

Wayne County Farmer Sees Volunteering As Crucial Part Of His Dairy Operation

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Technically Dix hasn't received the award in person yet, since he was unable to attend last week's meeting due to a scheduling conflict. He expects to have it presented to him during the Wayne County DHIA banquet this fall. The award is a wristwatch that commemorates the time that Dix donates to farm organizations such as the DHIA.

Dix and his wife Daisy milk 50 cows on Ellday Farms just outside of Pleasant Mountain.

Rotationally grazing the herd, Dix maintains a rolling herd average of 18,491 pounds milk, 672 pounds fat, and 604 pounds protein. They own 271 acres, with 35 for intensive grazing and 50 in meadow land. The rest is mostly wooded land.

Dix was one of the first farmers in Wayne County to switch to rotational grazing. Since then, he has hosted several educational meetings on his farm to help other farmers learn more about grazing.

According to Dix, he is still one of only a few who rotationally graze in the county. But more switch to it every year.

"Grazing does take time, and it's not right for every farmer,"

said Dix. "But a lot of the land in Wayne County is unsuitable for other cropping, and it's cheaper to take the cows to the grass than it is to take the grass to the cows."

Dix dispels the myth that grazing is less labor intensive than other types of dairying. The cows on his farm are switched twice a day and on pasture 24 hours a day during the summer. In the winter, he feeds baleage, dry hay, and a concentrated grain mix.

For Dix, grazing is the most profitable way to dairy farm. "I make more money with cows on pasture than I do when they're in the barn," said Dix. "The cows also last longer. Some last 15 to 16 years."

Dix even had one cow who stayed in the herd until she was 21 years old. That cow held Wayne County's lifetime production record at 273,160 pounds for quite a few years. Since then, the record has been broken twice, this year by a cow from another herd producing more than 300,000 pounds of milk.

The 21-year-old cow was classified as very good. She produced one excellent cow and three other offspring that all stood as grand champions of the

Wayne County Fair.

Dix has four excellent cows in his 50-cow herd right now. His B.A.A. is 103.6.

The Dixs have four children who showed animals in 4-H while they were growing up. For seventeen years, Ellday Farms had dairy cattle at the Wayne County Fair. Now, with his grandchildren starting in 4-H, dairy animals from Dix's farm are appearing at the Fair again.

Several years ago, Dix and his family were featured in the Pennsylvania Holstein Profiles because of their quality Holsteins. The family and some of their best animals appeared on the front cover of that magazine. Along with the Holsteins, Dix also has a few Brown Swiss that his grandchildren show.

Dix's children are Darlene, Charles, Karen, and Roger. Roger, a milk truck driver for Dairy Farmers of America, helps out on the farm when he can. Working for an environmental company in southern Pennsylvania, Charles also comes home on the weekends to help. But Ellis and Daisy handle most of the work on the farm.

Karen is a registered nurse, while Darlene and her husband live in New Jersey where he serves in the Navy.



Wearing a suit and tie is something Dix does often because of the many organizations for which he volunteers. Volunteering for these organizations, according to Dix, is the way to make them work.

The Dixs have five grandchildren. Darlene and her husband, Paul Hoffman, have a son named Jacob. Roger and his wife, Kathryn, have two children, Ashley and Adam. Karen and her husband, Don Jonas, also have two children, Will and Kayla.

Dix attributes his passion for getting involved to what he learned while enrolled in vocational agriculture classes and as a 4-H member growing up on

the farm. He is the fifth generation of Dixs to farm in Wayne County. All five generations farmed on separate farms.

Dix and his wife purchased the farm where they live in 1961. Now at 63 years old, he plans to keep farming for some time.

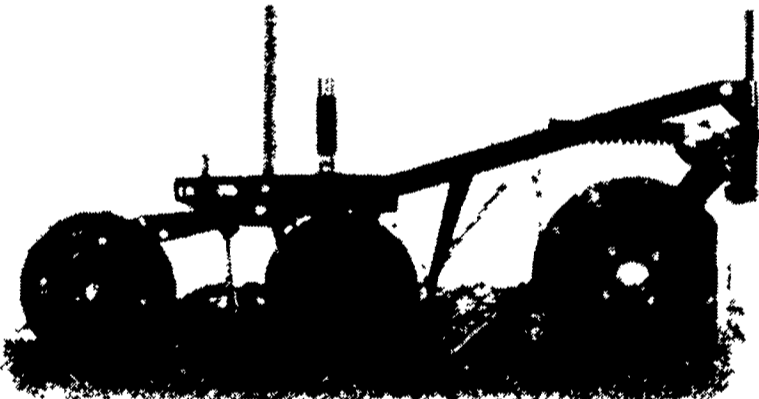
"My grandfather said he would farm until he was 90 years old, and he did," said Dix.

Over the years, Dix has been involved and held offices in

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