

Lebanon County Cook Turns A Profit With Baked Goods

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Rosene Bollinger likes to bake, and she has put her talents to work by providing the Schaefferstown Fire Company and two area restaurants with fresh, homemade pies and cakes.

The wife of Lebanon County dairyman Donald Bollinger, Rosene helps to milk their herd of Holsteins. She is also the mother of two active children, Angie, 16, and Steven, 12. Because of all the work on the dairy and broiler farm, Rosene is happy to have an outlet which allows her to work from her farm kitchen, and at a pace which gives her time for gardening and other work at home.

When asked what kind of pies she specializes in, Rosene replies, "Any kind." She makes all kinds of fruit pies, sponge and meringue, and she also produces an ice cream pie which is a specialty of The Franklin House, a restaurant in Schaefferstown. Cheesecakes and chocolate cakes with peanut butter icing are two other favorites she produces. Big Jake's also in Schaefferstown, receives some of her homemade goodies.

Rosene explained that she's only been baking for these three establishments for the last three years. A friend in Farm Women Society 9 was planning to give up

baking for banquets for the fire hall, and someone suggested to Rosene that she try it.

When she called about the job, it was offered to her. She says, "It is a good place to bake, because I know how many they need, and they are eaten right away." Another good part of the fire hall work is that they do not serve banquets in June and July, which leaves Rosene some free time for caring for her garden and preserving the food.

In addition to their banquets, she also supplies pies to the fire hall for the dinners they serve before bingo on Friday nights.

She got the job at Jake's much the same way, with a senior citizen wishing to slow down and not bake for them anymore. "I heard about it through the grapevine. It works out because it is so close and handy for me."

With the fire hall and restaurants, Rosene sometimes bakes as often as four days a week, but she tries to reserve Saturdays for being with her own family.

Does she bake for her own family? Rosene says, "They eat the flops. A baker has to have flops." Actually, she admits, "Donnie would be lost if I didn't have dessert. He's a super one to try something new - he'll eat anything."

She likes to try new things, and

uses any of her nearly 175 cookbooks to look up a new recipe. She smiles, "Cookbooks are my weakness." How does she decide which one to begin looking in. Simple, she says, "I go to my favorite ones first."

Rosene is too busy to copy over her favorite recipes onto cards for a file, but she has solved the problem of where to find them by attaching pieces of paper to the page of a favorite recipe. That way, she can quickly find the appropriate book.

She points out, "I like church cookbooks. I find them to be the best, with down-to-earth recipes." Her husband is chairman of the local Soil Conservation District, and when they travel to the national conventions, she always tries to get a cookbook from the state she is visiting.

All the work for her baking business is done in her own kitchen, but she does have a second oven and a second refrigerator in an adjoining room. Nevertheless, she says, "I only bake three pies at a time." She is careful to set timers and to keep a close watch on what she is making to avoid costly accidents.

Occasionally the numbers she must bake will mean that she must bake some in the evening on the night before they are needed, but for the most part her baking begins in the morning after she has finished milking chores. She also will freeze unbaked pie shells ahead to cut the preparation time on the days she must fill orders.

One concession to the increasing numbers of pies she makes is that she no longer freezes her own pie fillings. She recalls pitting cherries and cooking her own fillings, but found it didn't pay for the extra

effort. She tries to purchase supplies in bulk as much as possible.

Surprisingly, Rosene says, "I didn't bake at home. My mother always did the baking." After her marriage 20 years ago she said she really enjoyed baking, but only "once I learned to make pie dough." She experimented with using an egg and with vinegar, but has developed a simple, basic recipe that she uses. In fact, she now says, "I would rather make pies than cakes."

She uses lard to produce her flaky crusts, but says she uses shortening for pies for her family.

Her recipe is 5 "full" cups of flour, 1½ cups lard, 1¼ teaspoons salt, and ¾ to 1 cup water. Rosene says, "There is a difference in the

flour you use. You can feel when it's right. When working in the lard you can feel if it's going to be too rich. I don't measure exactly; I go by the feel of it."

Once the dough is ready, she rolls it out on her formica table top, which, she says, "works real well." She cautions, "Don't work more flour in than necessary, and don't work the dough more than necessary because it will get hard." This recipe will make about six 10-inch pie crusts.

She prefers making crumb toppings, but also makes lattice crusts with the help of a "gadget" which cuts the top in one piece.

Recently Rosene expanded her kitchen to build in more counter space, and her two requests were

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Rosene can select from an enormous supply of recipes contained in her extensive cookbook collection.



A chocolate cake with peanut butter frosting is a delight for any family, and Rosene puts the finishing touches on one. She says she takes all the calories out of her cooking for her family which enjoys eating the fruits of her labors!



Using hot caps will speed the maturity of these lettuce and cabbage plants in Amy Bollinger's garden. She said she bought a huge supply of the caps at a bargain price years ago and continues to use them. Now that she is retired, she enjoys growing "fun things" like herbs and flowers in addition to the traditional garden vegetables.



Three is the maximum number of pies Rosene bakes at one time so she can carefully control them and give them her full attention. A second oven in an adjoining room is sometimes pressed into service.

Homestead Notes