH: 11:45 AM SPEAKER: 12:30 PM



JAMES H. FREMSTAD
WESTBY, WIS.

JOHN P. ENDRES
SAUK CITY, WIS.

PHILIP & DEBRA LUEBKE
WHITEWATER, WIS.

NICOLE C. TRYTTEN
MABEL, MIN.

THURMAN BROWN
VIOLA, WIS.

CHAD & LAURIE JORDAN
ORANGEVILLE, ILL.

Outstanding YC Contest Set for Sept. 9

Calling all Swiss Valley Farms Young Cooperators! September 9th is the date of the Outstanding Young Cooperator Contest. It will be held in Prairie du Chien, Wis. at Huckleberry's Restaurant off of Hwy 35 on the south side of town.

The contest will begin at 11 a.m. with an informal "getting to know you" chat and luncheon with the co-op Board's Industry and Member Relations Committee. Individual interviews will be held after lunch.

The top two winners will be representing Swiss Valley Farms at the next National Milk Producers Federations annual Dairy Summit, which will be held in November in Dallas, Texas.

Contact Nancy Feeney at nancy.feeney@swissvalley.com to get a YC Contest application. Or call Nancy at 563-468-6600 to get an application mailed to you or to ask questions regarding the contest or the trip.

Swiss Valley Farms Welcomes New Members

LOVING LIFE & DAIRYING

by Evie Hamilton

Welcome to Hamilton's Hill-Ton Holsteins! My husband John, our son Charlie and I own and operate a 65-cow herd of 100% purebred Registered Holsteins near Cuba City, Wis. We raise all our own replacements and are a completely homebred herd with the exception of a heifer calf John's dad won (and then sold to Charlie), from the Wisconsin Jr. Holstein Association's annual calf raffle. Our last purchased animal was when we bought Charlie his first calf, 12 years ago when my mom dispersed the herd she and my dad had built together, Marclif-Ridge Farms of Soldiers Grove, WI. "Charlene" is no longer a part of our herd, but she has several descendants that are the foundation of Charlie's herd. We currently rent all the facilities and 200 acres of land from John's dad, Bill Hamilton, raising corn, oats and alfalfa while purchasing all concentrates and additional hay and straw. We are members of the Grant County, Wisconsin, and National Holstein Associations, where we are quite active. Our herd statistics include Rolling Herd Average of just under 28,000 milks, our Classification Breed Age Average (BAA) is currently 108.9, and we have received the Progressive Breeder Registry Award (PBR) for 15 consecutive years, as well as the 2008 Herd of Excellence Award from Holstein Association USA. We were one of only eleven herds throughout the entire United States to receive this prestigious award in its inaugural year. It is truly an honor, to say the least. In addition, we have bred/developed 37 Excellent cows, have had 15 Gold Medal Dam recipients and over 15 cows have made over 200,000 lb. Lifetime records. We have also received the Swiss Valley Farms Milk Quality Award for 25 years. We are also members of the Cuba City United Methodist Church, and Charlie is active in 4-H, FFA, as well as Jr. Holstein activities. As you will see, our lives revolve around Charlie and the cows. We hope you enjoy "riding along" for the next several weeks.

This month's journal keeper, Evie Hamilton, poses with one of her many calves on the Hamilton's Hill-Ton Holsteins Dairy in Cuba City, Wis..

At right is Evie with her husband John and son Charlie.

● WEDNESDAY, APRIL 01--

We woke up this morning to wind and snow flurries, what a way to start April! As John and I enter the barn, we are greeted by our “welcoming committee”, our herd of barn cats. They get fed first, then I let Charlie’s dog, Champ loose. We have several packs of coyotes in the area, so we always tie Champ in the hayshed at night. I then put the milk house together, before I start mixing up my calf milk. After I have everything ready to go, I load all the milk, water and buckets into the Gator, and drive up behind the barn, where all our calves and heifers are housed. I feed all the calves their feed and grain, and collect everything to take back down to the barn to wash up. When I return to the barn, I clean up behind the cows, and scrape, sweep and lime the walkway. While I’m doing these chores, John sweeps out the mangers and puts fresh hay, corn silage and haylage down before we start milking.

