

Glass-Bottled Milk Remains Tradition At Oley Dairy

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Rose said the petting zoo is home to several different types of pygmy goats, llamas, alpacas, emus, rheas, and several exotic monkeys and birds. Also included is a dairy calf.

Each of those who work in various aspects of the store "brings talent and experience" to bear, according to Rose. With all the work that needs to be done, all stay busy. The store is open year-round.

"Our hats are off to Gene and Darlene, who did all of this for 28 years by themselves," Rose said.

The ice cream parlor is the "icing on top of the cake" for the store's success, Rose noted. People come as far away as the Reading Airport to buy one of 51 flavors of homemade ice cream.

An employee, Curt Payne, makes all the ice cream. He's been doing so for 25 years. "The man is an icon," said Rose.

The store also sells fresh produce in season. The produce is from the Leola Auction in Lancaster County. They also purchase from Kutztown Auction.

The "focus" of the enterprise is the look of "country" to the store, said Rose. That includes homemade baskets, artwork by an artist named Bob McGee from Bechtelsville, and wrought iron candles.

The store is home to tour groups through the spring. During April and May, many preschoolers come to visit. They receive a guided tour

of the zoo, visit the animal house (open only a couple of times each year), and sample a free serving of ice cream. More than 100 schools, including head start programs in Pottstown and Reading, visit the dairy.

And don't forget Bessy the Cow.

Bessy is a large plastic Holstein that used to sit on the roof of the store. Now, because of "leg problems," Rose noted, Bessy sits next to the deli counter. Lots of customers bring their children to visit her.

"I remember this cow with my parents when we used to visit here," said Rose. It was on the roof — until it fell over.

"Families bring their children here to have a good time with the family," he said. "We try to stay family-oriented."

The ice cream parlor is going through some minor renovations, including changing seat cover colors and some work on the counter top.

But the store remains a dairy. Maybe it has something to do with the milk.

"I'm a heavy milk drinker," he said. "Milk tastes better in a glass bottle."

Store hours are regularly 7 a.m.-8 p.m., and, when the season develops, will be open until 10 p.m. The store is open seven days per week all year long, except for Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.



Visitors to Oley Turnpike Dairy recently stand next to Bessy the cow. In back, Frank Natale with granddaughter Heather, 1 and Gabrielle, 5.

Dairying In Moldova

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TOWANDA (Bradford Co.) — This time each year our dairy industry receives special attention as June is recognized as Dairy Month.

Dairy promotion committees conduct dairy festivals and select county dairy princesses who promote our number one industry.

Pennsylvania dairy families are special people, continually being challenged to produce milk more efficiently.

This past January and February, I volunteered, through Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs, for an assignment working with dairy farmers and a milk handler in Moldova, which is a former republic of the Soviet Union. My partner was Mark Rogers, a Vermont dairy farmer.

As I compare the Pennsylvania dairy industry to the Moldova one, I am more appreciative than ever of the management capabilities of our dairy families.

Moldovan dairy cows average about 10 pounds of milk per cow per day. We have challenges, and we are not receiving enough for our milk, but we are much better off than the Moldovans.

You may ask, "How can they keep their cows from producing more milk?"

They really would like to increase production. Many times we were asked, "How can we increase our cows production?" One can list many reasons as to why the

Moldovan dairy industry is in the position it is today. But, most if not all of the blame rests with the former communist government which stifled progress in all areas.

The cows are of no particular breed and conformation wise resemble our dairy cows of many years ago. As I understand under the communists, dairy farmers were required to use AI. However, the farmers did not have a choice of bulls, with the same bull of questionable genetics, being used for two years. As a result, their genetic progress stopped.

Here in the U.S., we have a wide choice of bulls through AI that enable us to select the genetics which will help increase milk production and our net farm income. Yes, not everyone takes advantage of this opportunity, still persisting in keeping a herd bull which in most situations does little to help increase our income. Those herds are slipping backwards.

The Moldovan dairymen would like out options. We were able to convince those in Moldova to order U.S. dairy semen.

The daily feed intake for a milking cow in Moldova consisted of dry, whole stalks of corn fodder, without corn grain, plus over mature grass hay made in late August.

On most farms, the feeding of grain, salt, minerals and vitamins was non-existent. Very poor grass pasture was utilized in the summer. The cows were very thin.

