

Dairy wife tells why she decided to get involved in milk promotion

BY WENDY WEHR

MILLMONT — "As a farm wife and consumer, I am very aware of the poor promotion of our dairy products. How many of us are 100 percent satisfied with the job we do ourselves to promote agriculture — and it's our own product and our way of life that is slowly falling by the wayside!"

Hearing persuasive words like that, you might be tempted to fall back on the expression "this is no ordinary farm wife you're dealing with!" But talk to Carol Sanders, author of those words, and she'd probably claim that she is like a lot of other farm wives. She just believes in acting on her beliefs.

Carol Sanders is a Union County dairy wife who, like a lot of the women described this month in the pages of "Lancaster Farming," carries out many of the "around the farm" roles and responsibilities of farm women. But this year Carol took on a new role, as a member of the Pa. Dairy Promotion Advisory Board.

"I was scared," explains Carol about her first-ever experience of serving on a state board and representing several thousand dairy families. "But I have just as much desire as the others to promote our product."

"This will sound like a great cliché, but we have to help ourselves. No one will do it for us," she says.

Carol's nervousness about serving on the board stems from the fact that she is only one of two women (the other being Beverly Minor), and the youngest member of the promotion board. But, obviously, her enthusiasm and concern for the dairy promotion program came through when the board selections were being made last spring.

In her position on the board, Carol represents dairy families who sell their product to independent milk handlers. Her husband, Don, is part of the family operation known as San-Be Farms, which sells milk to Hershey Foods Corporation. And it was through Hershey that Carol was appointed to the advisory board.

"Last March I was co-chair of the county women's committee of PFA," explains Carol, "and when we did a supermarket promotion of Pa. products, Hershey donated some 'kisses.'" After the successful promotion, Carol wrote a thank you letter to Hershey, including a newspaper clipping about the event.

Weeks later, Carol's husband Don came rushing upstairs to where Carol was getting ready to go away. "Wallace Willig is here, and he wants to see you!" he exclaimed. Willig, Hershey's manager of milk marketing, had come to the farm to chat with Carol — he remarked that few people take the time to write thank you notes and report back on how Hershey products were used in dairy promotions — and to invite her to be nominated to the promotion board.

Carol was surprised when the appointment later came through, and although she was a bit afraid she was "out of her league," she buried her fears and concentrated on her new responsibilities.

Getting in touch with the farmers she represented was one of her first goals. To do this, she composed a letter to all the dairy families who ship to Hershey. She described her background and her new responsibilities, and she also included the hard-hitting paragraph at the beginning of this article.

In the letter, Carol carefully explained the Pa. promotion program, including the farmers' opportunity to voluntarily designate 10 cents of the 15 cent mandatory assessment to be used in direct Pa. promotion. She let them know she would probably seek out their thoughts on the promotion activities, and she encouraged the farmers to write to her and let their feelings be known.

The results of her effort were shocking. A majority of the replies she received were "nasty letters." One person even went so far as to blame her for the loss of his farm, and another asked "how she could call herself a farm wife."

All of that was a bit much for Carol to take. "I am not a state bureaucrat. I am a farm wife and I have a direct line in this. I just wanted them to be able to contact me," she sighs.

But she shared the letters with her fellow board members, and they were supportive. Carol looks forward to the discussions during the monthly board meetings in Harrisburg.

She firmly believes in the promotional work of the advisory group. "We're in our infancy," says Carol, but already she's gotten some good comments about the fluid milk advertising that was begun September 1st.

"Tears came to my eyes the first time I heard it," relates Carol, as she talks about the ads that were broadcast on the Penn State Football Network. At the time she thought, "That's promoting what we do!"

Of course, she recognizes that the Pa. promotion program is just one part of an ever-increasing effort to promote dairy products. She thinks the nutrition campaigns that focus on milk as a healthy beverage are particularly useful.



Carol Sanders, a Union County farm wife and a member of the Pa. Dairy Promotion Advisory Board, shares her thoughts about dairy promotion and rural living. She holds a copy of "Action Line," the advisory board newsletter.

"If people are confronted with the information and have statistics, maybe they'll begin to think 'milk's not as bad as we thought,'" she says.

One idea the Pa. advisory board has considered for promoting the healthfulness of milk, is to hire Bruce Baumgardner, Olympic gold medalist and Pennsylvania native, to represent dairy products. But this is only one of many promotional ideas, notes Carol, that the board has kicked around in their meetings.

Referring to the advertising and promotion efforts, Carol says, "It will make a difference, even if it takes a while." And she's always encouraged by small changes she's noticed. Recently the manager of the local supermarket told her that sales in the dairy case are up. And one morning when her children were watching television, she realized that a commercial for a chocolate flavoring was emphasizing "and milk" in the ad.

That's one of the benefits of funding local promotions, notes Carol. The dairy families who are putting money into the program get to see something from their contributions. It's a real psychological boost.

"My life depends on milk," Carol adds, so she's anxious to see milk consumption increase, and she's glad to do what she can to help out.

Not having grown up in the country, Carol is especially appreciative of life on the farm. She doesn't hesitate to say that being a farm wife is "the best thing that ever happened to me." She believes it's an ideal place to raise their children, Amy, age 7, and Nathan, 4½, and she loves the freedom of rural life.

Serving on the Pa. Dairy Promotion Board has been a satisfying complement to her life at home on the farm. She says it's "broadened my horizons" and been an excellent way to meet new people. But, most of all, she thinks it's great just to be "doing something you believe in."

FARM BUREAU

GIVE YOUR DAIRY REPLACEMENT HEIFERS A HEAD START

Feed Rumensin® to your dairy replacement heifers

The Facts About This Advantage from Rumensin

- Fact:** Rumensin boost gains in replacement heifers an average of 9.8%
- Fact:** Rumensin helps you cut the time and costs of dairy heifer development
- Fact:** Rumensin is the only product of its kind approved for use in dairy heifers

Rumensin* for replacement heifers
Performance and reproductive safety data

	Control	Rumensin
Average Daily Gain, lbs.	1.43	1.57
Days of Age at First Estrus	421	408

Feeding a ration with Rumensin showed no detrimental effects as measured by comparisons based on: weight at first estrus, percent conception, percent first service conception, birth weight of calves, or milk production.

Do Not Feed to Lactating Dairy Cows



Farm Bureau
107 Grant Street
Grove City, PA 16127
(412) 458-6141

Farm Bureau
Sharon Road
Beaver, PA 15009
(412) 775-0535

Farm Bureau
104 Mill Street
Dublin, PA 18917
(215) 249-3541

Farm Bureau
67 Washington Avenue
Souderton, PA 18964
(215) 723-4355

Farm Bureau
110 East Chestnut Street
Bechtelsville, PA 19505
(215) 367-2515

Farm Bureau
Rte. 29 & Park Avenue
Collegeville, PA 19426
(215) 489-2521

Farm Bureau
111 Mill Street
Mifflinburg, PA 17844
(717) 966-1047