

Glass-Bottled Milk Remains Tradition At Oley Dairy

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OLEY (Berks Co.) — Years ago milk delivery trucks made their way into the winding roads of resident neighborhoods.

Today, instead, people from a nearby community take turns making the rounds, picking up the trademark glass bottles and coming into the Oley Turnpike Dairy store to receive fresh bottles of milk.

To the neighbors who collect glass jugs for friends in the nearby towns of Boyertown, Birdsboro, Exeter, Oley, Douglasville, and Jacksonwald, Oley Turnpike Dairy is home to what consider the best product — glass-bottled milk fresh from the farm.

Neighbors know what to expect from the dairy, located on the Oley Turnpike Road. Ice cream is made and named — all 51 flavors.

It's the same for deli treats. Ask anyone who has ever sampled "The Silo," "The Udder," "The Plow," or "The Tractor." The dairy store owes its rich heritage to the people of the Oley Valley.

Thomas Rose, a partner in the family business who is in charge of the ice cream parlor, noted some of the challenges of taking over a family business going back 28 years.

"The owners who decided to get out of the dairy store business sold us a very valuable enterprise," said Rose. The prior owners, Eugene and Darlene Moser, decided to give up the dairy store. Eugene still farms and Darlene takes care of their antique business.

David Reichert, brother-in-law to Thomas Rose, rents the barn and owns the cows of the original dairy that supplies milk to the store. The farm encompasses about 425 acres and is comprised of 52 Holsteins, including registered and grade. About 80,000 pounds of milk per month are used by the dairy store.

But the farm store remains the centerpiece to the dairy business. It is owned by the Reichert family and spouses, including David Reichert, president, and wife Beth. Vice president is Carl Reichert, Jr. with wife Carol. Treasurer is Diane Rose, wife of Thomas Rose. Secretary is Jennifer Blair and husband Charles. The spouses are also shareholders in the company.

The family business was purchased in February this year from the Moser family.

Since then the farm store has added a deli and bakery.

But one tradition stays the same — refilling the store's glass bottles with whole, 2 percent, or skim milk. The bottles are often brought

in by a friend or neighbor. At one time, recalled Rose, one person brought 20 bottles in to be refilled for his neighbors.

The dairy charges a \$1 deposit on each bottle. A half gallon of milk is sold for \$1.10 in glass bottles. The store also carries various plastic cartons, including pint, quart, half gallon, and gallon sizes.

Also, Oley Turnpike Dairy makes and freezes its own ice cream, which it sells at the store parlor.

They also mix their own concentrated orange juice, iced tea, and lime and grape juices. They don't mix apple juices.

Thomas Rose knows how to operate the business from the ground level.

"I have several years of experience in a retail background. I sold clothing at the Bon Ton," he said. At Bon Ton, Rose was the division sales manager.

Many other owners have experience in various parts of retail food sales. Jennifer Blair, who works full time, has deli experience. Carol Reichert has experience with baked goods. Carl Reichert loves animals and cares for the huge petting zoo open to the public, behind the store.

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Jennifer Moyer, left, serves chocolate marshmallow ice cream from the Oley Turnpike Dairy parlor.



Stacy Kiline at the deli counter at Oley Turnpike Dairy.



The dairy packages its own ice cream. Here, Thomas Rose inspects the milk tank.



The petting zoo welcomes visitors. They included Susanne Antonio, Pottstown, with her children, Gabriella, 4 and Sebastian, 2.