

Two Elected To Eastern Board

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — The board of directors of Eastern Milk Producers Cooperatives has two new faces, including the first woman to serve on the board in well over two decades.

The new directors are — Larry Allen, who operates a 725-acre farm with his wife, Agnes, and sons in Chelsea, Vt.; and Gerry Mesick, who runs an 800-acre dairy farm with her husband, George, and sons in South Scho-dack, N.Y. The farm also serves as a buffalo ranch.

Allen says he is a strong advocate of the cooperative way of doing business. He has been an Eastern member since 1960. Wife Agnes is secretary-treasurer of the Eastern's East Central Local. They both have attended Eastern's annual meeting every year since 1980.

"Cooperatives are a great way to go," he said. "They're the only ones to represent you in Washington."

On that issue, he said, "independents get a free ride," and despite criticism some non-cooperative farmers may have for co-ops, "they're willing to accept the good things co-ops do."

As a director serving more than 150 farms in District 4, which covers mostly the eastern half of Vermont, he said he has one agenda — "to do the best I can for our producers."

Allen, an Eastern delegate for 12 years, has been dairying since 1946, the year he graduated from high school.

"My dad died, and my mother kept the farm going with hired help until I could take over," he said.

The farm has been in the Allen family for 200 years. The current homestead was built in 1917. Allenville Farm is located in Orange County, about 30 miles south of Montpelier.

With help from sons Ronald and Rory, Allen milks 65 Holstein cows, attaining a herd average in excess of 20,000 pounds per cow and producing more than 1.2 million pounds a year. They also have 65 young stock.

A 600-acre woodlot leaves them 125 acres for tillage and open pasture. They grow mostly corn and hay. Until this year, the family ran an apple cider press,

doing custom pressing.

The Allens have two other sons, Richard and Robin. They also have two married daughters, Susan and Laura, who "occasionally come in to help milk. They're glad to pinch-hit when I'm gone," Allen said.

Allen has been active off the farm in both agricultural and community organizations. For example, he spent 27 years on the Chelsea School Board, including 15 as chairman. She also has served on the Town Zoning Board, the Town Planning Commission, the Farm Bureau, the Orange County FFA Committee, and the ASC (Agricultural Stabilization Conservation) Committee.

Gerry Mesick not only has the distinction of being the only woman on the board, but also of being a dairy farmer who markets buffalo meat.

She also has the distinction of being able to switch roles with her husband, George, whom she succeeds on the board. George Mesick served nine years, the maximum allowed before the bylaws were changed at the recent annual meeting.

As a director, Mesick represents some 230 farms in District 2, which stretches from the St. Lawrence River, across the Mohawk Valley and into Massachusetts.

"I think it's good that there is a woman on the board, although it wasn't a campaign issue," she said.

"I don't think I'm coming in cold. I kept abreast of everything while George was in office. I'm ready to go."

Mesick also said she felt strongly that "cooperatives need to work together." She said she was "upset that farmers can't agree — I believe we've got to learn to."

Gem Farms, located in the southern end of Rensselaer County, is a four-way partnership with her husband and sons (David and James). It boasts a milking herd of 190 cows, plus 210 head of young stock and bred heifers.

Gem Farms Buffalo is a two-way partnership with her husband. It boasts a herd of 100 buffalo and a Trading Post, from which they sell buffalo meat and related items and souvenirs.

"We had to make our own market," she said, noting that not

many consumers are aware that buffalo meat is available. "It's an educational process."

Mesick graduated from Ithaca High School, and went on to earn a B.S. at Cornell University. She had lived several years in Rensselaer County, where she first met her future husband. George joined her at Cornell after serving in World War II.

After graduating in 1949, Gerry worked for Cooperative Extension for a year in both Schenectady County and Rensselaer County. After marrying George, she continued working part-time for awhile before devoting all her time to farm and family.

George was a partner with his father until he and Gerry took over the farm in 1960. They have since gone into partnership with their sons. The couple also has three daughters.

Other organizations she has been involved in include the Farm

Bureau, the National Buffalo Association and the American Bison Association.

Allen and Mesick are to serve three-year terms.

Headquartered in Syracuse, NY, Eastern Milk Producers has 3,200 member farms in nine states, with the majority concentrated in Pennsylvania, New York and Vermont.

Conference Set

LEWESBURG (Union Co.) — Northeastern Farm Credit, ACA will be holding its 4th annual Ag Outlook Conference on January 13.

The conference will feature Dr. David Kohl, professor of ag finance and small business management, Virginia Tech, who will speak about "Managing Your Farm Business for Success in the '90s", and Michael Brubaker, agronomist/president, Brubaker Agronomic Consulting Service, Inc. discussing the current "Pen-

nsylvania Nutrient Management Legislation."

The same program will be offered at two different locations on January 13: Corey Creek Country Club, Rt. 6, Mansfield, from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and the Country Cupboard, Rt. 15, Lewisburg, from 6:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. Snacks and beverages will be provided by Northeastern Farm Credit.

Phone reservations must be made before January 7, by calling (800) 326-9507.



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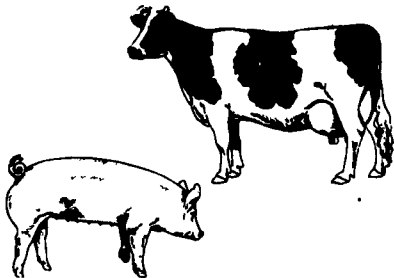
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