

Cooperative Extension Centennial Celebration
Your Trusted Partner... Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

As Cooperative Extension marks 100 years of working for Wisconsin, the following is an excerpt from Cooperative Extension in Grant County – The First Forty Years by Wilfred Pierick, written in 1963.

Dairy Production

Quality Milk—In 1942, government orders for number one cheese began to cause a back-up of lower grade cheese in the county and this was resulting in lower prices paid to farmers. It appeared that dairy producers were about to lose many of their good markets because of poor quality products. Consequently, county agent Wally Voskuil, in cooperation with the State Department of Agriculture and dairy plant inspectors, engaged in a series of 140 schoolhouse meetings throughout the county in an effort to teach quality milk production and the need for it. Nearly 2000 plant operators, milk haulers, and farm leaders attended.

Two quality dairy cooperatives were organized in the county in 1944, the West Grant Coop and the Central Quality Coop. Factories included in the West Grant Coop were Hazelton, Brodsville, North Andover, Five Points, Patch Grove, Bloomington, Cassville, and Beetown. In the Central Quality Coop were Beck & Schwartz, Steinhauer, Hurricane, Millville, Conley Cut, Shady Dell and Ellenboro. The Coops hired fieldmen to assist farmers with problems relating to milk quality as well as aiming to give added service to patrons.

The quality milk program was put into high gear in 1949 as evidenced by the following: (1) a three day quality milk clinic for producers, plant operators, farm builders, and suppliers of dairy equipment, (2) special meetings with county buttermakers on quality butter, (3) a series of meetings with the bottle milk producers on quality, (4) a series of meetings on proper washing and handling of milk utensils, (5) ten dairy cattle clipping demonstrations for farmers, (6) a meeting at

Boscobel for plant operators and quality fieldmen on the interpretation of new dairy regulations, and (7) township and district meetings to acquaint producers with the minimum standards and regulations of the Department of Agriculture to prevent the sale and delivery of unsanitary milk.

Dehnert reported, late in 1949, that a four year summary of the grades of milk produced in Grant county from 1946 to 1949 showed some definite improvement in the quality of milk being delivered to the cheese factories and creameries.

War Restrictions Have Effect—In 1942, it was evident that the war was going to have a serious effect upon the operation of cheese factories in the county, due to tire shortages, overlapping truck routes, and shortages of milk cans and utensils. Consequently, the plant operators formed a county association in an effort to meet these problems. Among other things, the Federal government had placed restrictions on the over-lapping of milk truck routes through its Office of Defense Transportation. Officers for this association, formed to meet the emergency, were Rupert Steinhauer, president, and John Kujawa, Secretary.

Artificial Breeding—The first artificial breeding unit in Grant county for breeding dairy cattle was organized at Boscobel in 1945. The unit was a part of a Vernon county "ring" and it served dairy farmers in both Grant and Crawford counties. "Settling" rates in the early years were a bit disappointing and this caused some dissatisfaction among farmers making use of the service.

From 1500 Grant county cows being serviced in the Boscobel unit in 1945, artificial breeding had grown to reach a total of 10,000 cows by 1948. At that time there were five artificial breeding units in the county. They were located at Boscobel, Bloomington, Fennimore, Lancaster and Platteville. A unit formed at Beetown in 1947 did not survive.

Two hundred Grant county dairy farmers toured the Tri-State bull stud at Westby in 1947. A twilight meeting held at the Kenneth Frankenhoff farm, Boscobel, in 1948, at which E. E. Heizer was present, featured an exhibit of 27 head of calves and heifers from artificial breeding.

In five years time, by 1950, artificial breeding of dairy cattle had become available in all areas of the county. Eight technicians were taking care of over 16,000 dairy cows for 1300 dairy farmers.

Dairy Herd Improvement Testing—By 1943 there was only one small DHIA unit remaining in Grant county. County agent Dehnert recognized, according to his 1945 report, that an immediate need in Grant county was a county-wide Dairy Herd Improvement Association. Such an association was organized in 1946 when a new testing "lab" at Fennimore employed two fieldmen and one lab technician. Grant county dairy cattle breeders organizations and creamery operators helped to get the new DHIA unit organized. A total of 4441 cows from 220 herds were under test in 1949.

Bang's Control—A newly revised Bang's control program was initiated in 1948 which provided for (1) free testing and calfhoo vaccination, or (2) free calfhoo vaccination only. In order to come under the program, townships had to obtain at least seventy-five percent sign-ups of all the dairy cattle owners in the township. In 1949, twenty-nine of the thirty-three townships in Grant county had obtained the necessary signers and were participating in the program.

Purebred Bull Project—A project to improve the quality of dairy herd bulls in the county was begun in 1945 through the County Holstein Breeder's Association. This year, nine registered, purebred bulls were put out to 4-H and FFA boys in the county on a 50-50 basis, the bulls to be sold at a Fall sale. Butterfat production on the dams of the bulls when this project was started in 1945 had to be 300 pounds or more.

Thirty bulls were put out in the project the following' year, but with Guernseys and Jerseys being added to the project. After a few years, the sale was again confined to the Holstein breed of cattle, and there were also years in which heifer calves were put out on projects and sold in the Fall sale. This is a project which has continued to this present day.