Occasionally we met a farmer

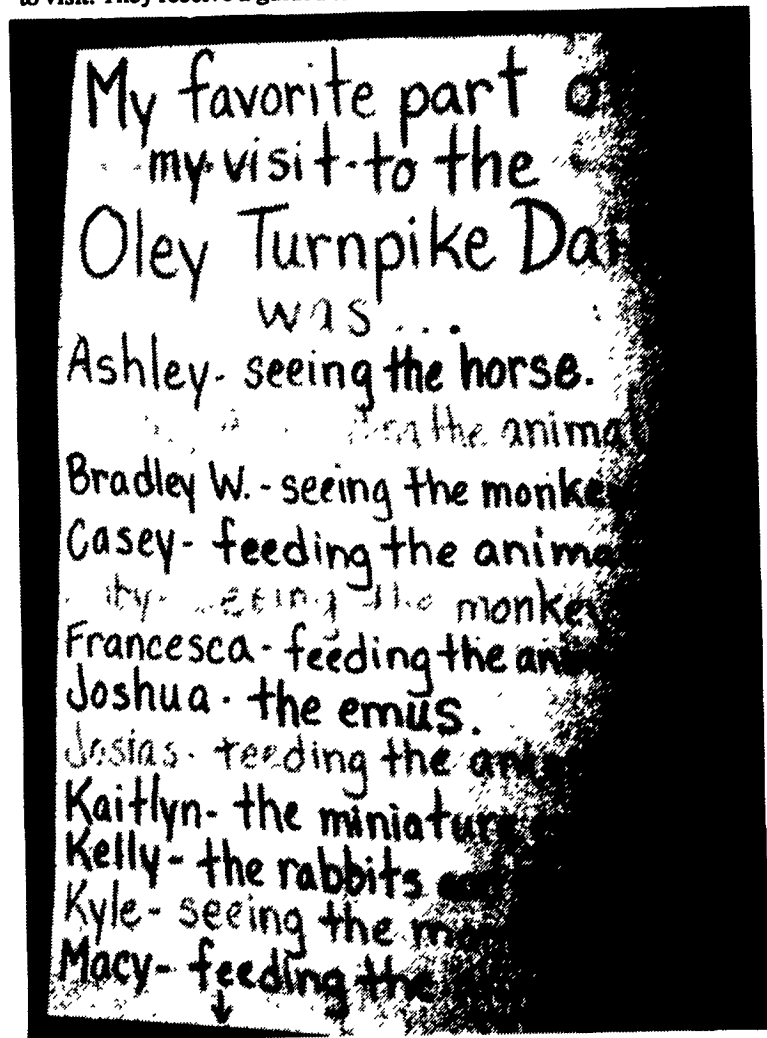
who was feeding a little cornmeal plus sunflower cake, but most cows were eating just enough to maintain their body and not enough to produce much milk.

Services such as forage testing and feed programming for balanced rations were unheard of in Moldova. We developed simple fact sheets to help them learn how to improve their feeding practices. Here in Pennsylvania, we would have a healthier, more profitable dairy industry if the use of these feed programming services was expanded.

Cows were milked by hand even on the state farm we visited. This particular farm had 135 milking cows. Total labor force was 60 full-time employees. Milking supplies were not readily available. The strainer was a piece of cloth. Somatic cell counts were unknown.

The future of the dairy industry in Moldova rests with the private farmers as the larger state run farms are being broken up into small tracts through the granting of land settlements to the people who worked on these state farms.

Through land transfers between individuals, it is hoped that those interested in dairying will be able to accumulate enough land to support a profitable dairy herd. This has already started as some were trying to sell land to Mark and I. I am sure that we were thought of as rich Americans.



School kids leave the marks of their favorite experiences at the dairy.

Graham Pledges \$105,000 For World Dairy Expo Sweepstakes

MADISON, Wis. — Producers can bet on their genetics by being one of the first entrants in the new Bill Graham World Dairy Center International Sweepstakes to be held at World Dairy Expo.

Three-year-olds from all seven breeds will have a chance at \$35,000 in prize monies donated by Bill Graham, cofounder of the World Dairy Center. Additional prize money will be determined by entry fees collected.

The Bill Graham World Dairy

Center International Sweepstakes is a futurity contest where animals entered as calves are not shown until they are three years old. Ayrshire, Brown Swiss, Guernsey, Holstein, Jersey, Milking Shorthorn and Red & White will each have their own futurity and \$35,000 will be distributed, \$5,000 per breed. The sweepstakes will also include the selection of a supreme champion which will receive \$1,000 in additional prize money. Graham has pledged

to provide the \$35,000 in-prize money for three years for a total of \$105,000.

The seven separate futurity classes will take place on the last day of World Dairy Expo, 2001. A \$25 fee is required for entries postmarked by Sept. 8 of this year and a \$50 fee is required for entries postmarked after Sept. 8. Entries will only be accepted until Nov. 1, 1998. For an animal to be eligible for the 2001 sweepstakes it must be born between Sept. 1,

1997 and Aug. 31, 1998.

Entry forms will be available July 1 in the World Dairy Expo premium book. If a producer has been a cattle exhibitor at Expo in the last three years you will receive a premium book in July. If you have not exhibited in the last three years, please call Expo at (608) 224-6455 to have a form sent out with the Expo premium book in July.

World Dairy Expo is held at the Dane County Expo Center in

Madison, Wis. The sweepstakes will become part of Expo, an annual event that draws more than 68,000 dairy producers from around the world. The World Dairy Center is a 5-year-old business park located on the East side of Madison, Wis. The park includes many dairy and agricultural-related organizations. Graham is the land owner and one of the original developers.