

# Dairyman

DECEMBER 2016



## NMPF Cheese Awards



# Employees Have Good Ideas

by Chris Hoeger, CEO

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**Swiss Valley Farms  
 Cooperative**

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Swiss Valley Farms will produce, distribute and sell value-added, quality products for our:

- Customers & Consumers
- Owner/Members
- Workforce

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I continue to see positive changes at Swiss Valley Farms. Let me share a few of these with you.

Since I stepped into the CEO position nearly a year ago, I have focused on empowering our co-op employees to make decisions that will eventually add value to your milk checks. Already, several co-op employees have made significant contributions towards improving efficiencies and helping to reduce costs in our facilities.

Here are a few of these that come to mind.

Debbie Paetznick, Quality Manager at the Mindoro plant, and Carrie Jones, Quality Manager at Luana, both came up with ideas to significantly reduce costs within their departments.

Brad Fischer, Maintenance Manager at the Rochester plant, and his team traveled to Luana to help reduce costs on the construction of the brine flume in the new plant addition.

Al Gaul, Club Cheese Supervisor at Rochester, implemented a more efficient and less costly process in the manufacturing of that cheese.

These are just a few examples of all the hard work your co-op employees do day in and day out to reduce costs and add value to your milk check. I'm sure there will be more good ideas yet to come.

In other cost-saving news, restructuring the Executive Team is ongoing. In the past year, two V.P. positions have been eliminated. In January, a third V.P. position will be eliminated due to a pending retirement. The duties of all these executives have been reassigned among other Executive Team members and Management Team employees.

I am thrilled to say we are in



**Chris Hoeger**  
 CEO

the home stretch with our Luana construction project. By the time you read this, we should be making cheese in the new vats and we will be able to see the fruits of all the hard work our co-op employees have put into this project. It is a thrill to everyone involved to be completing this project on budget, if not a little below. Let me assure you that this took the combined efforts of many, many employees who burned the midnight oil to find ways to achieve this major goal. I appreciate everyone's dedication and hardwork.

I also look forward to working with everyone at Swiss Valley Farms in the coming year to meet our new goals, conquer the new challenges and bring added value to your hard-earned quality milk.

Please enjoy time with your families this holiday season. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

# Cheese Awards in NMPF Contest

Nashville loves its country music, but it also seems to love Swiss Valley Farms cheeses!

At the recent National Milk Producers Federation annual Dairy Summit held in Nashville in late October, our co-op cheeses scored well in the cheese competition and were real crowd pleasers at the cheese reception.

Here's even more proof that the co-op's Luana, Iowa cheese plant continues to make the best cream cheese in the country. Cream cheese made there claimed a First Place award, scoring a 99.60 out of a possible 100. Luana's Neufchatel wasn't far behind, coming in with a Second Place in the same category and scoring 99.50. A cream cheese processed cheese snack, also made at the Luana plant for one of our customers, won a First Place award in the processed cheese category, scoring 98.50. Not a bad run for our cream cheeses!

A wheel of Baby Swiss cheese made by White Hill Cheese in our joint venture in Shullsburg, Wis., took First Place in the Swiss category, scoring 98.50. Swiss cheese made at Luana claimed a Second Place, scoring 98.30.

Cheeses from the Caves of Faribault both scored

Third Places. St. Pete's Select Blue cheese scored 98.40 in the Hard and Mold Ripened Italian category. Jeff's Select Gouda scored 99.30 in the Unique or Mild Flavor category.

Altogether, 120 cheeses from cooperatives across the United States were judged in this annual competition.

Also during this convention, a column written by Chris Hoeger and Nancy Feeny, "We're All In On FARM," took home a Third Place award in the communication competition.



**Above:** Every co-op that submits cheese in the judging has a table displaying these cheeses at the annual NMPF cheese reception. Above is a small part of this year's Swiss Valley Farms cheese table.



