



June Dairy Month with Brent Mueller

Claretta Farms, the Mueller family's dairy farm, has been in the capable hands of the Mueller family for more than 50 years.

Originally stationed in Peotone, IL and then St. Charles, the Mueller dairy is now located in Garden Prairie.

Now, after four generations, Brent Mueller and his wife, Amber, and their children Samantha and Logan, are milking the registered Holstein herd and they have growth on their minds.

"Ever since we moved to Garden Prairie in 1995, we have been in expansion mode," Mueller said. "We have added cows, added buildings and added grain facilities."

Once Mueller turned 18, and became too old for 4-H, he joined the Illinois Farm Bureau. Since then, he also has served on the Winnebago-Boone County Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

"Besides a night away every month, the benefits of the Farm Bureau are good as far as keeping its members up to date on state and federal legislation and policies," Mueller said. "Since I'm on the board, I get the chance to know firsthand what is happening and we get the information right away and get to bring it back to other farmers in the area."

Brent also is on the Mid-West Dairymen's Board of Directors, a position he said he enjoys because it helps keep his fellow dairy producers well-informed.

"I get information firsthand," Mueller said. "Once I get the information, I give it to somebody else and get their feedback and go back and forth."

For Mueller, one of the most important aspects of his family's farm is the 'open gate' policy they keep with consumers and the public.

"Anyone can walk into my barn at any time and I know nothing is going to be going on that would give us a bad name," Mueller said. "We need to be our own voices and invite people in."

I'm married to a teacher and they bring all of the kindergarteners out here and show them what we do. Those kids remember us and still have a connection to the farm. That sticks with them and I like being that voice to show people what is really going on."

In the end, Mueller said he truly enjoys his profession and knows that he provides a service for his community by doing what he loves.

"I find joy in dairy farming because, in a way, every day is different," Mueller said. "Sometimes you wake up and it's six below and other days it could be fifty degrees. You never know. It's mainly just a joy to see things grow." (Published June 13, 2015)