

# Dupuis Puts Professional Mark In Dairy Promotion

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hundreds of news releases.

And she has spent many long hours in the office making phone calls, nailing down details, ensuring that the job was done, and that it was done to the best of her ability.

But, the 28-year-old has resigned.

Friday was her last day with the PDPP.

She said she will indeed miss her job, but she resigned to pursue a law degree.

Basically the equivalent of a doctorate, she said she intends to complete an intensive 3-year program and eventually specialize in civil law, especially property and agricultural rights. She is to go to school at the University of Pittsburgh Law School.

"I don't know where I'll end up, especially three years down the road," she said, but she added that the time is right for her to pursue another goal.

"I had pondered going to graduate school. When I graduated (from college with a dairy science degree) I knew I would get a graduate degree.

"Last summer, I took the LSATs (Law Scholastic Aptitude Test) and began the application process. If I would get a law degree, I could come back and help the industry.

"With more and more regulation, nutrient management problems, water problems ... ag has been under the gun and I would want to help out."

It's a risk.

Especially today, with job markets very tight and many people with impressive talents and skills unemployed because of American business's recent penchant for widespread cuts in manpower to increase profit margins and reduce long-term, non-productive debt associated with labor and retirement costs.

According to Brian Ross, program manager, 132 applications were submitted over four weeks, the majority within the first two weeks, for Betsy's job.

"There are a lot of people out there looking for jobs," she said. "A lot of people, when they looked closer at this job, didn't realize what it entailed. You have to love the dairy industry."

She said for her, it wasn't the same as if she were to be working long hours for another product or commodity.

"You have to have respect for the people you work for," Dupuis said. "I know I do. I think it makes your work better."

Further, she said, "It's essential that you understand where (dairy producers) are coming from and what they expect from you. I helps you set goals to accomplish what you set out to accomplish."

She also said that promoting dairy products has been a toil of love. "What helped is the product, it's wholesomeness. Outside of the dairy industry, you're not likely to be working for something as good and healthy."

But then, at the same time, there are many who know Dupuis who have said that she is one of the first people they would hire to represent them in a legal battle.

"She has the strength and she has a lot of backbone," Ross said of Dupuis. "She can represent me anytime. I heard a lot of people say that. She has the tenacity to be there when needed and never give up.

"They (her supporters) know how dedicated she is, how she attacks a problem," Ross said.

"They know that whatever she put her mind to, she will do well."

Starting with the PDPP in January 1989 as a promotions specialist, Dupuis began with coordinating county promotion efforts in the western portion of the state her first year. She took over coordinating statewide promotions the second year.

At that time, there was also another woman who worked at PDPP. During the first year the two shared promotion efforts, but then the two split the responsibilities between them with one doing the communications duties and Dupuis taking over the promotions.

It was a time of rapid change and growth for the PDPP, following the tempo of change in the working relationships between milk marketing agencies.

It was not an easy time.

Prior to some more recent developments, Pennsylvania's dairy promotion problem was that it was an undefined jigsaw puzzle that overlapped in places and couldn't be found in others.

It was not organized, it was not mature. It was alive, but was far from defined.

This was due to the fact that Pennsylvania's dairy industry is unique.

In most states, dairy producers have the option of sending a dime of the mandatory 15-cent-per hundred pounds of milk promotion assessment to the state or the federal promotional program, because that's how those areas of milk production and promotion developed.

Pennsylvania has milk coming and going, multiple federal marketing orders, and a variety of markets which can be served, in addition to a strong degree of competition.

One problem that occurred was that competition began to evolve within the dairy promotion side of the dairy industry, with some disturbing effects.

Promotional agencies authorized by the federal and state law to receive assessment money, if they met certain guidelines, began springing up and competing for funds. Farmers can direct where some of their assessment goes. It doesn't have to go to a local agency.

And with promotion agencies had every reason to grow more competitive with each other in order to attract farmer promotion funds, the agencies has little reason to cooperate in promoting the consumption of dairy products.

And at the same time, there was some discomfort within the dairy industry because the original Pennsylvania Milk Promotion and Marketing Program, as formed under former state Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hollowell, was run by the state Department of Agriculture under its Bureau of Market Development.