**Left:** Swiss Valley Farms directors are joined at the co-op's cheese table by NMPF staff. From left to right are: Chris Hoeger, CEO; Jim Mulhern, NMPF CEO; Keith Blake, Swiss Valley Farms Board member and NMPF rep; Robert Horst, Swiss Valley Farms Board member; Randy Mooney, NMPF Board Chair.

# Swiss Valley YC'ers Shine at NMPF

Swiss Valley Farms YC'ers did a great job of representing the co-op at the NMPF annual Dairy Summit in Nashville, Tenn.

Dan and Jenelle Thorman of Dakota, Minn., served on this year's YC Advisory Board. In June, they worked with other YC'ers on this committee to plan this event. While attending, they helped out during the meetings and helped the other YC'ers who attended feel welcome.

Maddy Berner, the YC Coordinator for NMPF, awarded the Thorman's a certificate of appreciation during the final YC meeting of the conference.

YC'er Alex Holdorf of Walcott, Iowa, attended this Nashville meeting as the winner of the 2016 Outstanding YC Contest. Next year, Alex will serve on the 2017 YC Advisory Committee and help to plan the next annual Dairy Summit.

During their meeting, the YC'ers learned how to create positive dairy videos using their smart phones and then edit and post them on social media as well as how to discuss difficult farm transition issues with their parents and siblings. These YC'ers attended not only their portion of the Dairy Summit, but also listened to the national dairy leaders who spoke during the two-day main event.



**Above:** Keith Blake, right, Swiss Valley Farms director from Eldridge, Iowa, checks out the Swiss Valley Farms table during the cheese reception at the convention.



**At left:** Dan and Jenelle Thorman receive an appreciation certificate from NMPF YC Coordinator Maddy Berner.

**Below:** YC'ers gather before the final banquet.



YC'er Alex Holdorf, right, Walcott, Iowa, works with his team during an exercise to learn how to create videos.



## And The Winning Photos Are . . .

The 2017 Swiss Valley Farms calendar will soon arrive at your farm. Just like last year, it features photos taken by co-op members on their dairies. Once again, co-op members stepped up to the plate and submitted lots of great photos for the calendar. Without these members' help, there would be no calendar. So my thanks go out to them.

As usual, Swiss Valley Farms Corporate employees were asked to vote for their favorites. The top six of these photos were then posted on the Swiss Valley Facebook page and everyone was given a week to vote for their favorite. The winning photos are shown on this page.

Congratulations to the winners and to everyone who took the time to take photos on their farms and submit them for the contest.

Please continue to keep your eye out for great photographic moments on your dairy throughout the coming year. As these photos prove, every season offers photo opportunities on the farm. Don't forget winter photos. Snow offers lots of great Kodak moments.

Use your imagination and your camera to capture some dairy magic with your camera for 2018!

**Second Place:** At right, Sarah Gilbert, Iowa Falls, Iowa, took this photo of her daughter Isabel pushing feed up to the cows.



**First Place:** Teresa Beers, Eastman, Wis., took this photo of her daughters Danielle and Brooke watching the cows from the barn loft.



**Honorable Mention:** Lynne Wingert, Epworth, Iowa, got a photo of her son Aiden hugging his favorite cow.



**Third Place:** Pam Bolin, Clarksville, Iowa, took this photo of her grandson Vance playing on his sand pile by the calf sheds on New Day Dairy.

# Here's What's Happening at Mindoro

by *Ryan Smetana, plant manager*

Let me introduce myself. I am Ryan Smetana, the plant manager at Swiss Valley's Blue cheese facility in Mindoro, Wis. since the beginning part of August. I am originally from a small town just north of Eau Claire, Wis. called Bloomer. I graduated from UW-Eau Claire in 1996 with a B.S. in Biology and Mathematics.

I started my post college career in the Quality Assurance field at a small food plant in Eau Claire where we packaged ketchup, jelly and other condiments. I saw an ad for a lab tech at AMPI-Jim Falls and thought I'd rather be testing milk and cheese instead. I quickly moved up to Quality Assurance Manager at the Blair facility in 2001. I then progressed through the production supervisor job and into the production manager role in 2007. At the Blair cheese plant, we processed about 2.6 million pounds of milk per day translating to 270K pounds of Cheddar cheese and 135K lbs. of whey powder per day.

