

Open House/Drive Yourself Tour

*Visit dairy farms that have transitioned
from tie-stall to free stall/parlor*

Tuesday, August 19, 2014

10:30 am - 3:00 pm

While most people would love to see the countryside dotted with lots of small dairy farms that we were accustomed to seeing years ago, the trend towards fewer but larger dairy farms that has been ongoing continues today. Many factors have contributed to this trend.

Smaller herds have historically been housed in tie-stall barns, while farms with larger herds have invested in free stall housing along with a milking parlor for the increased labor efficiency. (Full Time Equivalent = 55 hrs/week) Making the transition from tie-stall to a free stall/parlor can be difficult. It's not a change for everyone. However, for many smaller dairy farms to continue operation by the next generation, additional income is frequently needed. Often times the value of the farm makes up a substantial portion of the older generation's retirement. To buy the farm and to have their own income, this most often means that the farm needs to grow in size.



To highlight how others have made this change work for them, we have organized an open house/drive-it-yourself tour of several farms in our region. It is a day that is open to farmers, their advisors, and their families (not for the general public) to talk to others who have made this change. We have provided the address for each participating farm. Use your GPS, MapQuest, Google Maps, or an old fashioned road map and feel free to visit whichever and as many of these farms as you wish during the time they have their doors open to visitors. Pick their brains, ask them questions, and determine if this may be a strategy you wish to follow. Some have done it in stages. Others have made the change via a low cost approach by using welding shop parlors, used equipment, and by placing the parlor in the old tie-stall barn building. Some have built totally new complexes.

There are certainly many other farms in our region that have made this change. This day is simply designed to provide an opportunity to visit with a few who have done so. This open house/tour is not high tech like Robotic Milkers, but it's a change that many more people can afford to implement. There is no charge and no registration. Hope to see you along the way on August 19th.

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## Chenango County

### **Kip & Stacy Law**

220 Charles Merrill Rd., Sherburne, NY 13460

*This transition may still be in progress when the tour date arrives. Construction of the 98 stall 3 row sand bedded free stall barn to replace the tie-stall barn began in October 2013. Cows entered the new barn mid June 2014. 75 cows entered the new barn; heifers freshened, purchased some cows. Total number now is at 95. A new double 8 welding shop parallel parlor is currently being installed in the old tie-stall barn while cows are milked in shifts in the rest of the tie-stall barn. Used milking equipment and lots of farm labor kept costs down. Cows are up 12 lbs./cow/day so far since moving into the new barn!*

### **Balsam View Dairy ~ Brian & Harold Newton**

187 Fultner Rd., McDonough, NY 13801

*The tie stall barn was handling 82 cows in 1992 and the herd average was around 22,000. The first free stall barn was built in 1994. Cows were milked in a number of flat barn variations for the next several years. They added more free stall barn space and installed a double 10 welding shop parallel parlor in 2010. In 2011 an additional bulk tank was added to the milkhouse that had not been modified since 1964. Current production today on 199 cows is nearly 28,000 per cow! They recently received a Bicentennial Award, as the farm was originally established by Daniel II and Lossa Newton in 1809!*

*(participating farms continued on pages 2-3)*

## **Herkimer County**

### **Foster's Acres ~ William, Rose, & Billy Foster + Melissa & Randy Hawkins**

270 Old City Rd. (do not turn from Rt. 28 until you are at the school), Newport, NY 13416

*In 2008 106 cows were managed in the old tie stall barn. The herd average was 23,750. The tie stall barn needed to be renovated and the next generation wanted to enter the business. The decision was made to expand by transitioning to a free stall/parlor facility. Their free stall barn was built in 2008. Cows were milking in the tie stall for a year. A double 8 Surge Herringbone milking parlor was installed in an addition that was attached to the old tie stall barn. Today there are 199 cows with a herd average of 27,675. A new larger bulk tank was recently installed to handle the additional milk production.*

## **Montgomery County**

### **Robby & Shannon Dygert**

243 Dygert Rd., Palatine Bridge, NY 13428

*65 cows were milked in a tie stall barn prior to the transition. They averaged around 70 lbs./cow/day. Milk sold per Full Time Equivalent was around 800,000 lbs. A new sand bedded freestall barn was built in 2011, followed by a welding shop milking parlor (parlor and holding area built inside the old tie-stall barn) in 2012. Today the 115 cows average around 80 lbs./cow/day and milk sold per FTE is around 1,200,000 lbs. Much of the construction was done by family labor. Most of the milking equipment is used low cost equipment that was acquired over time, as the parlor was being planned.*

### **Glen Meadows Farm ~ Clark, Dennis, & William Egelston**

200 Egelston Rd., Fultonville, NY 12072

*This long established Jersey Dairy had 70 cows in 2009. They also grew their own corn grain, sold hay, sold surplus corn, and also sold breeding stock. When the next generation wanted to enter the business they decided to expand the dairy. A barn used to store hay was converted to a freestall barn and an additional freestall barn was built. A low cost welding shop parlor was added (inside the old tie-stall barn) during the winter of '09 – '10. Today they have 240 cows. They now ship around 4.4 million pounds of high component milk (4.7% fat, 3.75% protein). Cows per FTE went from 23 cows to 61 cows today.*