That changed in 1987 with the amendment of the Commodity Marketing Act. The farmer-run advisory board to the promotion and marketing program suddenly went from being an advisory body to an administrative body.

They hired their own people, sought out expertise and carried on with the efforts to create an independent, effective and efficient PDPP.

Betsy was one of the first they hired.

Over the years, the PDPP program developed more focus and direction, while Dupuis took on wearing a number of different hats. In fact, when the other woman resigned, Dupuis ended up taking



From the left, Betsy Dupuis goes over scheduling and promotions planning with Holly Gerke, of Lancaster, whose was selected to replace Dupuis as communications specialist.



Betsy Dupuis stands on the left with dairy promoters Pa. Dairy Princess Jennifer Grimes; Nadine Houck, promotions specialist; Amella Saunders, Warren County Dairy Princess; and Marel Raub, Perry County Dairy Princess.

over responsibility for the whole program for a year before the PDPP board of directors hired Brian Ross as general manager.

It is generally acknowledged that Dupuis did an outstanding job holding down the fort until help could arrive.

"It's true," Ross said. "A lot of people wouldn't have been able to survive that process. She was here during the maturation process of the program and was instrumental in helping the program as it went through growing pains.

"She had the skills and the background to contribute to the success of the program," he said. "I think we're right now at a point when things have come together very well, and, looking back, Betsy had done a lot for the program."

When she started, she was already well on her way to developing the kind of mature confidence that comes with taking on big jobs and seeing them through.

She grew up on her parents' small farm in Bellefonte where, through raising and showing dairy calves in 4-H, she eventually wound up owning and managing 14 Jersey cattle. She said both her parents were professors at the college, but got her involved in 4-H.

And although she and her father had never intended to start milking cows, when her first show calf, a Jersey named "Rosebud," grew up, she had become so attached that she couldn't bear to sell her.

Thus began hand milking and two years later buying a Delaval milking unit. Eventually they bought a 210-gallon cooler and sold milk for cheese.

Dupuis had the herd on test and was showing and marketing the animals. Her responsibilities involved milking, feeding, and maintaining health and breeding records on her animals.

"In 1982, I was very lucky to place in the top third in Harrisburg and qualify for Louisville, Kentucky."

The more Dupuis became involved with 4-H and dairy, the more she became involved.

She had been the Centre County dairy princess in 1983-84 and stayed with the program as public relations chair from 1984 through 1986 and again in 1987-88. That's where she prepared press releases and radio commercials and developed a rapport with local media.

Being a dairy princess exposed her to more frequent and more confidence-required public speaking opportunities.

She attended Penn State University, originally set her sights on becoming a large animal veterinarian, but changed that after working for a vet and also doing some dairy promotion work.

"After the combination of promotion and working with vets, I found out that being a large animal practitioner is not what I thought it would be, and I wasn't ready for the commitment. And I really like promotion."

She took a basic journalism course and "decided I liked writing that way."

She concentrated on achieving a 4-year-degree in dairy science, but

took a number of additional courses work in communications and public relations.

Again, as seems to be a characteristic of Betsy, she was involved.

She served as president and vice president of the PSU Agricultural Student Council and was a College of Agriculture Student Senator to the University Faculty Senate.

The she was editor and originator of the PSU College of Agriculture Yearbook, "Pioneer." She also helped sell more than \$1,000 in advertising to help cover the costs of publication.

She was also on the Undergraduate Student Government Academic Assembly, the College of Agriculture Course of Study Committee, and the College of Agriculture's Undergraduate Education Task Force.

And, since she has a penchant for Jerseys, she was also involved with the Pennsylvania Jersey Cattle Club, serving as a junior club advisor from 1989 to 1994.

For her, the pursuit of a law degree is natural, at this time.

"In my case, it makes a lot of sense," she said. "I'm not married, and I have no commitments. I don't know how hard it is, but I don't want distractions, and it's not fair to (PDPP) to stay on (and compromise the quality of effort). It made more sense to make a clean break," she said.

"At some point, I would like to come back and apply what I've learned, in the (dairy) industry."