

**Ida's  
Notebook**  
by  
**Ida Risser**



We will probably both remember the winter of 2003. My husband, in the hospital, has round-the-clock nursing service for months and an opportunity to order whatever food he wants. Wait until he comes home and has to eat whatever I cook. Now I cook for myself, and then eat leftovers for a few days.

I rattle around in our house and keep myself busy with the 21st braided rug for a grandchild. There are also lots of flower plants and they need water plus attention for dropped blossoms and

leaves. Our bird feeder has a Downy Woodpecker that is very attractive and I enjoy watching him eat. Church activities and visiting Allen fill the rest of my time.

One or another of our children usually drive a few hours from Delaware or New Jersey on week-ends when they can get away from work. They not only visit their father but sometimes can attend basketball games that the nearby grandchildren play in. Our daughter video taped some games for them to watch later.

This winter we have had a big opossum and a bigger raccoon visit us in our garage. They came in the cat door hunting for food. Even after we removed the birdseed and the catfood, they still came back. They can surely make a grand mess.

One winter we left a big bag of black walnuts outside our cellar door. Then we kept hearing noises on our house roof and animals running across our front porch. It took us a few days to realize that squirrels were emptying the bag. In fact, I caught one in the bag and it surely scrambled out in a hurry. In the country you never know what animal will visit you next.

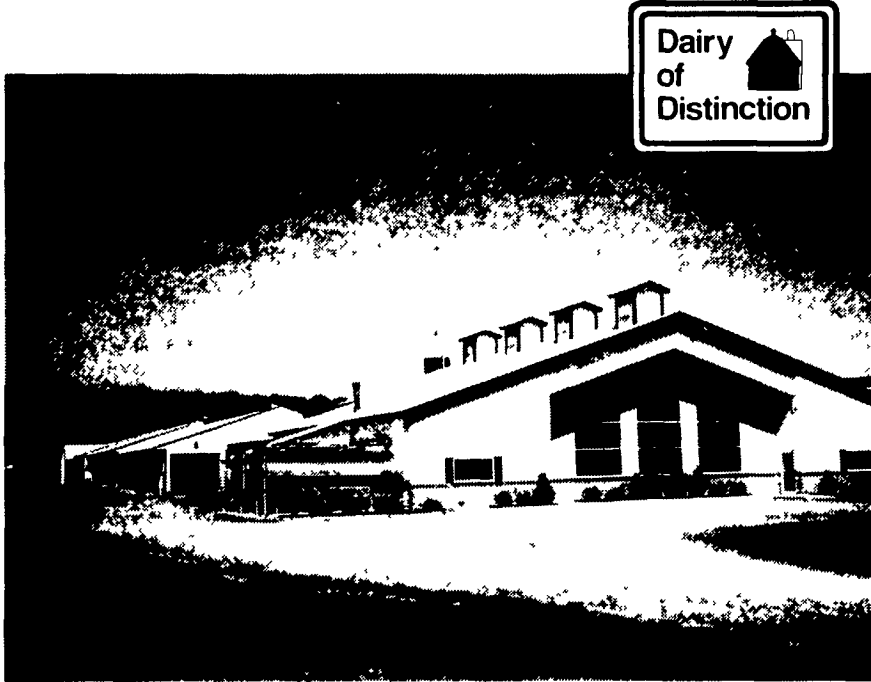
**Apply For Dairy Of Distinction Award By April 15**

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co) — Pennsylvania dairy farms are invited to apply for this year's Dairy of Distinction award from the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program. Applications must be submitted by April 15.

The award is based on the idea that attractive farmsteads enhance consumer confidence in the wholesomeness of milk and stimulate milk sales and public support for the industry. Dairies receiving the highest scores in each of 10 Pennsylvania districts will be awarded an 18- by 24-inch Dairy of Distinction sign to display in front of their farm.

"This program is run by volunteers and recognizes the hard work and dedication of dairy producers who promote a positive image for the dairy industry," said Mike O'Connor, secretary of the Pennsylvania Dairy of Distinction program and professor of dairy science extension in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

Roadside judging will take place in May. Judges will look at factors that can be controlled by the farmer, such as clean and attractively finished buildings, neat landscaping, ditches, roads and lanes; and well-maintained fences. They also will take into account other aspects of the farm, such as cleanliness of animals, the barnyard, feed areas and manure management.



