

Rancher or Cattle Producer?

**I was recently in a conversation about what we call ourselves. A well-known Ag blogger, has suggested, those of us raising cattle should call ourselves, “ranchers”.**

**Her argument is that, this is the preferred term by our consumers. Ranching seems to be a more romantic, fantasy occupation over “cattle producer” and cattle farmer. The perception, is that a “producer” seems to be too close to factory farming (whatever that is).**

**So I turned to our Water Quality specialist that grew up in the Sandhill’s of Nebraska (real ranch country) and asked him what his interpretation was. Will stated that to him, it was raising cattle on the land, mostly perennial grasses, very little crop production. He gave no mention to the size of the ranch. I guess I must have some of those “romantic” notions about ranches. To call ourselves ranchers, to me seems boastful! Especially compared to our neighbors, that have much larger ranches, operations or whatever we should call them. The cattle backgrounder we were visiting, decided to call himself BYC, Bovine Youth Counselor! Now that’s catchy.**

**It’s not boasting to be proud of our dairies! June is Dairy Month. We have some great dairies in the Meadowlark Extension District. Two have been awarded for their management. Gracing the cover of the Kansas Farmer magazine is David and Jan Rottinghaus, of Rottinghaus Holstein Farm of Seneca. I was able to visit their calf rearing barn, it is quite impressive.**

**Kelly Hills Dairy, owned by Brian and Kristina Haverkamp was also recognized by the Dairy Farmers of America. The Haverkamps have done a great job on their dairy. They hosted a dairy lameness school for us, and it’s obvious they care deeply for their cows and their employees.**

**June Dairy Month started out as a way to distribute extra milk during the warm months of summer. The commemoration was established in 1937 by grocer organizations sponsoring “National Milk Month.” By 1939, June became the official “dairy month.”**

**Whether it’s in coffee, cereal or smoothies, adding one more serving of milk to your family’s day can help ensure they get the nutrients they need to build strong bones and teeth. Trusted for decades, dairy farm families pride themselves on producing wholesome dairy foods that help their families grow up strong and healthy.**

**Dairy's unique combination of nutrients plays key roles in preventing heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and osteoporosis. Dairy is important for building strong bones and teeth.**

**Cow's milk offers a superior nutrient package over alternative beverages such as soy, almond, rice or coconut. Fat-free cow's milk contains 15 fewer calories per glass, 70 percent more potassium and almost twice as much protein as many calcium-fortified soy beverages.**

**Most milk alternative drinks have only half the nutrients of real milk and cost nearly twice as much.**

**Dairy farming is a family tradition, one that has been a way of life for many generations. Ninety-eight percent of dairy farms are family owned and operated.**

**Dairy farmers are dedicated and take pride in caring for their cows by working closely with veterinarians to keep their cows healthy and comfortable. Dairy cows receive regular checkups, vaccinations and prompt medical treatment.**

**Dairy farmers work hard to provide your family with the same safe and wholesome dairy foods they give to their children.**