Usually by now, its time to go down to the house and make sure Charlie is up and getting ready for school. After the school bus leaves, I try to take 15-20 minutes to load the dishwasher, put clothes into the washing machine, or pay any bills before I head back up to the barn to help John finish milking.

Today, after we had chores finished I had to get cleaned up to take John’s dad up to Platteville for physical therapy. He had knee replacement surgery on March 2nd, and has been in therapy for four weeks. John or I usually are the ones that have been taking him, as he can’t drive yet. He had both knees done five years ago, but after a nasty fall,

he tore one completely loose, and had to have surgery again. Unfortunately, there is too much scar tissue forming around his knee, and he will have to go back into surgery this coming Friday to have the scar tissue broken up. They do not need to cut it open again, just “manual manipulation”. Then he will have to start therapy all over again.

● THURSDAY, APRIL 02 --

It rained lightly all day. A neighbor stopped by to see Bill this morning, and brought a casserole for dinner. John and I have always eaten our mid day meal with his mom and dad, and since his mom passed away three years ago, I have assumed the responsibility of making meals for Bill. I usually try to make something that I can take the leftovers home and reheat for our supper. After dinner, John ran our stock trailer up to Platteville, it needs some structural work before we can use it again. We priced a couple new trailers last year, but it looks like we need to keep this one going for a couple more years. Tonight, after milking, I made a batch of chocolate chip cookies to take up to the fairgrounds on Saturday for the 4-H dairy judging clinic.

● FRIDAY, APRIL 03 --

John’s dad had his surgery this morning, everything went well. Charlie had an early release from school today, for Parent/Teacher conferences (report cards). Once again he has earned the privilege of being on the Distinguished Honor Roll.

● SATURDAY, APRIL 04 --

Today was the Grant County 4-H dairy judging and clipping clinic. I had to have Charlie in Lancaster at the fairgrounds by

10 AM. I got as many of my chores done as I could before I had to go, I hate leaving John with all the chores. At the fairgrounds, they started out dividing the kids into two groups - the more experienced, and the beginners. They had several yearling heifers cleaned up and ready to go, so the kids could work on their clipping and top line skills. After we got home, Charlie went up to help John clean out some sheds. While Bill is recovering,



Charlie has stepped up to run the skid steer, and John unloads the spreader. Two heifers were back in heat, and John had three cows to breed after milking tonight. We do a lot of “time breeding” on the cows (Ova-Synch), and it works out best for us to breed them at night.

● **SUNDAY, APRIL 05 -- 11:13 PM**

Palm Sunday - Charlie and I went to church this morning. John thought he had better stay home in case his dad called. His dad did come home from the hospital, but not until late in the afternoon. After chores were done, I came down to the house to get dinner ready for Charlie, and do some bookwork. John kept going with chores. They had winter weather warnings out and John needed to grind hay and straw for the barn.

● **MONDAY, APRIL 06 -- 11:24 PM**

After lunch, I got cleaned up to take Bill up to Platteville for physical therapy. After I dropped him off at the clinic, I headed back to Cuba City and picked Charlie up from school and took him to the clinic in Cuba City for his allergy shots. He was diagnosed with allergies when he was five years old, and last year when they retested him, he reacted to 37 allergens! Including cows, horses, dogs, cats, and every other possible thing found on a farm!!! He started weekly shots, and now is just starting year two, (out of five). He will need shots every other week.

Last fall, Charlie received the Wisconsin Younger Member Recognition Award from the WI Junior Holstein Association, he along with 16 other juniors who received this award for 2008 were recognized in January at the Wisconsin Junior Holstein Convention. He was then named one of four out of this group to represent Wisconsin in the National Younger Distinguished Junior Member Recognition contest. He had to fill out an extensive award application and submit it to the national office in

Brattleboro, VT. He received his letter today stating he was not chosen as a national finalist, which is fine with us, as he is only 13, and has three more years that he can qualify.

I know there are many youths whose parents are Swiss Valley members who have received this award in years past, and my hat goes off to all of them for the effort they have put into their Registered Holstein projects. Hopefully, within a couple years, Charlie will join their ranks. He will be heading to the National Holstein Convention, which will be held in Sacramento, CA the last week in June to participate in the National Prepared Public Speaking Contest, as he won the Junior Division at our state convention. Yes, I get to go along, too.

