

Meet The Purina 'Calf Lady'

Well-Traveled Calf Specialist Brings Lessons Home



Becky May is the new Purina Calf Specialist for the Northeast.

Becky May wants farmers to know she's always available to meet their calf-growing needs

"I tell farmers to go ahead and call me anytime," said the new Purina Mills calf specialist for the Northeast. "I try to be as available to calf and heifer growers as I can be. It's not a normal 9 to 5 job, but agriculture isn't either."

Becky should know. She grew up on Little Pine Farm, a dairy in Morrison's Cove, Bedford County. Her parents Rod and Cathy Carson manage a 130-cow herd there.

She earned a Penn State degree in Marketing and Management while working parttime on the farm, handling tasks such as bookkeeping, payroll and feed pricing.

While maintaining lifelong ties to the family dairy farm, Becky will pursue her new job of "becoming the Northeast Purina expert on calf-raising." Her territory includes Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey.

In preparation for her position as premier calf consultant in the Northeast, Becky traveled this summer to various states to "learn what it is like to raise calves in different parts of the country and what the producers in those areas are facing," she said.

States she visited include Georgia, Texas, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Michigan. She has future plans to see dairy operations in Minnesota, Florida, and Washington State.

"It's a good way to meet calf and heifer growers and get different ideas for running the business," she said. "It's interesting to see the different protocols for raising calves — anything from health standards, to how and when they pick up the calves, to how they bill."

"I got a chance to feed 800 calves with the calf manager in a large herd in New Mexico. It is experiences like this in which you can really learn what these people are facing, and then bring that back home and use those experiences for new ideas and ways of thinking."

Becky's responsibilities at Purina include working directly with the sales team, farm consultants, and dealers who are servicing calf and heifer grower concerns in the region; conducting calf-feeding trials; updating representatives and customers on new calf concerns; and working with 4-H and FFA youth to promote good calf-raising practices.

She also plans to become certified in the near future to perform Professional Dairy Heifer Growth Association walk-throughs on calf operations.

Becky's mission is to help dairy producers gain efficiency and performance while maintaining and enhancing heifer health. Tools she uses to accomplish this include least-cost ration balancing, walk-through evaluations, record evaluations, business planning, and trouble shooting.

Becky is looking forward to providing calf growers with the best possible service. If you have any calf concerns or want to schedule a walk-through for your calf operation, give her a call at (717) 737-4581 ext. 288 or 278.

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