

#### Volume 10: Issue 1 **January 2008**







**PROFESSIONAL** DAIRY PRODUCERS OF WISCONSIN **1-800-WIS-PDPW** 

# Dairy's Bottom Line

# **Candidates Up For Election** On PDPW Board of Directors Five candidates are in search

of positions on PDPW's Board of Directors this coming March at the Annual Business Conference. Marion Barlass, Mark Diederichs, Patty Endres, Roger Erickson and Dan Siemers are all advocates for the state's dairy industry. The following provides a look at each of the candidates.

#### **Marion Barlass**

A Jersey breeder from Janesville, Marion Barlass farms with her husband, Bill, and son, Brian.

Barlass graduated from UW-Madison in 1974 with a degree in home economics

education extension. After graduation she worked Extension in for two years, and then began farming with her husband



his parents on Marion Barlass his home farm,

which they eventually purchased and continue to farm.

She and her husband have three kids, Brian, Kristin and Brett, who all received dairy science degrees. Their son Brian manages the farm.

They milk 700 Jersey cows and operate 560 acres of crop land, where they raise alfalfa, corn, soybeans, wheat and canning crops. They also rent additional acres and are currently in the process of putting in a new milking parlor on their operation.

On the farm, Barlass is

### Inside this issue...

Fewer County Board members could result in less rural representation. Page 2 ....

Starch levels should be considered in a balanced ration. Page 4 ....

responsible for the book keeping, herd health, heat detection, helping with the calves, and anything else that may need to be done.

She has been involved with PDPW for about eight years. "I think it's a really great orga-

nization," she says.

"PDPW is always pretty ahead of the curve," she says, adding, "The organization as a whole sees things coming and is able to provide us with the newest information to help us reach our potential as producers."

"I think that it provides a lot of education, not only for us, but for other leaders and decision makers," she says. "It gives us an opportunity to network with other people with similar inter-ests and goals."

Barlass feels that the Annual Business Conference is one of the most significant events that PDPW puts on and provides producers with numerous opportunities that are tailored to the needs and goals of their operation.

"I like the fact that there are a lot of different educational presentations," she says. "Everything is self-focused on helping you with your dairy and it also provides the opportunity to talk with other producers and network."

Barlass strongly believes that PDPW has a significant impact on the dairy industry and that it will "continue to provide up-to-date forward thinking" for producers.

"By becoming a member of the board, I think I'll be able to help people get involved and bring new people to the organization," Barlass says.

#### **Mark Diederichs**

Mark Diederichs serves as the general manager of Lake

Breeze Dairy, located eight miles northeast of Fond du Lac. Diederichs oversees the overall operation of the dairy. Since the dairy purchases all of its feed, he manages the feed



Mark Diederichs

and manure contracts, in addition to overseeing and managing 34 full-time employees.

Diederichs grew up on his family's dairy farm and began milking cows on a farm his father rented while he was senior in high school. He and his wife, Laurie have three children, Eric, Heather and Amber, and one grandson, Logan. They started out farming in 1982 when they milked 50 cows in a stall barn. In 1995 they expanded the herd to 150 cows and expanded again in 2003 to 1,500 cows. Since 2005, they expanded their herd to reach their present number of 3,000 milking cows.

There are five partners which make up Lake Breeze Dairy. The operation includes a double-44 parallel parlor, as well as a double-eight parallel parlor used for special needs. The freestall barns are sand bedded and they also have a flush system, and a manure digester.

Diederichs has been involved with PDPW since the very start

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Fantastic items up for sale at PDPW's

Education Foundation live auction.

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....

#### See Board, on Page 3

The next ACE Educational Seminar will be held in Kimberly on Feb. 12. Page 8

Captain Scott O'Grady will be a highlight of PDPW's Annual Business Conference. Page 12 ....

Sharing ideas, solutions, resources and experiences that help dairy producers succeed.

# Smaller County Boards Often Means Less Rural Representation

The 2005 Wisconsin Act 100 allows voters to reduce the size of their county boards. There are two ways of doing this – either by petition and referendum initiated by voters or from action by the county board itself.