● **TUESDAY, APRIL 07 -- 11:38 PM**

As we were finishing up the chores in the barn, a cow we knew was carrying twins started calving. Just as we finished feeding the heifers, she was ready to deliver. It was an easy delivery, a heifer and a bull calf. We milked the cow and fed the calves, then John had to go get cleaned up to take his dad to therapy. I finished cleaning up everything, and then updated some of the cows' barn signs. I then moved the new calves into the hay shed, dipped their navels with iodine, and headed home to get cleaned up to pick Charlie up from school. He had an orthodontist appt. in Dubuque at 4:20.

When we got home, John was just about ready to start milking, so we helped him start, and then fed the calves up in the calf hutches. With four baby calves to feed after milking, (I had another set of split twins last week that were born 10 days early, and need extra attention before I can sell them), it was quite late by the time we finally got home.

● **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 08, -- 11:27 PM**

Charlie had an early release from school today - Easter Vacation. He and John worked at cleaning out one of the sheds, if all goes well, they should get it done tomorrow. This is the shed that Charlie ties his show calves in, but I told him NOT YET! I worked on cleaning things up around the house. I prefer to work outside, or in the barn, but sometimes I have to force myself to take care of things inside, too. Besides, I really wanted to



ABOVE, EVIE CRITIQUES CHARLIE AS HE TRAINS A NEW CALF. AT RIGHT, CHARLIE WELCOMES A NEW MEMBER TO HIS HOLSTEIN FAMILY.



take the Christmas table cloth off the table before Easter, but I had to find the table first!

● **THURSDAY, APRIL 09-- 11:30 PM**

Finally, a nice day. It was much too nice to work indoors, so after dinner, I went down to our yard and pruned trees, and then went down by the road bank, where the snow plow had done a really good job of tearing up our front yard, this past winter. I spent the rest of the afternoon turning the sod back over and filling in the ruts. When I was all done, I had Charlie go over it with the lawn roller, and it actually turned out pretty good.

● **FRIDAY, APRIL 10 -- 11:01 PM**

I had to have Bill up to Platteville by noon for therapy, and then had to run out to Wal-Mart to pick up a prescription for him. When we got home, there was a message on Bill's answering machine, his seed oats were ready to be picked up, so I hooked our truck up to the flatbed wagon and Charlie and I went over and got the oats for him. Bill had insisted on getting on the tractor, and taking the soil finisher out to work up the fields, so they can get the oats planted in the next few days. John and Charlie went down to check on him, and ended up picking rocks and "treasures" as Charlie called them out of the field. At some time, (no one has any recollection), there was a house or

something on the corner of this field, and we find "artifacts" on that surface every year.

● **SATURDAY, APRIL 11 -- 10:41 PM**

Another busy day. Bill finally located some brome grass and alfalfa seed that he needed, and he asked me to go to Belmont to pick it up. Before I left, I asked Charlie to take the calf blankets off the calves for me, and I put them to soak, so they're ready to go next fall when I need them again. I had to be in Belmont before noon, and then I went down to Cuba City to pick up the ham that Bill had ordered from the locker. (John's uncles own Weber's Processing Plant). After dinner, John, his dad, and Charlie went out to start planting oats. I made out ear tags for the calves that needed them, tagged the calves, and pictured them for registration. When I was finished with this, I went down and hosed off the calf blankets, hanging them over a gate to dry. I then looked up the necessary information needed for the registration applications before I started chores.

● **SUNDAY, APRIL 12 -- 11:40 PM**

Happy Easter! The Lord has risen indeed! Up early to get a good start at chores. The youth group from our church serves Easter breakfast every year, so I had to have Charlie to church by 8:30, then it was back home, to help John finish milking,



Charlie mixes individual feed buckets for the calves and heifers in his show cow barn.

*I enjoy working with these black and white beauties and **cherish the time** I have working side by side my partners in crime, **John and Charlie.***

feed the two sets of twins we still have, and back into town for church by 10:30. Fortunately, we only live five miles from town, so it's "doable". After church, we finished chores before dinner, John's sister and her husband (Sue and John Miller) came over from Dubuque, and then John Miller's grown son, Jeff and his girlfriend Brooke made a surprise visit from California.