Pictured is the Kulp Family Dairy, Blair County, one of Pennsylvania's Dairies of Distinction for 2002.

Winning farms will be notified in late June. Because this is a yearly award, previous winners are reevaluated each year to see if they are still maintaining excellent standards.

To receive an application, call Mike O'Connor at (814) 863-3913 or e-mail him at HYPERLINKmailto:MOCConnor@psu.edu

Since 1987, Pennsylvania's Dairy of Distinction Program has recognized more than 700 dairy farms. The Pennsylvania program is part of the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program, which also includes New York, New Jersey, and Vermont. Dairies in these states can contact the program secretary in their state for applications.

**HOW IS YOUR FARM SCORED?**

Awards will be based upon neatness, good maintenance, and other factors, which can be controlled by the farmer. Attractive background scenery should not be weighed heavily in judging. All judging observations should be made from a vehicle at one or more points on an adjacent public highway (or if farm is off the road, the nearest lane). Judging should give equal consideration to old wood construction and new construction of metal or concrete block.

The award program may be used for subsequent advertising or promotion activities for dairy products or dairy farming. Farmers who apply for awards agree that if selected they will cooperate with these activities and make all reasonable efforts to maintain both the exterior and interior of their properties in an acceptable condition.

**HOW THE JUDGING WORKS**

Judging teams will visit the farms during the month of May. Farms will be judged each year as the award is presented on an annual basis. Any dairy failing to maintain appearance standards will be asked to remove their sign. The Dairy of Distinction signs remain the property of the committee, not the property of the dairy farmer. All farms must achieve a compliance score of 90 percent on their Dairy of Distinction score card. Your cooperative or milk handler will be contacted to approve your milk quality.

**RULES FOR THE DAIRY OF DISTINCTION AWARD**

1. The Dairy of Distinction sign remains the property of the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program Committee (NEDFBP).
2. The post and bracket shall be supplied by and maintained by the dairy farmer. NEDFBP suggests that a wood post 4 x 4 x 12 or iron pipe 2 x 12 be used. Posts or pipe should be installed and maintained in true vertical position with 8" above ground. Top of the bracket should be lower than six inches from the top of the post. In addition, NEDFBP suggests that the sign be mounted in a frame to provide additional stability.
3. The sign shall be displayed in front of the dairy at roadside. An attractive post and bracket, or other frame shall be used to display the sign. No more than three signs should be displayed from the sign frame or post, and all shall be of a style, general size and quality comparable to the Dairy of Distinction sign. The sign should be secured on all sides to avoid wind damage.
4. Signs shall not be moved to other premises. New owners of a Dairy of Distinction farm must apply to retain the sign.
5. Replacement of damaged signs shall be at the discretion of the committee.
6. No producer shall be charged with scoring or sign expenses.
7. The judges' decision will be final.
8. Judging will take place between May 1 and May 31.
9. Farms awarded a Dairy of Distinction sign in previous years will be judged between April 1 and April 30. If they do not qualify they will be rejudged between May 1 and May 31 so they have the opportunity to keep the sign.
10. Farms that do not requalify will return the sign to their regional Dairy of Distinction Committee.

**Dairy of Distinction  
2003 Pennsylvania Application**

**PURPOSE OF PROGRAM**

Attractive dairy farms give the consumer greater confidence in the wholesomeness of milk and stimulate milk sales which encourages public support of the dairy industry. The award gives recognition to the dairy farmer for maintaining a well-kept farmstead.

**ELIGIBILITY**

All Northeast dairy farms producing milk for sale are invited to submit an application for the award. Dairies receiving the 10 highest scores in each of the 21 districts will receive an 18" x 24" Dairy of Distinction sign to be displayed in front of their farm.

**APPLICATION**

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Farm Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Cooperative or Handler (where you ship your milk, be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

(Your Handler will be contacted to approve your milk quality)

Location (driving directions for judging team) \_\_\_\_\_

County (where your farm is located) \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby apply to the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Committee to have my dairy scored in accordance with the rules of the program for the purpose of obtaining a Dairy of Distinction sign to be displayed on my premises.

(No producer will be charged for scoring or sign expense.)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Owner/Operator \_\_\_\_\_

Return application by April 15 to:  
**Michael O'Connor**  
Department of Dairy and Animal Science  
324 Henning Building  
Penn State University  
University Park, PA 16802

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