Since 2006, this has already happened in a number of the state's 72 counties.

Matt Stohr, legislative associate for the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA), lobbies on behalf of WCA on issues related to agriculture, land use and transportation.

The effect of Act 100 on rural areas has not been a positive one, Stohr believes.

Stohr said WCA opposed the measure when it was introduced in the State Senate by Senator Ted Kanavas (R-Brookfield). Lobbying in opposition to the proposal was not an easy thing for WCA to do, Stohr admits, "because I think the general public often thinks when you talk about government, less is better. But that's not always the case, especially in county government."

Why is a smaller county board detrimental to county government? Stohr said it is because the downsizing is done "without any thought as to where the remaining representation would come from."

Rural areas with fewer people end up with less representation than the areas where population is greater. That's because the downsized board follows the same process that is used every ten years when redistricting takes place across the nation. In essence, the representatives, whether they be for the U.S. House of Representatives, the state legislatures or county boards, come from the areas where the population is greater.

Another reason why opposition to Act 100 was difficult had to do with money. "The perception is that county officials are making lots of money," Stohr continued. "They are usually paid on a per diem basis – essentially they are pretty much volunteering their work."

Milwaukee County is the only county that has full-time county supervisors. "Dane County supervisors probably receive the highest level of pay of all the other counties outside of Milwaukee. Each of the 37 Dane County Supervisors, when all is said and done, earns about \$7,000 per year between mileage and per diem payments." Stohr said.

Any citizen of a county can start a petition asking for a reduction in county board size. The only thing a person has to do is get 25 percent of that county's voters from the most recent election to sign the petition. The petition is then taken to the county clerk who determines if the signers are county residents. If the signatures are valid, so is the petition. The petition then generates a referendum question that will show up on the ballot at the next election.

Several counties have already voted to downsize their county board. These include:

• Walworth County's current 25 supervisors will go down to 11 in April of 2008.

• Fond du Lac County had 36 supervisors and after the April election it will be down to 18.

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• Wood County will go from 38 to 19 in April.

• Waushara County will go from 21 to 11 in April.

Some county boards decided to downsize on their own, without waiting for a petition and referendum process.

Waukesha has gone from 35 supervisors to 25; Green Lake County from 21 to 19; and Winnebago from 38 to 36.

Referendums do not always favor downsizing. Douglas, Jackson and Rusk Counties all had referendums that failed. The votes were close in all three but in Douglas County the referendum failed by about 40 votes. "In Douglas County, the question was to decrease the number of supervisors from 28 to 7," Stohr added.

"The reason the referendums failed in both Jackson and Rusk Counties was because voters weren't convinced it was good to reduce the size of the board. People feared rural parts of the county would lose representation on the board.

"Superior is located in Douglas County and had the referendum been approved, the City of Superior's supervisors would have controlled the county board and that may not bode well for controversial

See County, on Page 8

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#### PDPW Staff P Shelly Mayer Executive Director

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## - Board

## **Continued from Page 1** of the organization.

"I like the educational opportunities that they provide for our employees and for me," he says. "The networking it provides allows you to talk to a lot of other producers that have a lot of good ideas that we can take back to our dairy."

His favorite opportunity that PDPW provides producers with is the PDPW Annual Business Conference held in March. He likes the variety of speakers and the number of people who attend the conference.

"There are going to be a lot of things that come up as the industry does change and PDPW is usually there at the forefront," says Diederichs. "The ideas they have will help producers as they go forward into these changing times."

Diederichs serves on the Fond du Lac Ag Ambassador Committee, of which he has been a member for eight years. He is also a past volunteer fireman of 18 years and recently became a Lion's Club member.

"The board of directors is made up of a lot of knowledgeable people," Diederichs says. "Sharing ideas always intrigues me and I've always enjoyed being around and working with other people."

He has many ideas he could bring to the organization through serving on the board of directors, including different educational session and program ideas.