The transition into the Swiss Valley Farms Blue cheese plant in Mindoro has been on a different scale to me. At Mindoro, we process about 130K lbs. of



Ryan Smetana, right, Mindoro plant manager, stands with Walter Rainey, production lead, as the cheese comes out of the pasteurized brine tank.

milk/day translating to about 16K lbs. of cheese/day. The specialty care during the process of making Blue cheese instead of Cheddar has also been very interesting to me.

I'd like to personally thank all the Mindoro employees and others from the Swiss Valley Farms family who made me feel welcome.

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**A** long-awaited upgrade project at Swiss Valley Farms Blue cheese plant in Mindoro, Wis. came to fruition this fall. A major process modification was realized after we brought in two new salt brine tanks from Johnson Industries.

The installation of these new tanks required us to have no production for about eight days in September since the production process is four days in that area. This shut down time also kept us very busy with some overall plant condition improvements.

These new salt brine tanks were replacements from our original heat-treated tanks. The transition between the two different brine tanks went fairly smoothly. After the new brine tanks were operational we were able to increase our daily production and also increase some revenue on our whey sales.

The new tanks will also allow us to produce organic cheese for some customers. Previously, we had been using our organic tanks for some heat-treated.

Some other major projects we will be completing in the future are:

- vat agitator replacement
- whey system cooling
- installation of a back-up generator that we repurposed from the Luana plant

The Mindoro plant continues to run very strong. We are looking forward to a bright outlook for 2017.

The Mindoro team wishes you a happy holiday season.



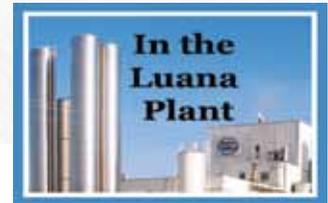
**Above:** A crane was used to lift one of the two new salt brine tanks off of the truck and maneuver it in place by the side of the cheese plant.

**At left:** To get the tanks inside the building, an opening was created in the wall. A worker helps to guide the huge tank into the building as far as the rigging will allow.

**Below:** Once inside, the tanks are installed and filled with salt brine and made ready to use in the new cheese making process.



# First Block Rolls Down The Line



There was a special delivery at the Luana plant the day before Thanksgiving when the first block of Swiss cheese produced on the new equipment was unmolded and sent rolling down the line toward the brine tanks. Luana controller Lisa Tesar reported that the first block weighed in at 206.3 pounds. That's one big delivery!

When word spread throughout the cheese plant that the first block was about to roll down the line, around 25 employees gathered to witness the big moment. To the Luana employees who have been watching this new addition being built from the ground up over the past two years, witnessing this moment was as nerve racking and exciting as any birth should be.

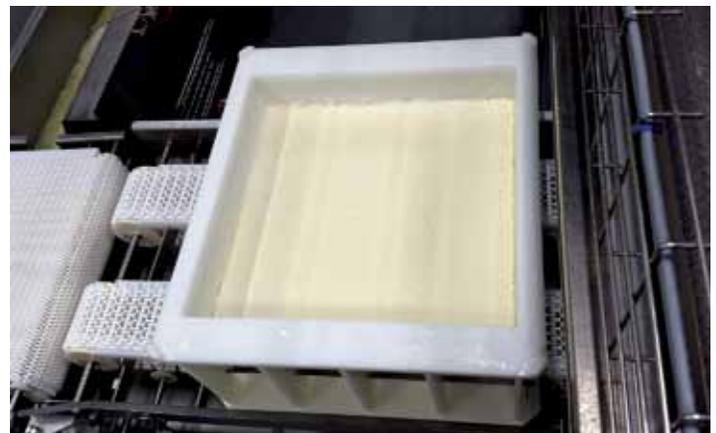
"After two years and many thousands of man hours of work, it was exciting to see the first block of Swiss come off the new equipment 'looking good,' says Rod Kregel,

Luana plant manager. "I am very grateful for everyone's contributions to the success of this project."

