

Leo's Dairy Market will participate in Farm Show's Food Marketplace

BY SUZANNE KEENE

CARLISLE — For the fifth consecutive year the list of Farm Show exhibits will include a Pennsylvania Food Marketplace featuring the finished products of the farmer's labors.

Visitors to this popular marketplace, located on the lower concourse off the large arena, will be treated to Lebanon bologna, canned scrapple, ring bologna, fruit juices, baked goods, pickles on a stick, cookies, soft pretzels, goat's milk fudge, and other goodies.

This year, hungry visitors will also be able to enjoy a heaping cone of creamy, homemade ice cream from Leo's Dairy Farm Market in Carlisle. Leo's Dairy is one of five new exhibitors in the Food Marketplace this year, bringing the total number of exhibitors to 25.

Leonard Leo Jr. and his sons, Leonard Leo III and Tom Leo, are responsible for producing the tasty ice cream that weary Farm Show visitors will be enjoying next week. Using milk and cream from their herd of grade Holsteins, the Leos produce their own ice cream mix. Most businesses making homemade ice cream, the Leos

said, use commercial mixes made elsewhere.

By using all their own products, the Leos can completely control the quality and freshness of their product. Tom spends about one day a week producing 150 to 200 gallons of ice cream mix and devotes another full day to transforming the mix into about 400 gallons of ice cream.

The creamy finished product, containing 13½ to 14 percent butterfat, is available in 30 flavors. The Leos package their ice cream in half-gallon, five-quart and three-and-one-half gallon containers for sale in the dairy store. Customers can also grab a cone to enjoy on their way home from the farm market.

Dairy products are the keystone of the Leos' business and the family is perfectly equipped to produce, process and market their product. Production starts out in the barn, where the Holsteins munch on hay and silage. Leonard Leo III, also known as Lenny, is in charge of the herd which consists of 220 grade animals with 120 milking.

The Leos raise all their own feed on the two farms they own. Their farm in Carlisle has about 210

acres and another farm in Newville has 410 acres. Lenny says they also use their own chopped corn fodder for bedding, an economical practice that has given them good results.

The Leos milk two times a day in a parlor that can accommodate 12 cows at a time. They produce about 500 gallons each day.

The milk is piped through a plate cooler, which cools it to a temperature of about 40°F. within one minute after it leaves the cow. The milk is then stored in two 2,100 gallon tanks.

An underground pipeline carries the milk to another building, where it is processed. It is separated, pasteurized and homogenized, before it is packaged in cartons and rushed to a walk-in cooler.

The Leos make their own butter from the cream that is removed from skim and lowfat milk.

The milk is on the shelf the same day it comes from the cow, Leonard said, and customers are assured a fresh product. Consumers buying their milk in a grocery store are usually purchasing milk that is four or five days old.

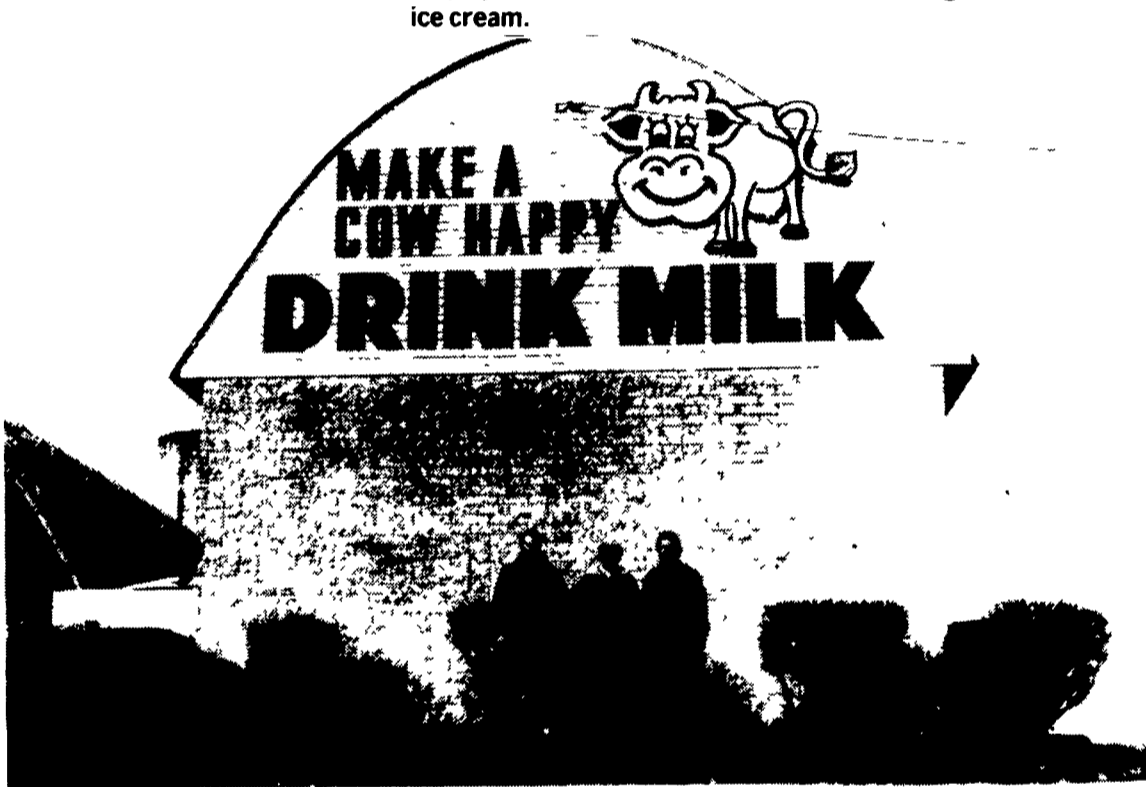
Running an efficient dairy farm and store takes knowledge and management skills that can't be



Employee Cheryl Shughart offers a customer a cone of homemade cherry vanilla ice cream. Leo's Dairy will have employees at the Farm Show next week selling their delicious ice cream.



Tom Leo shows how he scoops creamy ice cream into packages to be sold in the farm market. Tom makes his own ice cream mix using the dairy's milk and cream.



Leonard Leo Jr. (center) and his sons Tom (left) and Lenny, pose in front of a promotional sign on one of their dairy barns.

learned in a day. Leonard Leo got his apprenticeship at an early age when his father died, leaving behind a widow and nine children. It was then that Leonard and his brothers decided they would make something of Sunny Hill Farm, and

they turned it into a successful dairy farm market like the one Leonard now owns in Carlisle.

Two years ago, one of Leonard's brothers wanted out of the business, so Sunny Hill Farm was sold and Leonard started his search for a new business. When he found a vacant dairy farm market in Carlisle, he jumped at the opportunity and purchased the farm.

In the nearly two years since then, Leonard and his sons have been working hard to make a success of their venture. They built their herd from scratch and are

pleased with their progress. "The herd has improved quite a bit from last year," Lenny reports.

Much of the equipment was in disrepair, but now most of it is in good shape, Tom said.

They have also introduced a variety of other products in addition to their milk, ice cream and butter. The dairy market has a deli where customers can purchase fresh meats, cheese, salads and soups. Their store also offers bulk products and snack foods.

While they have made much

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Dairy employee Dave Myers works at putting the milk into cartons.



Leonard Leo shows the dial which registers the milk's temperature as it is processed, then cooled.