Right after a very nice dinner, Bill, John and Charlie headed out to finish planting the oats, since they were predicting rain.

● **MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2009 -- 11:30 PM**

I woke up with a migraine, and it didn't let up all day. Right after John fed the cows grain, he and Charlie headed up to Platteville to pick up our trailer. I worked on barn chores until it was time to take Bill to therapy, while he was at the clinic, I ran up to the grocery store to get some yogurt. I feed yogurt to my calves whenever they get a little "loose", instead of electrolytes. I have had much better results, and they come around a lot faster (they don't go off feed this way.) I feed my calves before milking both morning and night, so when they need it, I go back after milking (usually 2 1/2 to 3 hours later) and give them 60cc. yogurt in a syringe. I've tried several brands, but honestly, Swiss Valley does work the best. Since I can't get Plain yogurt in our local stores anymore, I use Peach. The calves love it! I did have to cut the tip off the syringe so the peach chunks would go through.

● **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2009 -- 10:57 PM**

I woke up this morning, and thankfully my migraine was finally gone - I could think again! It was an absolutely beautiful day. Then the tractor mechanic came, and the corn seed dealer, and an AI representative! We finally made it through chores. John had me make him a quick sandwich, and then he headed for the fields, he didn't want to be bothered anymore! I had some bookwork that needed attention, so I worked on some of that until Charlie got home from school. He had entered a National Holstein Junior Essay contest, and the results were to be posted on the Holstein USA's website today. Charlie checked and he had placed 2nd in the Junior division!!! The topic was "Why am I thankful for the American Dairy Farmer".

● **THURSDAY, APRIL 16 -- 11:01 PM**

This morning we had Herd Check with our veterinarian, Dr. Greg Schueller. We had a few heifers that were out in the pasture that we needed to get in to be pregnancy checked. Usually we keep them in the heifer shed until they have been checked twice, but we needed the room (a nice problem to have!) so we had to move a few of the older/longer bred ones out. All the heifers we checked were pregnant, although in one heifer, Greg said the calf

didn't seem right, and she would probably lose it. Two cows were open, one we will keep working on, the other one, although one of our favorites, may be time to let go. Sometimes decisions like these are not easy ones. We have herd check once a month, and we dehorn calves, vaccinate calves, heifers and cows that need it (we have a very vigorous vaccination protocol that we follow closely), preg. check heifers and cows. It usually takes 3 1/2 - 4 hours to get everything done.

● **FRIDAY, APRIL 17 -- 10:41 PM**

After Charlie left for school, I looked up towards the barn, and saw a car backing up to the milk house - oh, great, the inspector! I hurried back up to the barn, so John wouldn't have to deal with her by himself, but she was very nice, and thought everything looked pretty good. "Continue with spring cleaning" was her comment. Yes, we need to wash down the walls (we have wooden walls in our barn), but it really needs to warm up a little first.

After chores, I finished up the registration applications for the calves and submitted them over the internet, using the Holstein Association's EasyID software program. I'm just getting started doing it this way, and I think it's going to work out O.K. I submitted one on Monday of this week, just to see how it would go, and she is already entered into our herd's inventory list. As far as I'm concerned, purebred registered animals are the only way to go. There is so much that is offered through the Holstein Association, that I simply wouldn't do it any other way!

● **TUESDAY, APRIL 21 -- 11:14 PM**

Just as I was finishing up the barn chores this morning, one of Charlie's cows, Cheri, began calving. I went and told John (who was outside feeding heifers), and we decided she would be O.K. until after dinner. Cheri was ready to deliver her calf when we returned to the barn, she had a really nice almost all black heifer calf. Charlie named her Champagne. He has quite a family going with his "C-h" cows. He flushed his VG-88 Terrason daughter, Cheery (who was his first cow's youngest daughter) to Goldwyn and was rewarded with five heifer calves. Two were born in December, one in February (the 28th), and two born in March. He plans on showing one Dec. and one March calf this year, along with several others.