Since this first vat of cheese rolled down the line, there have been several more vats created on a regular basis. Representatives from the German and Finnish companies who built the vats are on site to work with the Luana employees as the new equipment is monitored and tweaks are made.

It is hoped that the plant will ring in the new year by being fully on line and up and running.

Luana employees were thrilled to snap photos of the first block of Swiss cheese as it rolled out of the new equipment, was unmolded and rolled down the line to the brine tank.



# Antibiotic Testing Trial Will Focus on Another Drug Family

by Tim Genthe, Field Information & Logistics

Consumers are becoming more and more concerned about antibiotics in their food supply. They expect the food they purchase to be wholesome and antibiotic-free. Many of them are in the market place asking questions about what assurances they have that the food they consume is totally free of antibiotics.

We at Swiss Valley Farms Cooperative can ensure the consumer we have a vigorous antibiotic testing program for the milk received at all the plants where our members' milk is turned into wholesome dairy products. The plants test every load for beta-lactam drugs before the load is accepted and brought into the plant for processing.

In the past few years, the consumers are asking more and more questions about antibiotics of our regulatory agencies and the Food and Drug Administration. These agencies are now responding with additional antibiotic testing for loads of milk. They have asked dairy processors across the country to voluntarily participate in a trial testing for the Tetracycline family of drugs. Swiss Valley Farms was happy to join this voluntary testing program and therefore, as of January 1, 2017, we will begin testing

random loads of milk at our plants for the Tetracycline family of drugs.

At the conclusion of this voluntary testing period, the cumulative data from all the participants will be analyzed by the FDA to see if any further action is necessary.

The Swiss Valley Farms field staff and the members' veterinarians work with our producers on education of the proper storage and usage of all antibiotics on the dairy. As always, we encourage our co-op members to have the milk tested for the specific antibiotic family that was used before allowing the milk to be loaded onto the milk truck at the farm. These are good practices to continue to ensure wholesome dairy products.

Maintaining a safe, wholesome food product needs to be the concern of everyone from the producer on the farm to the dairy processor to the consumer. For if the consumer loses faith in our food products, we all lose -- the producer, the processor and the consumer.

Let's all work together to keep antibiotics out of the market place.

## Swiss Valley Farms Offers 8 Scholarships Every Year!

Do you have a son or daughter who plans to attend college or a technology school full time next year? As always, Swiss Valley Farms is proud to offer eight college scholarships to its co-op members and their children.

Getting an application is as easy as going on the internet. The 2017 Swiss Valley Farms Scholarship application can be downloaded now at [swissvalley.com](http://swissvalley.com) under "Member" then "Procurement" then "Member Benefits." It is available as a Word document or a PDF.

To guarantee impartiality when scholarships are judged, the co-op seeks out dairy industry-related professionals from the east or west coast areas. These are people who are familiar with the dairy industry and

agriculture, but are most likely not acquainted with any of our co-op members or their families.

Good luck, students! We are proud of you all!



swiss valley farms

# FIELD PERSONNEL & STATISTICS



## Field Department & Procurement Division Directory

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

ARENDS, DARWIN & DULCI	86,000
BAILEY, MICHAEL & JEAN	96,000
BAILEY'SCHERRYVAL.DAIRYLLC	96,000
BENNETT, JOHN & CHARLENE	50,000
BOWERS, KERRI	72,000
BOWERS, MARK & KATHY	72,000
BRENNEMAN, MARCUS D.	99,000
BREUCKMAN, CHAD	73,000
CAROLAN, KEVIN & DONNA	78,000
DUTCHLAND DAIRY	95,000
FISCHELS, JEFF	83,000
HALL, LARRY & ROXANNE	82,000
HAUGEN, BONNIE & VANCE	97,000
HESSENIUS, CRAIG	98,000
KIRSCHBAUM, ALAN	96,000
KNOPLOH, REECE	85,000
KUDERER, JOHN & ANTON	73,000
MEIER, BRIAN	76,000
MEIER, MIKE & CHERYL	76,000
STAUFFER, TITUS	89,000
THOMPSON, LARRY & LIANE	94,000

