

Farmers Market Milk Through Mini Dairy

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Lancaster Farming Staff
QUARRYVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — 28 dairy producers joined together with the goal of marketing their own milk and dairy products through the Susquehanna Mini-Dairy Cooperative. Three years after the coopera-

tive was formed, the farmers are beginning to process and market their milk through a private label called "Cream Lake" at the cooperative's mini-dairy.

The mini-dairy facility is located in Quarryville and will handle 20 to 25,000 pounds of milk per day.

"The farmers banded together and really wanted to do this to increase their bottom line," said Herb Graybill, marketing director for the cooperative.

Mostly Amish located in Lancaster and Dauphin Counties, the farmers pooled money from their monthly milk checks to fund the mini-dairy. When they reached a certain level, they got the remaining financing from a local bank.

"Only 10 of our farmers will be able to send their milk through this facility," said Graybill. "But future expansions are planned to bring in the other farmers at other facilities."

The Quarryville facility will include a 1,100-square-foot retail outlet where the local community can come buy high quality dairy products, including premium ice creams, and specialty bakery products from the Amish families.

"We plan to offer a little bit different atmosphere at our store," said Graybill. "Our emphasis will be on our products. We will also have a convenience bar with coffee, Amish baked goods, and hand-dipped ice cream."

In addition to selling their "Cream Lake" products at the retail store, the cooperative will market them into elite grocery

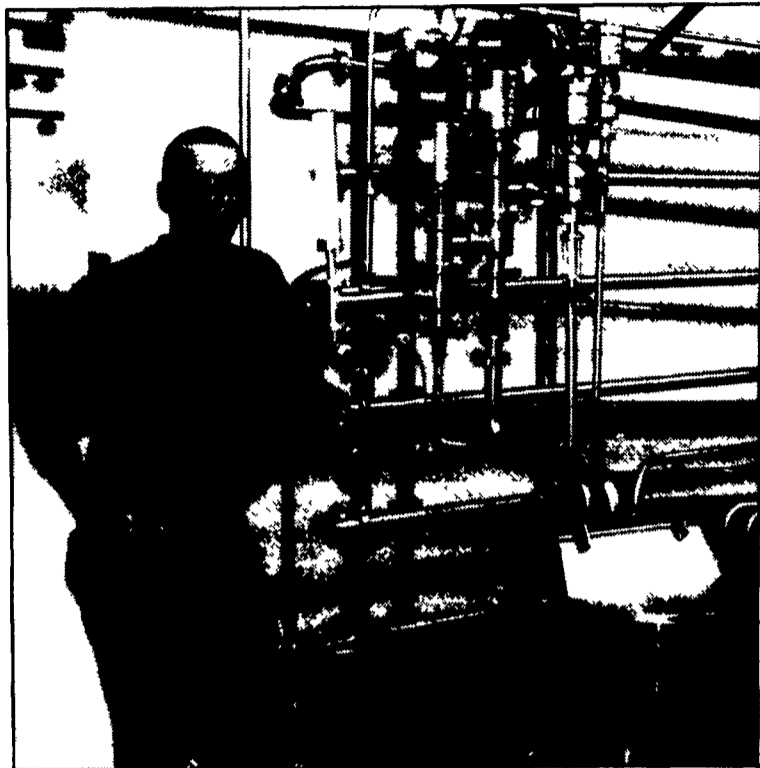


The cooperative's brand name, Cream Lake, originated because of the wholesomeness of the products. According to Graybill, the products emphasize full-flavor nutrition from whole milk dairy products.

stores in the more affluent areas of Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. Home deliveries in urban Lancaster are another possibility.

"Our major market will be in wholesale," said Graybill. "The retail outlet is just a nice convenience for the community."

The mini-dairy facility started processing milk in April. The Turn To A25



Herb Graybill, marketing director for Susquehanna Mini-Dairy Cooperative, hopes to see several other mini-dairy facilities follow the Quarryville plant. Only 10 of the 28 dairy farmers who belong to the cooperative will send milk through the Quarryville plant.

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