● **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22 -- 10:37 PM**

John got up during the night to check a heifer we thought might calve, but she was O.K. until we got back to the barn this morning, then she was ready for assistance. Charlie showed Missy as a calf, and she was four days overdue. It took a little work, but we

delivered a healthy big bull calf.

● **THURSDAY, APRIL 23 -- 11:16 PM**

We had a cow calve just as we were finishing milking. This is Catchie's third heifer, as she had identical twins last year. We decided to name this one Camaro, John's first two cars were Camaros, (I totaled the first one six months after we started dating - and he still married me!) Charlie gave Catchie warm water while we finished up. We give all our fresh cows as much warm water as they will drink; it helps them get going faster.

● **FRIDAY, APRIL 24 -- 11:18 PM**

Today was very warm and very windy. We didn't quite break the high temp for today (which was 85), but came close. I even dug out my shorts for the first time, John liked that!

● **SATURDAY, APRIL 25 -- 10:38 PM**

Today started out warm and muggy, but soon turned cold and windy, then the rain came. We had thunderstorms off and on all day. With Charlie home, chores went fairly fast. After dinner, I came down to our house and washed clothes, loaded the dishwasher, and worked on the books. I fed calves in a hurry tonight, as another thunderstorm was heading our way, we were just finishing up when the rain came, then the Gator wouldn't start, Charlie was laughing at me, as I was yelling at the Gator, (it needs a new starter). It was lightning again after milking, when I went up to feed the new calves, I made Charlie stay in the barn with John. Looks like storms all night.

● **SUNDAY, APRIL 26 -- 10:45 PM**

It was still raining when we got up this morning; it rained hard

during the night. With Charlie's help, morning chores went well again, I can't wait for school to be done for the year, I love having Charlie around all the time, and he is so much help, too.

I went in to make dinner, and John and Charlie worked on replacing worn parts on the soil finisher. They came through the barn on their way in and a heifer, Cranberry, was calving. I put dinner on hold, and went out to assist. We delivered a really nice heifer calf. This is the last one to freshen until the first of June, we get to take May off this year. (That would be nice!)

● **MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2009 -- 11:27 PM**

After morning milking was done and all the babies were fed, I came down and got the truck. John loaded a calf hutch and put the bull calf on so I could take it down to Berning Livestock. When I returned, I cleaned up and headed to Platteville for my "all time favorite job" -- grocery shopping and errands.

The DHIA technician coming, so we had to hurry up and get to the barn to get all the chores done before she came. The cows aren't milking like they could/should, but with the milk price as low as it is, and feed costs that continue to rise, we have had to make several adjustments, which are not all in the cows best interest, as far as maximum production goes, but we have to do what we must to survive. We won't sacrifice the health of the animals, so we won't cut any vitamins/minerals or any of the other nutrients that factor in to their rations, and we feel we need to keep the heifers and calves rations balanced so we don't jeopardize their development, so our feed bills are still higher than some. Hopefully it will pay off in the long run.

● **TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2009 --10:30 PM**

Charlie's class is working on a prejudice unit in language arts, and for his research paper he chose to write about prejudice against dairy farmers. In addition to searching online for information, he also called and interviewed a few dairy farmers in our area. He chose a couple of larger commercial dairies, a couple small purebred dairies (including mom and dad), and also interviewed a classmate who works on his uncle's organic dairy farm.

● **SATURDAY, MAY 02, 2009 --11:09 PM**

Today was a really nice day. My brother Dean brought my mom down to stay for a couple days. I was making dinner when they arrived; John and Charlie were still finishing up chores. Dean, his daughter Kassie, and mom came in the house, but after a few minutes Dean decided to go out and check on the guys. They didn't return for over an hour. Dean checked everything over while he was out there, and mom and I didn't even get the chance to get in on it. I enjoy "talking cows" too, so I was a little perturbed. I had planned on eating and then going out to the barn. I had wanted to get his opinion on some of the calves that Charlie has picked out to show. Oh well.

