

Milky Way Farm: 40-Plus Years Of Direct Marketing

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TROY (Bradford Co.) — The Fourth of July was hot last year, so a four-hour round trip in an air conditioned vehicle seemed like a good idea.

spoke of long hours, keeping the shop open initially until 11 p.m. every day except Christmas. Keeping good help, he said, has always been a worry (and a salvation).

“You can’t play any golf” in this profession, he said.

And if keeping the ship running steady were not hard
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Headed for an intensive grazing program on Milky Way Farm, this spring crop of calves displays its genetic diversity.

“And there’ll be ice cream at the farm when we get there,” I told the kids to coax them into submission (they thought a swimming pool was a better idea). Dad prevailed this time, and we set out down the road to Milky Way Farm near Troy, Bradford County.

When Kim Seeley Of Milky Way first announced that three generations of Seeleys were planning to celebrate 40 years in the direct-marketing dairy business on July 4, he also expressed concern that the turnout would be low, given people’s holiday plans.

“But we opened on the Fourth of July in 1962, and we’re going to celebrate on the Fourth just the same,” he said.

That kind of firm resolve has always figured into the Seeley family business plan. An interview with Milky Way founder and Kim’s father Lewis Seeley indicated just how determined this unusual family has been through the years.

“Forty years ago I was president of the local chapter of a large milk co-op,” Lewis said. “I could see the writing on the wall — the co-op’s pricing structure was not going to put our four kids through college.”

So Lewis and his wife Marie took matters into their own hands, and actually put their fate (or faith) in the hands of their neighbors and friends who they thought would buy fresh, local milk. They built it, and they came.

In those early days, the Seeleys at times sold 300 to 400 gallons per day at a price that made sense. And yes, all four of the Seeley children graduated from college (Penn State), paid for in full by the family business.

Lewis worries that their accomplishment of staying in business for four decades might look too easy to the casual observer.

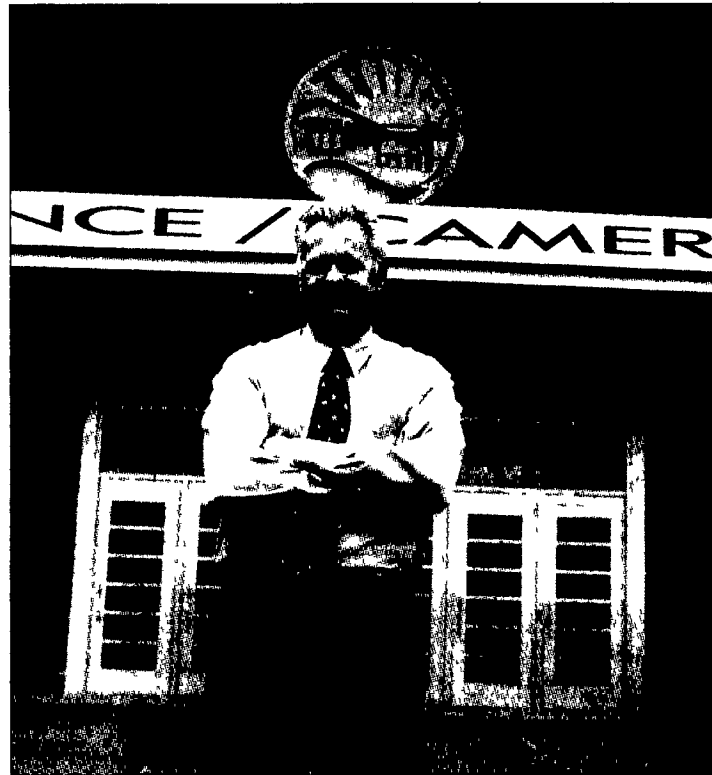
However, “the situation was never very rosy,” he said. “There were problems right from the start.”