"I think it's a growing organization that does a lot for producers and I think I can bring something to the table that can enhance that experience from my own experiences I've had here at the dairy," Diederichs says.

#### Patty Endres

After receiving a degree in 1989 from UW-Madison in

human nutrition and dietetics, Patty Endres worked as a clinical dietician for four years.

Endres and her husband, Dave, began a farm of their own in Waunakee in 1986, milking 50 Holstein cows.

In 1990, the Endreses began incorporating Jerseys into their herd after having problems with their tie stalls being too small for the Holsteins.

Two years later, they transitioned the herd to all Jerseys. The attractiveness of the component-based pricing in the future, as well as advantages in reproduction, feet and legs and longevity of the Jerseys were particularly appealing to them. They decided to really expand the herd in 1993 and Endres left her job as a dietician to help full-time on the farm. In 1994, they moved to Lodi and increased the herd to 200.

Currently, they are still at the same location, but now milk 750 registered Jerseys. They raise all of their own replacements and also crop about 700 acres.

Endres's main responsibilities on the operation include bookkeeping, payroll, employee benefits and any other area of the operation where help is needed. She and her husband have three children, including Vinny, who is a junior in high school; Sydney, who is in seventh grade; and Mitchell, who is in sixth grade.

All of the children play an active role on the farm and help out with many aspects of the operation including registering calves, filing papers and entering in herd health information. They also show at the local and county fair, in addition to being involved in 4-H and FFA.

Endres has had many leadership roles through her involvement on the youth ag

See Endres, on Page 6





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# Balancing Ration Includes Balancing Starch

Developing the right ration for dairy cattle is a balancing act. Maybe that's where the term "balancing the ration" comes from.

One of the most important ration ingredients to carefully balance is starch. With too little of it cows don't milk as well as they could. With too much starch, health problems can crop up.

"Starch digestibility can be a two-edged sword," warns Mary Beth Hall, a dairy scientist at the USDA Dairy Forage Research Center. "The more digestible the starch is, the more nutrients the cow and her rumen microbes can get to support production. At the same time, the more digestible the starch is, the greater care needs to be taken to balance the diet to avoid rumenal acidosis."

Hall will talk about "Understanding Starch Digestibility and Its Impact on Rations" during two Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin (PDPW) Nutrition Innovation Seminars. The seminars are scheduled for Feb. 6 in Green Bay and Feb. 7 in Madison. To register, visit www. pdpw.org.

To stay away from rumen acidosis – or too much acid in the rumen – it's important to balance the amount of starch and other fermentable carbohydrates that are in the ration, Hall explains. Balance these fermentable carbohydrates with fiber.

Use the kind that nutritionists call "physically effective" fiber. This kind of fiber usually comes from forage, such as haylage or dry hay.

Performing this balancing act gives cows something to

See Starch, on Page 10

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## - Endres

#### **Continued from Page 3**

apprentice committee, Farm Bureau committees, the parish board of education serving as president for six years, as well as being a group leader for 4-H – just to name a few.

The Endreses have also been honored as outstanding young farmers through both Farm Bureau and Jaycees. In 2001, they received recognition as National Outstanding Young Farmers through the Jaycees.

Endres's involvement in PDPW stems back to the beginning of the organization. She has attended many of PDPW's events and is very passionate about the organization.

"What they do is target what is needed in the industry and you'll see workshops not only at the annual meeting, but throughout the year," says Endres. "For example, we were able to send our calf feeder (who is Hispanic) to a conference recently and it was all in Spanish, so she could understand and learn."

"They present timely information to its members so that

the dairy producers can also keep appraised of what's going on in the industry and how they can be proactive in their industry," she adds.



Patty Endres

Endres believes that the many educational opportunities PDPW offers for people in the industry is successful in keeping them up-to-date on what's going on in the industry.

"We want to continue to have progress and forwardminded people helping to set the tone for the dairy industry," Endres says. "Volunteering for this board helps keep the for-

See Candidates, on Page 18

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Pete Kappelman Dairy Producer and CWT Member Two Rivers, Wisconsin

CV/Cooperatives Working Together

# ACE Educational Seminar Set For Feb. 12 in Kimberly

"Agriculture's Changing Face – Meeting Environmental & Community Needs" will be the focus of the Agriculture Community Engagement (ACE) Educational Seminar, Feb. 12 in Kimberly.