● **SUNDAY, MAY 03, 2009 -- 11:29 PM**

We had to get up real early this morning, church is at 10 AM, and we had to have everything done before then, because John's dad was taking us out for brunch afterward. Charlie came up



THE HAMILTON FAMILY POSED AT LAST YEAR'S WISCONSIN STATE HOLSTEIN CONVENTION. FROM LEFT IS WILLIAM, CHARLIE, JOHN AND EVIE.

and fed all the heifers and dry cows while we were finishing up milking. We finished everything, and made it to church only a few minutes late. We then went to Timmerman's Supper Club in East Dubuque for brunch to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary, which is coming up this week. John's dad, my mom, John's sister Sue and her husband, John, John's brother Jim and his daughter Natalie, and of course, Charlie were all that were able to make it, but we had a very memorable day. It is hard for John and me to comprehend that it has been that long already. Where does the time go?



JOHN & EVIE'S 25TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CAME WITH ROSES, FRIENDS AND LOTS OF HUGS.

● **WEDNESDAY, MAY 06, 2009 -- 11:25 PM**

Happy Anniversary, Honey!!! Yes, today is the big day, our 25th wedding anniversary, WOW! After dinner, John had just gone to the basement to change his clothes when there was a knock on the door. I answered, and a gentleman said, "Are you ready for these? They're heavy!" I just nodded, as I was speechless, he was holding the most beautiful bouquet of flowers I had ever seen! After I set the vase on the counter, I called down to John, to come back upstairs, then I started to cry. Twenty-three red roses, and two white silk roses. They were absolutely gorgeous. Believe me, I know how fortunate I am to have such a wonderful, loving husband. That's one of the reasons I love doing what I do.

● **SATURDAY, MAY 09, 2009 -- 11:05 PM**

Yesterday I wore shorts, today it was back to three sweatshirts and a vest. John's dad always says he can tell how cold it is, by seeing how many sweatshirts with hoods that I'm wearing.

● **SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2009 -- 11:49 PM**

Happy Mothers Day! Last night, as we were ready to head home, we all felt a "thump" when John started the Gator. It was late, and we were all tired, so we kept going, I just said a prayer that

it was just a rock, and nothing else. Unfortunately, when we went into the barn this morning, one of our favorite cats, "Paws" wasn't there. John and I went looking for him, and found him in the hayshed, we had apparently ran right over his head. He was still alive and alert, but he looked terrible. I treated him with antibiotics, to help fight infection, and said another prayer. Paws is a remarkable cat, he's almost a year old, and the only cat I have ever known that plays fetch. We will pick a piece of corn cob out of the corn silage, and throw it down the barn alley. Paws will chase after it, pick it up in his mouth, and bring back, dropping it at your feet, or in your hand, waiting for you to throw it again and again. He is amazing.

● **MONDAY, MAY 11, 2009 -- 11:51 PM**

Our cat Paws seems to be doing a little better, still too sore to eat or drink anything yet, at least he is still alive. After milking, I went up to feed and water Charlie's show calves, and then I cleaned out the soiled bedding, and put fresh down. It's our "official" start to summer, and mom gets to take care of them when Charlie is in school, not that I mind, it is something we all enjoy doing as a family, even if it is a lot of hard work, showing is definitely worth it.

● **THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2009 -- 11:00 PM**

Paws is doing some better, he is at least drinking milk now, and wants to chase corn cobs again, even if he can't pick them up yet, he tries. After John and I finished milking and chores and had dinner, I finished up the calf registration applications, and submitted them online. There, I'm caught up on one thing for awhile anyway.

● **FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2009 -- 11:01 PM**

Wow, this is the last day of my journal entries. Tonight, we helped Charlie pack his bags. Tomorrow morning he's headed for Cow Camp, which is sponsored by the Wisconsin Junior Holstein Association. This will be the 5th year that he's gone, and he loves it.

I hope you have enjoyed reading about my life as much as I love living it. I really wouldn't want to trade lives with anyone, it may not be glamorous, and times haven't been very prosperous recently, but I try to keep a positive attitude. I have been blessed with a wonderful husband, a great son, and the support of family and friends. I have the opportunity to promote agriculture, the dairy industry and my passion, the Registered Holstein Cow. I enjoy working with these black and white beauties (most of the time anyway), and cherish the time I have working side by side my partners in crime, John and Charlie. Our farm motto is "Live to dream - work to succeed" and our mission statement is: "To build a reputable herd of Registered Holsteins through honesty, integrity and hard work".