Somatic Cell Range -- Percentage listed is based on number of **A**

Farms	
0-100,000.....	5%
100,001 - 200,000.....	34%
200,001 - 300,000.....	32%
300,001 - 400,000.....	16%
400,001 - 500,000.....	6%
500,001 and above.....	7%

**For Sale:** 1,250-gallon Dari-Kool Glacier bulk tank, \$8,000. Lucknow vertical 2300 stationary TMR mixer, \$7,000. Call: 563-608-5370.

**Have something you want to sell?**  
Classified ads in the Dairyman are FREE to Swiss Valley Farms members. Just e-mail your ad to: nancy.feeney@swissvalley.com. Or mail it to: Swiss Valley Farms, Nancy Feeney, P.O. Box 4493, Davenport, Iowa 52808.

**Wanting to Rent** a dairy barn and milking facilities to accommodate 80 cows in the northeast Iowa area. Please call 563-880-3023 if you have a place available for rent.

**For Sale:** 2½ inch loop free stalls cantilever. Call 563-724-3451 if you are interested in these.

## *How to Make Your Future Milk Contracts*

Future Milk Contracting is open to Swiss Valley Farms members only. All futures' contracts are made directly through Blimling and Associates. To contract milk, call the offices of Blimling and Associates at 1-800-945-8891 and give them your farm number to get the process started. Through Blimling, you will have access to live market pricing and your contracting window will be larger.

You may contract milk from:

- 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Thursday CST and 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday CST for the Class III-based program.
- 9:05 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday-Friday CST for Total Price Contracts (this includes Producer Price Contracts) and Options-based contracts.

For more details on Forward Fixed Price Milk Contracting, Swiss Valley members can log on to the members-only section of [swissvalley.com](http://swissvalley.com).

## *Have Your Lab Counts Texted to You*

Swiss Valley members can now get a text message delivered to their cell phones containing their components from every tank of milk picked up on their dairy as soon as the lab sends the results to Swiss Valley, which is usually the next day.

Lab results include components (butterfat, protein and other solids), SCC and MUN score. The text is identified by the sequence number the hauler puts on the sample when picking up the milk.

To get signed up for texting, send your producer number, your cell number and cell provider to [tim.genthe@swissvalley.com](mailto:tim.genthe@swissvalley.com).

### *Swiss Valley Farms*

## **ANTIBIOTIC POLICY**

### **Antibiotic Policy**

If a member suspects antibiotics in his or her bulk tank & calls a SWISS VALLEY FARMS field representative to report this before dumping the milk:

- 1st time in a calendar year, the coop will pay 80% of the milk.
- 2nd & 3rd times in a calendar year, the coop will pay 50% of the milk.
- Over 3 times in a calendar year, the coop will pay zero.

On the 1st offense, if a member has purchased a test kit and detects the positive antibiotic milk, SWISS VALLEY FARMS, CO. will reimburse that member \$75.00 toward the cost of the test kit.

All claims must be received by the corporate office for payment no later than 60 days after the milk was dumped.

The earliest dated claim turned in will be paid at 80% payment.

If antibiotics are found to be present in a farm truckload as a result of a screening test, the member will NOT be paid for that shipment of milk, and will be assessed as follows:

Full cost of net load

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**Dairyman**



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FARMS COOP

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**YC'ers! Save these dates!**  
**Friday - Saturday Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Swiss Valley Farms**  
**Young Cooperator Conference**  
**in Rochester, Minn.**

**Take a bus trip to the Caves of Faribault**  
**with your fellow YC'ers!!**