National Farmers Union

FARMERS UNION CELEBRATES

DAIRY







June is National Dairy Month and in Wisconsin, fondly known as America's Dairyland, it gives us a chance to shine a light on one of our most beautiful agricultural industries. Within the Wisconsin Farmers Union, we have members who run dairies of all types and sizes -- conventional and organic, big and small, from beginning farmers to farms that have been in the same family for generations.

Tom Moos and Deb Jakubek milk 40 cows on their organic grass fed dairy farm outside New Auburn, WI. For the last 2.5 years, Tom and Deb have been milking the herd once a day and utilizing nurse cows to cut down on our labor investment. This approach has allowed Tom and Deb to be more active throughout the year in activities for their children- Colton, 18, McKenna, 15 and Austin, 7. Being 100% grass-fed also lessens their workload since they do not have to worry about planting and harvesting row crops. "This also allows us to enjoy time away from the farm, riding our Harley or for a weekend away enjoying the beautiful scenery of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa." Jakubek added.

This farm is truly a family farm; everyone pitches in to help when needed. Tom's dad helps to move bales and spread manure, his cousin does field work and both their moms keep the yard and buildings looking nice. Tom's brother feeds or moves cows when they are away from home. Deb's daughter, McKenna enjoys milking, working with her show calves and has now completed her tractor safety course so will be helping with more field work this year.

Deb acknowledges the many challenges of dairy farming; including fluctuating markets, farm/family balance and general isolation on the farm make life hard as well. "We depend heavily on our member organizations of Wisconsin Farmers Union, National Farmers, Organic Valley and Grassworks to alleviate these challenges and make farming better for everyone involved."

So what keeps Deb and Tom motivated? According to Deb, "Knowing that we are doing our best to steward the land and animals in our care while raising our kids on the farm to learn the value of hard work and dedication. Our love of the land, cattle and lifestyle make the hard days bearable and the good days better."

Tom Moos and Deb Jakubek, Wisconsin Farmers Union Members