Life is short, so my final words are LIVE, LAUGH, and most of all LOVE as if there is no tomorrow. God's blessings to all.

AMERICA'S DAIRY FARMERS: Investing In America's Future

Investing in Our Children...over the next five years, dairy farmers will invest over \$250 million to help fight childhood obesity in our nation's schools by providing access to naturally nutrient-rich products, providing nutrition education and encouraging physical fitness.

Investing in Our Community...the 56,000 dairy farm families and processors generate billions of dollars in economic benefits to local communities.

Investing in Our Environment...in many ways, dairy farmers are the original environmentalists. In the past sixty years, dairy farmers have reduced their carbon emissions by 63%*, the equivalent of taking 32 million cars off the road! And the dairy industry is committed to reducing carbon emissions 25% by 2020.

Investing in Your Family's Health...every day, you invest in your family's health. You want value and nutrition; dairy products deliver both. Dairy foods, like milk, cheese, and yogurt, are naturally nutrient-rich, providing important nutrients such as protein, vitamin D, potassium and calcium to the diet. Compare the cost per nutrient of dairy products to other food and beverages; you'll see the enormous value they provide. By investing in your family's health, you also support your local economy, your community and the environment.

LOOK FOR THE REAL SEAL to know you are getting a real value. BUY real, natural dairy products.

As seen in



Learn more at
www.NationalDairyCouncil.org

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*Research conducted by Cornell University
(Judith L. Capper, Euridice Castanada-Gutierrez, Roger A. Cady, and Dale E. Bauman, Journal of Animal Science, March 2009)

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Through the dairy producer checkoff investment, a consumer awareness initiative was launched in June to educate consumers about the nutritional and economic value of dairy products, as well as the contributions that America's dairy producers make to their community, economy and the environment. As one component of this, Dairy Management Inc. placed this ad in June issues of **USA Today**, **People** and **Time Magazine** leveraging on increased awareness of dairy and America's dairy producers during June Dairy Month. I thought you would enjoy seeing this excellent ad.)

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**During the Month of May,
these Swiss Valley Farms
Members averaged below
100,000 for their
Somatic Cell count.**

Bierschenk, Cary & Jennifer	70,000
Gilbertson, Larry	89,000
Grand Central Jerseys LLC	98,000
Hellenbrand, Brent N.	79,000
Hendel Farms	70,000
Hodson-Dirksen Farms LLC	84,000
Hofmeister, Dallas & Pat	82,000
Kabara, James	86,000
Ketchum, Robert C & Terri A	74,000
Klosterman, Rich & Sandy	82,000
Laufenberg, Koty J.	79,000
Martin, Cheryl & Schmidt, Glenn	92,000
Meier, Brian	66,000
Meier, Cheryl	66,000
Meier, Mike	66,000
Oat Hill	83,000
Rego, David & Linda	96,000
Schaefer, Jeffrey G	67,000
Schaeffer, Kurt	67,000
Schaefer, Susan	67,000
Schmitz, Kenneth & Marlus	65,000
Schneider, Sam D	77,000
Selke, Walter	74,000
Selke, William	74,000
Siegle, Sandra Schrempp	97,000
Siegle, Steven D.	97,000
Stanton, Gordon	87,000
Statz, Kevin F	79,000
Stauffer, Titus	95,000
Strief Farms INC	97,000
Thompson, Larry & Liane	52,000
Walz, Jeff & Melinda	69,000
Weier, Harry A	44,000
Yoder, Leighton	96,000

Somatic Cell Range % of **A** Farms

0 - 100,000.....	5%
100,001 - 200,000.....	22%
200,001 - 300,000.....	26%
300,001 - 400,000.....	22%
400,001 - 500,000.....	13%
500,001 and above.....	12%

Somatic Cell Range % of **B** Farms

0 - 100,000.....	5%
100,001 - 200,000.....	21%
200,001 - 300,000.....	15%
300,001 - 400,000.....	10%
400,001 - 500,000.....	13%
500,001 and above.....	36%

Vilsack . . .

