



Willow Bend Farm Spring Hope Dairy & Bonna Terra Farm

A PARTNERSHIP OF PEOPLE & NATURE.
Fall 2017

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Even though we're in our 60th year of farming, Mother Nature still provides endless challenges. Last year, not enough water. This year, too much. Yet, our experience is helping us navigate these challenges. Time will tell how well we are doing.

We hope you enjoy receiving our newsletter. We enjoy sharing our passion for farming and hope this type of communication helps you understand our profession - and passion - better. This issue we've included articles on the eclectic cow diet, George's update on milk marketing and his latest history installment, as well as meeting Ramiro. If you ever have any questions about the farm or milk in general, please don't hesitate to reach out!

-Our Farm Families

The Cow: The Great Recycler

What do all these items have in common: chocolate, beer, yogurt, cotton, ethanol, grapes, cabbage, green beans, whiskey, apples, beets, oranges, potatoes and peanuts? Believe it or not, the manufacturing process for all these, creates by-products that cows consume, providing them with a healthy diet while preventing waste.



For example, on our farm, whey that is left over from making yogurt and cheese gets delivered and stored in large tanks to mix with our cow feed. Whey is very rich in protein which is needed by the cows to make milk. Rather than over load the waste water sewage systems, we are finding a good use for the whey. Also, rather than let cotton seed go to waste, our amazing cows, with their four stomachs, can digest the fuzzy seed and obtain protein and fat from it. Another food source is wet brewer's grain and wet distiller's grain, which are rich in protein, are left over from making beer, whiskey, and ethanol and are fed to cows. This step saves the expense of drying the by-product or sending by-products to a landfill.

Then, after a cow gets all the nutrition out of these by-products, she passes it onto our land, in the form of manure. The manure helps the soil remain healthy and productive, while reducing the need for chemical fertilizers.

So, if you're looking for a role model for the 3 R's (Reduce, Re-use & Recycle), just visit a dairy farm and thank a cow. And next time you taste some refreshing apple juice, think about how it nourished you, the leftover apple pomace nourished a cow and that by-product (manure) nourished the soil; to help even more apple trees to grow. What a cycle! What a re-cycle!

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
1378 King Road, Clifton Springs, NY 14432
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 **Jim Powers**
315-462-3177 585-727-9564

Check us out online
willowbendfarms.com
springhopedairy.com
bonnaterrafarm.com

Pumpkins & Flowers FOR SALE

And baby calves to pet too!
Stop by and see us at the Milk Pail! Open every Saturday from 9am-4pm and Sunday 12pm-4pm, until October 29th. Find us at 1099 County Rd 7, Shortsville.



The Flood of WNY Milk May be Finding a Home

As reported in our last newsletter, western New York is awash in milk and much skim milk is being dumped after the valuable butterfat is removed. Thus, the farmers in our Upstate Niagara Co-op called a special meeting and asked our management to be "aggressive and bold" in their effort to solve the problem. How much more aggressive could we, the directors of Upstate, be? Our co-op was running 24/7 to process, package, and move additional product. Upstate had already built a yogurt plant in West Seneca, purchased a yogurt plant in North Lawrence, and a bottling plant in Williamsport, PA. These expenditures have moved a large amount of milk. However, we also were selling surplus milk for \$2-4 under the market and paying huge sums to ship it to as far away as Wisconsin. Some action was needed.

So at the last minute, Upstate took a look at the Polly-O cheese



plant in Campbell that had already notified their workers that the plant would be closing. With Upstate as a prospective buyer, there was a flurry of activity. The State did not want to lose the business nor the jobs. New York State came forth with a generous grant. The local IDA provided 10 years of a significant real estate tax abatement. And Kraft was delighted to have a reputable firm to continue to process products that Kraft had a good profitable market for. For a modest price, the plant was purchased, and on August 8, 2017 Upstate Farms Cheese, LLC was born.

On August 14, Upstate began producing ricotta, mozzarella, and string cheese. With the help of good staff retained at Campbell, coupled with some of our own staff, we are quickly learning how to make cheese, and our co-op is certainly being "bold and aggressive". Time will tell if it is enough. Stay tuned.

The Backbone of our Farm: The Milkers

Ramiro Jimenez is one of 30 employees who has put in endless hours doing the very difficult job of milking cows. Ramiro came to Willow Bend Farm five years ago. Previously, he worked in a vineyard. He has eight siblings, two of which also work at Willow Bend Farm. His parents live in Mexico. He also has two young children, Rockfelo and Quetzalli. When he is not on the farm, he enjoys spending time with his family.

Recently, Ramiro has taken on new herd health responsibilities, tending to the other needs of the cows. Ramiro says, "I am happy with the changes. The best part of my job is taking care of the new calves." He was given this opportunity because he is flexible and always ready to take on whatever new task is given to him. Ramiro hopes to remain at Willow Bend Farm for many years. And Willow Bend Farm hopes Ramiro will stay for many years. Good, hard working, dedicated workers are the mainstay of our business.



**Thank You
Ramiro!**

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

When I left you in my last newsletter it was the summer of 1957 and I was courting Miss Morgan and I was beginning a farm partnership as a 1/5 partner with Uncle Norval (2/5) and 72-year old farm manager, Emmet Plyter (2/5). We each kept our own books. I had \$4,000 saved up as an ROTC lieutenant in the army stationed in peace time Korea. The summer went well. We raised ear corn and red kidney beans, alfalfa hay and dairy heifers.

Mr. Plyter was on the cutting edge of farming. We had a 4-row corn planter when most of the neighbors had a 2-row. We had a modern side delivery rake instead of a dump rake. Mr. Plyter had rigged up a 55 gallon barrel on the back of our Farmall "M" with a ten foot boom to spray 2-4D herbicide on the corn (today we have two self-propelled sprayers each with 90 foot booms). Controlling weeds with a once-over weed spray was a new concept. The standard practice was to fit the ground 3 times and cultivate the corn 4 times to control the weeds.

Mr. Plyter was an excellent farmer. At 6am we would be out in the fields working while the neighbors were still getting up. He was deathly afraid of catching cold and wore a wool union suit (full length wool underwear) all summer long. Perhaps it was the memory of the many influenza deaths in 1919 that provided his incentive.

After the autumn harvests of 1957 my work load slowed down so I took a job at a plastic factory called Kordite (later Mobil Chemical) in Macedon. Factory work was tough. I worked the 12 midnight to 8am shift. It took forever each morning for the sun to come up so I could go home and get some sleep. My goal was to work hard so I could buy Miss Morgan an engagement ring. My winter in a factory further convinced me that farming was an excellent career choice.



The young Mary Lue Morgan and George Mueller on his Farmall M.

Meanwhile, courting Miss Morgan was going well. In the autumn of 1957, she entered her senior year in Home Economics at Syracuse so I often made the trip to Syracuse to see her. Those visits were the bright spots in my life. One Sunday afternoon when Mary Lue and I came out of the movie theater there was over a foot of snow on the ground and it was still snowing hard. I quickly took Mary Lue back to her cottage dorm, kissed her goodbye, and headed for the New York State Thruway. THE THRUWAY WAS CLOSED! So on to plan "B. I took the back roads back. Luckily, my 1950 Plymouth sedan kept chugging along and managed to stay on the road. When I arrived at the plastic factory in Macedon that night I was about the only one on my shift that showed up. I could have spent the whole evening back in Syracuse with Miss Morgan.

Next Chapter: Marriage proposed, accepted...and then postponed.



More milk is produced today with 9 million cows in the U.S. than with 26 million in 1944.