### **Mohawk Oaks Farm ~ John Kellett**

327 River Rd., Fort Plain, NY 13339

*This dairy has 75 cows. A greenhouse style 4 row drive thru sand bedded freestall barn was built in 2002 to replace housing in the old tie-stall barn. The dairy converted to organic production and first sold organic milk in August of 2004. A double 8 swing milking parlor was installed inside the old tie-stall barn during the 2005 – 2006 period. To help keep cost down he utilized the old milking units he already had in the milking parlor. Pasture is utilized as the major forage source along with a partial TMR that is fed in the freestall barn.*

### **Panton Place Farm LLC ~ Tim and Joe Panton**

173 Rogge Rd., Amsterdam, NY 12010 (located just outside Hagaman, but they have an Amsterdam mailing address)

*This dairy milked 45 cows in 2003. To bring the next generation into the business a herd expansion was planned. A 3-row sand bedded freestall barn with a covered feed drive through was built in 2004. A mixer wagon was purchased to facilitate feeding in the freestall barn. Milking was done for 5 years in a flat barn pipeline arrangement. A used double 6 herringbone style parlor was installed in 2009. An aggressive internal herd growth effort now has the herd at 90 cows! Since moving into the new barn they have experienced lower SCC levels, increased milk components, and less teat injuries.*

## Otsego County

### **CoBar Dairy, LLC ~ Mike, Tammy, Jacob, & Jed Barnes**

999 County Highway 1, Mount Upton, NY 13809 (with google maps type in "42.379371,-75.400116" as the address for the farm)

(From Rt. 8 in Rockdale you would go east on County Route 40, in a very short distance you cross the Unadilla River into Otsego County. The route number changes to County Highway 1 in Otsego County; the farm is a short distance on your right)

*In 2009 this herd was at 80 total cows in the old tie-stall barn. Sons wanted to come back to the farm, so an expansion plan was put into place. They switched cows into the tie-stall barn to milk them while they grew cow numbers. A completely new facility was built nearby. It had 222 freestalls along with a double 10 parallel milking parlor. 140 cows moved into that facility September of 2011. In late 2013 a 77 stall addition was built. Today the herd is size is 335 cows. Production now ranges from 80 to 85 lbs., up from 60 to 65 lbs. in the old facility. Milk shipped is around 925,000 lbs./FTE. Prior to any change it was 425,000 lbs./FTE.*

### **Woodlawn Dairy Farm LLC ~ Tim, Sue, Mike, & Meghan Cantwell**

201 Dugan Rd., Richfield Springs, NY 13439

*Fire struck the old 86 stall tie-stall barn in March of 2000. The herd was saved, but the barn was totally destroyed. A completely new 4-row drive thru freestall/parlor facility was built on a new site with the cows moving in during December of 2000. The parlor is a double 10 parallel. The current herd is now at 170 cows. In 2005 a new heifer facility was built to accommodate the growing herd. Production (in the tie-stall) was nearly 21,000 lbs./cow. Today it is nearly 27,000 lbs. (2X milking). Labor efficiency improved from 34 cows/man to 49 cows/man. Total milk shipped went from 1.65 million pound to 4.5 million pounds/year.*

## Schoharie County

### **Proud Castle Farm ~ Carl, Faye, Mark, & Nan Stolzenburg**

147 Stolzenburg Rd., Berne, NY 12023

*Prior to 1995 this herd numbered 70 cows in the old tie-stall barn. That's when they built a 110 stall 3 row freestall barn with a covered drive along feed alley. They milked cows in a flat barn style parlor in the old tie-stall barn building until 2003 when they decided to install a double 8 welding shop parallel parlor (again, inside the old tie-stall barn building). This change made it easier for them to switch to 3X milking. Today they have 135 cows and they ship around 26,000 lbs./cow/year through the bulk tank. Milk sold prior to the transition was 580,000 lbs./FTE. Today it is 830,000 lbs./FTE.*

### **Schultz Bros. Farm ~ John and Gary Schultz**

585 Abrams Rd., Schoharie, NY 12157

*This dairy made the transition to a freestall/parlor system to accommodate the next generation coming into the business in quick order. 140 cows were milked in the old tie-stall barn; many cows were housed in a small freestall addition. Cows had to be switched into the tie-stall to be milked. April of 2013 they broke ground on a 200 stall 4 row drive thru freestall barn with sand beds. Cows moved in mid-August. Work then began on a welding shop parallel milking parlor that was installed in the old tie-stall barn. In mid-October they began using the milking parlor. Internal herd growth with lots of bred heifers will soon fill the new barn.*

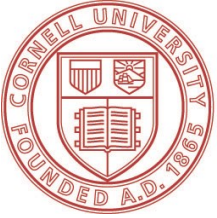
## Saratoga County

### **Smith Bros Farm ~ William & Richard Smith**

4561 Jockey Street, Ballston Spa, NY 12020

*This dairy made the transition from 95 cows in a tie-stall barn by building a double 8 milking parlor in 1989. A greenhouse style freestall barn with sand filled beds was built in two phases. Phase one was built in 1999, phase two was built in 2001. Today the herd is at 200 cows. Annual milk shipped was in the 1.6 to 1.7 million pound range prior to the change. Today it is around 4 million pounds/year. The total workforce on the farm is essentially the same as it was prior to the transition and expansion.*

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