Continued from Pg. 2

TEMPORARY EXPANSION OF DAIRY PRICE SUPPORTS TO HELP FARMERS

◆ Vilsack said it is important to continue to support and expand exporting opportunities for US products. This is great news for dairy!

◆ Promote value added product manufacturing and also expand production of renewable fuels (Ethanol, bio-diesel, etc.)

◆ Dairy was mentioned in his comments. He stated that DEIP had been reinstated and that was a major undertaking. He also stated that MILC payments will continue as well as government product purchases (CCC). Also, the dairy industry will have to be careful that what we do along these lines is both WTO compliant as well as NAFTA compliant.

◆ Speaking of exporting dairy products, Animal ID is a major food safety concern for exported product. Vilsack wished that farmers could agree on a good proposal because there are too many diverse opinions right now to get it moving. However, something must be done to improve animal ID in this country so that meat export markets will open up again. The objective is to pose minimal danger while involving the least amount of bureaucracy.

◆ It was also mentioned that the Food Pyramid will be up for review again soon, since it is reviewed every five years. Dairy holds a prominent spot on the current pyramid.

It was encouraging to me that our Secretary of Agriculture was focusing on the plight of the dairy producer and was listening to our concerns and seeking our input. --- *Don Boelens, CEO*

NMPPF and its members continue ARLINGTON, VA – In late June, the National Milk Producers Federation asked the U.S. Department of Agriculture to boost its purchase prices for cheese and milk powder in order to bolster the current rock-bottom milk prices that are threatening the livelihoods of thousands of dairy farmers.

In a letter sent to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, NMPF requested that the USDA raise the purchase price for cheese blocks from \$1.13/lb. to \$1.19; raise the purchase price for barrel cheese from \$1.10 to \$1.16/lb.; and raise the purchase price for nonfat dry milk powder from \$0.80/lb. to \$0.84. These price levels are identical to those suggested by NMPF to Congress as it wrote the farm bill in 2007 and 2008. Higher product prices will translate into higher farm-level prices, according to NMPF.

Under the Dairy Product Price Support Program, the USDA serves as a buyer of last resort to help clear commodity dairy markets during periods of exceptionally low farm-level prices. The current price levels were written into the 2008 Farm Bill, passed by Congress a year ago, but the USDA has the authority to increase those prices, according to NMPF. The letter to Vilsack asks the USDA to temporarily boost those purchase prices for a three-month period of July through September.

“Secretary Vilsack is sensitive to the fact that farmers are desperate for any type of price relief, as they are caught in the crushing vise of low prices and high input costs,” said Jerry Kozak, President and CEO of NMPF. “Raising

the price support levels by a few pennies a pound will be an effective way to offer some assistance to farmers facing a very difficult summer.” Kozak calculates raising the price support levels for cheese and nonfat dry milk will hike farmer income by \$235 million this year.

Kozak said that USDA has already taken several important steps to help farmers in 2009, including liquidating 200 million pounds of surplus milk powder, reauthorizing the Dairy Export Incentive Program in May, and expediting the payments under the Milk Income Loss Contract program.

The NMPF letter also asked USDA to authorize DEIP bonuses for the new fiscal year that begins July 1st, which, if fully implemented, could help clear another 1.7 billion pounds of milk from the U.S. market. The letter also reiterated NMPF’s intention to maximize the use of its Cooperatives Working Together self-help program, which is currently concluding its largest-ever reduction in surplus milk volume.

“As much as we’d like there to be some silver bullet that will restore dairy farm profitability, there is no simple solution to a problem tied to the poor health of the global economy. But strengthening the price support safety net represents a needed and quick fix to keep many farmers afloat at a time when the tide of red ink continues to rise,” Kozak said.

The National Milk Producers Federation, based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF’s 31 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 40,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. Visit www.nmpf.org for more information.



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swiss valley farms scholarships **HURRY! LAST CHANCE TO APPLY!**

It's your last chance to get your application in for the 2009 Swiss Valley Farms Cooperative Scholarships. The co-op 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. Applications can be downloaded from http://www.swissvalley.com/pdfs/2009_SVF_Scholarship_Form.pdf or by calling Nancy Feeney at 563.468.6600.

Hurry! All applications must be mailed back to Swiss Valley Farms by July 15th, 2009.