

### Dairy Farming Noble Tradition

Kansas is one of the fastest growing dairy regions in the U.S. in terms of milk production, due to a variety of factors like an ideal climate, land availability and a lot of cow feed, are all good factors for locating a dairy.

We are lucky to have some excellent dairies in Northeast Kansas, several of our dairies are being recognized by their peers, the Kansas Dairy Council and the Dairy Farmers Association as being the Dairy of the Year. I'm not sure when those announcements will be made, but I'm very proud of these two dairies and the efforts they make to be their best.

Even though we have top notch dairies, they all have challenges. Some of those challenges are the search for good employees, that will love and care for the animals like they were their own. We have plenty of feed for dairy cattle, but changes in the diet can have huge effects on the output. The weather changing drastically can have health implications and then there's the constant threat of those trying to put them out of business.

Recently it seems the Animal Rights movements have been at it again. Showing their pitiful videos that were illegally taken and praying on the sympathies of the naïve public. Spreading untruths about how unhealthy dairy products are for you.

I know how hard these people work, I know they spend countless hours making sure the animals are properly cared for. These dairy farmers are some of the most tech savvy people I know. The amount of information they have to keep up with every day is mind boggling. They are business executives in coveralls and muck boots.

They have all figured out that a happy cow, makes more milk and more milk feeds the world. If you prefer to use the milk substitutes that have less protein, more sodium and a lot more chemicals that is your decision, just don't spread untruths about the hardest working Ag industry we have.

At one time, milk was promoted as "the perfect food." Of course, no one food is sufficient in itself, but milk and other dairy products are very nutritious (they remain the chief source of calcium in the American diet) and can be part of a heart-healthy diet.

Don't believe claims by anti-milk groups that dairy harms bones. Though osteoporosis rates are lower in Asia, where dairy is rarely consumed, other factors other than diet affect bones, and most studies show that calcium from dairy is protective. Dairy is protein-rich, and very high protein intake slightly increases calcium excretion. But some protein is needed for strong bones, and dairy's high calcium may more than offset any small adverse effect of its high protein. Plus, in addition to calcium, milk provides vitamin D, magnesium, potassium and other key bone nutrients.