



Willow Bend Farm

Spring Hope Dairy & Bonna Terra Farm

A PARTNERSHIP OF PEOPLE & NATURE.

Fall 2016

Dear Friends and Neighbors,



The weather pendulum was swung fully in 2016. Last year, we were challenged with too much rain, and this year, not nearly enough, although we have been blessed to receive some in recent weeks. Needless to say, Mother Nature always has a way of keeping farmers on their toes! We hope you all have enjoyed your summer and find yourselves with a bounty of blessings this harvest season. We enjoy offering you this newsletter, which features stories from George that we hope will help you all understand our family farms better and feel more confident in your neighbors and the product we produce! Thanks for reading!

< Our drought stricken corn. Not a great crop, but better than some others in the area.

-Our Farm Families

Finding a Good Milk Market

This is the first of a two part series on milk marketing, written by George Mueller. This first article focuses on the history of milk marketing. Part two will be focus on milk marketing today.

The milk industry has come a long way. My grandfather bottled spring-cooled raw milk on the Budd Farm in Hyde Park and delivered it to housewives in the wee morning hours in Poughkeepsie. Grandpa's horse knew the route and would go around the block and meet Grandpa as he cut through back yards delivering the bottles. When done, Grandpa would tell the horse to go home and he'd immediately fall asleep. When the jiggling of the wagon stopped, Grandpa would wake up to find they were back at the farm. He then would un-harness his horse and feed him his oats as the reward for a "job well done".

Milk plants were everywhere! In the 40's, every village had a small milk plant, and pasteurization of milk had become mandatory due to brucellosis, undulant fever and other raw milk borne diseases. The Canandaigua area had five small milk plants bottling milk; today there are two in all of western New York, both are Upstate Niagara plants.

Willow Bend needed a milk market. When I was first in partnership with my Uncle Norval, we'd buy yearling heifers for \$150, put them with a bull, and sell them for \$300. However, in 1960 there was too much milk and our 80 heifers were only worth the \$150 we paid for them. So we decided to become dairy farmers. After spending \$5,000 on a milk house, \$3,600 on a bulk milk tank and a little concrete in the barnyard; we were ready to milk 80 cows. We decided to ship our milk to Dairymen's League at their Sealtest plant in Mac Dougall.

Volume has always been one reason for our success. We started with 80 cows and quickly grew to 120 when the neighbors all had 15-30 cows. Back then, there were 34 farms in Manchester shipping milk from a total of 900 cows. Today, there are only three dairy farms left (Wil-O-Crest, Reedland Farm and us) with a total of 2,500+ cows, making Manchester a major dairy farming town.

Finger Lakes Dairy was formed. Around 1970, four local dairies decided to merge due to small size and limited sewer systems, calling themselves Finger Lakes Dairy. The new merger required them to seek additional milk, so I left the Dairymen's League after 14 years to ship directly to Finger Lakes. It turned out to be a very fortunate move. By dumb luck, my desire to market our milk directly to the processor saved Willow Bend from heavy assessments. Luck plays an important role in farming, which you'll hear more about in our next issue!



CONTACT US ANYTIME!

Please let us know if you have any questions about our farm, or if there is anything we can do to be better neighbors.

Business Office

George & Mary Lue Mueller

315-462-3414

Willow Bend Farm

John Mueller

315-462-3177

Spring Hope Dairy

Kevin & Barb Nedrow

585-261-8182

Bonna Terra Farm

John Mueller

315-462-3177

Jim Powers

585-727-9564

Check us out online at
willowbendfarms.com
springhopedairy.com

Royalty Among Us!



Proud of our very own calf raiser, Lindsey Weykman, who is representing the dairy industry and touting the benefits of milk as the 2016-17 Ontario County Dairy Princess.

U-Pick Pumpkins



It's our first year growing pumpkins, and the crop looks really great! Come check out our new pumpkin patch across from the Canandaigua Outlet at 1099 County Rd 7, Shortsville. Call 315-462-6194 or 315-462-3177 for more information. Hours:

Sept. 17th - Oct. 16th: Sat. 9am - 4pm
Sun. 12pm - 4pm
Oct. 21st - Oct. 30th : Fri. 4pm - 6pm
Sat. 9am - 4pm

Chapter Four. Willow Bend...Through the Years. As told by George Mueller.

A “would be” farmer looks for a wife.

In farming, having a wife to share the good times and the tough times with is almost a necessity. This was certainly an important part of my “Grand Plan” to become a farmer. But after four years at Cornell, I had come up empty handed. I blamed it on being shy and on the ratio of one female for every five male students. I did go on a couple of “blind dates” at Wells College and Cortland State College; that too was a total failure. The only other thing to do was to go to the Aurora Inn and drink beer...and since I am a “teetotaler”, that was not my “cup of tea”.

I had deep concerns. I knew my assignment was to make this world better by having children and doing a good job raising them. The Lord’s Prayer was preaching to me every Sunday: “Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in Heaven.” A good farm wife was the key. But I saw none on the horizon. And with only every third Sunday off, my horizon was limited.

Then one summer day, my fortunes began to perk up. A neighbor farmer’s daughter, by the name of Mary Lue Morgan, stopped by to play tennis with the Smith daughter. I was introduced and began to dream that she might be my answer. I managed to arrange a date with her

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1378 King Road
Clifton Springs, NY 14432

before she went away to college at Syracuse. We went to Silver Lake square dancing and had a good time. Square dancing sure beats drinking beer.

But my plans were quickly shattered. Young Miss Morgan had seen how hard her mother had worked as a farmer’s wife with long hours of washing and candling eggs in the basement, and feeding hired men and harvest crews at lunch time. Young Miss Morgan was off to Syracuse to get a taste of the glamorous (and easier) city life. I was not about to change my dreams of being a farmer.

Three years later in 1957, I was stationed as a first lieutenant in a lonely outpost with the 57th Field Artillery, just south of the demilitarized zone in peacetime South Korea.

Many of the other men had girls back home whom they planned to marry when they returned, and whom send chocolate chip cookies that were pure crumbs when they arrived. Then one day a package arrived for me from Miss Morgan with Rice Crispy Cookies that were in perfect condition! Miss Morgan had taken a good look at city life and decided perhaps a farmer’s life would be okay.

I visited Miss Morgan at her college dorm upon my return in May of 1957, and the hug I received indicated my search might be over.

Next chapter: A slow courtship.



A young Miss Mary Lue Morgan

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Less than 2% of the U.S. population is involved in farming.
The average farmer in the U.S. feeds 154 people.