The word most used by Mr. Seeley throughout the interview was “stress.” He

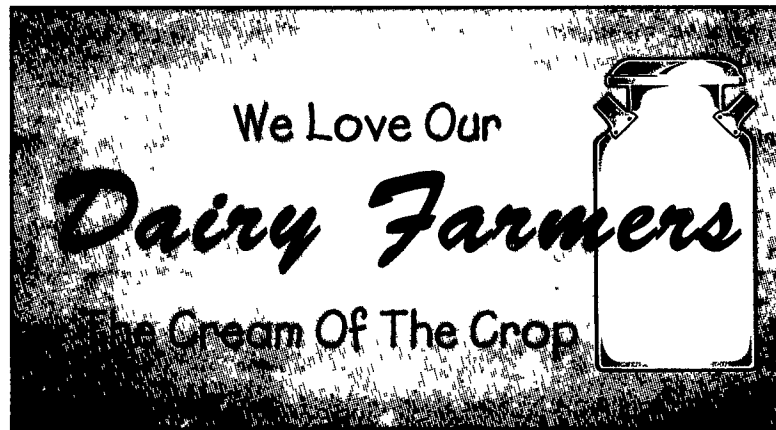


Penn State ag student Shon Seeley tends to twin belt-ed heifers born on the 4th of July, just in time for the Milky Way Farm 40th anniversary celebration.

Neilsen Named Farm Show Director



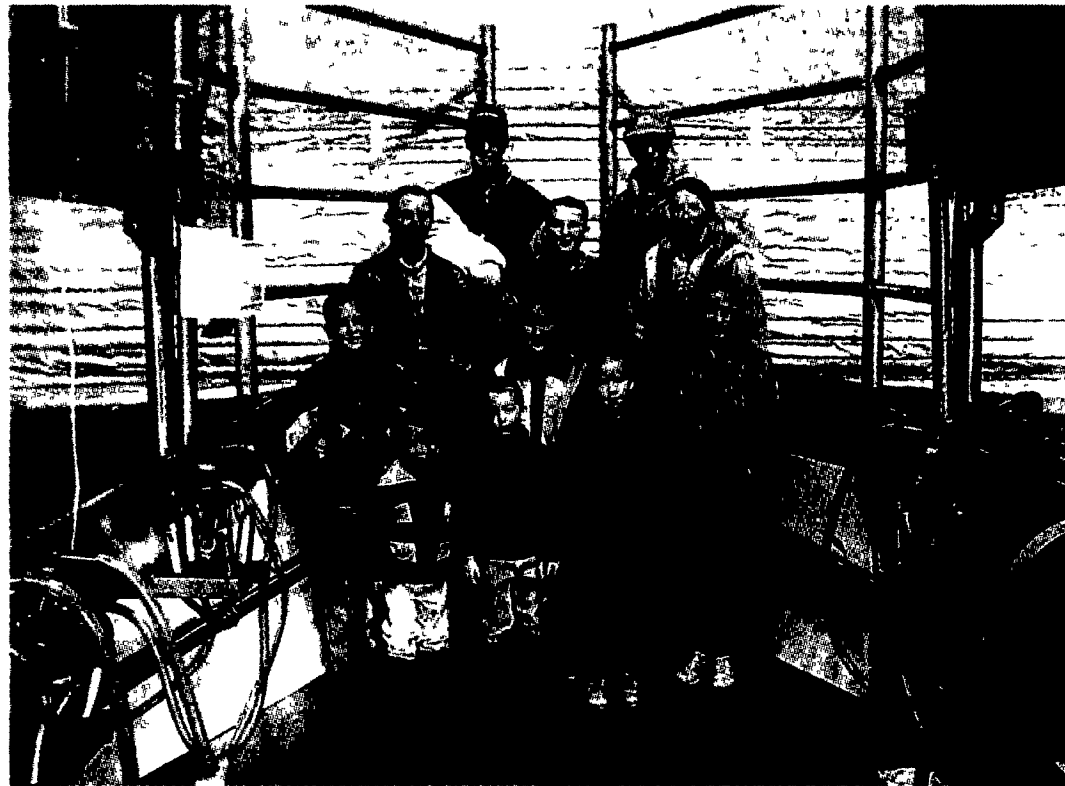
HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Ed Nielsen has been named the new Pennsylvania Farm Show director. Nielsen has 20 years of strategic planning experience with various organizations and aims to bring a “world-class marketing plan” to the Farm Show Complex. More on Nielsen is scheduled for next week’s *Lancaster Farming*. Photo by Dave Lefever



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During this “June is Dairy Month,” we congratulate the Dale & Paul Hess Jr. families of Drumore, Pa. and give them our best wishes on the completion of their new Double 8 Rapid Exit Milking Center, featuring Westfalia/Surge Omni-Analyst detachers. These two brothers’ farming operation is nestled in the river hills of southern Lancaster County. We at Fisher & Thompson Inc. wish to take this opportunity to thank them for the privilege to be part of their expansion program.



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