Community leaders, elected officials, dairy and livestock producers, conser-

## - County

**Continued from Page 2** land use issues," Stohr added.

A vote to downsize a county board can only be held once in a decade.

#### ACE program

As local governments – and that includes counties – are thinking about issues that have arisen in their communities, Stohr believes the best way to resolve issues is to by discussing them.

The Agriculture

vation officials and all interested Wisconsinites are urged to attend this information-rich seminar. Learning together is the first step in growing communities that are vibrant and green for generations to come.

Attendees will hear from a panel of Wisconsin dairy producers; Discovery Farms Co-Director, Dennis Frame; Discovery Outreach Specialist, Kevan Klingberg; Livestock Facility Siting Program Manager, Mike Murray; Livestock Siting Engineer with DATCP, Steve Struss; and dairy producer and former Secretary of Agriculture, Jim Harsdorf.

Agriculture Community

Engagement (ACE) is a threeway partnership with the Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA), Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) and PDPW. Developed in 2002, ACE educates and promotes constructive engagement that allows agriculture and local communities to co-exist and thrive.

Community Engagement (ACE) program is a three-way partnership with the Wisconsin Towns Association, Wisconsin Counties Association and PDPW.

Stohr sees ACE "as a tool to open up the lines of communication among producers, county officials and town officials. A successful conference was held in the Wausau area about a year ago," he recalled. "Members of the three organizations were invited to meet, hear about the issues and discuss them. Producers talked about their issues and local town and county officials talked what they have to deal with when it comes to solving agricultural issues.

"It was also an opportunity for members of each organization to get to know each other and try to understand each others' perspectives – what's important and how each operates. The ultimate goal is to help our rural communities thrive and discussing issues is one way to do that," Stohr said. "If agriculture is strong so are local communities.

"Manure runoff is one of the issues that puts a lot of pressure on local officials," Stohr said. Others include well contamination, siting of wind turbines and land use conflicts. "In all of these situations, discussions and education can bring understanding," he added.

By Joan Sanstadt



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The Nutrition Innovations Seminars are designed for feeding managers, dairy owners and nutrition consultants.

Register for the PDPW Nutrition Innovation Seminars and other PDPW programs online at www. pdpw.org or by calling 800-947-7379.

## - Starch

**Continued from Page 4** 

chew on – literally. Chewing produces saliva, and this saliva buffers rumen acids. This buffering helps keep the rumen working properly and healthily.

Just what is starch, anyway? Hall explains that it's similar to sugar because it's a carbohydrate that does not contain fiber. Starch is also made up of pectin. By itself, starch can make up 20 to 30 percent of the dry matter in a dairy cow's ration.

Starchy feed ingredients take many forms. Among them are the familiar names – corn silage, corn, sorghum, and cereal grains like oats, barley, wheat and rye.

There are other starch sources, too. These include small grain byproducts like wheat midds, hominy. Anytime a dairy farm feeds bakery waste it's feeding starch, too.

"Starch is digestible in the rumen by microbes, and in the small intestine by enzymes, and has potential to be almost completely digested," says Hall. "It's an excellent source of energy to the cow. When animal health is maintained, starch can help support good milk and milk protein production."

But be careful with starch. It's not just the amount of it in a ration that's important.

The more finely a grain is ground, the faster a cow will digest its starch. What's more, the source of the starch is important. The starch in corn and sorghum gets digested slower than the starch in small grains.

Then there's the moisture content to consider. The wetter the starch source, the faster it ferments – both in storage and in a cow's rumen.

The amount of starch in the ration can also influence how fast the starch is digested. One report, notes Hall, has starch digesting quicker the more there is in a ration.

Finally, starch digestion

might even be affected by how long a grain – or corn silage has stayed in a silo or bag. Hall says there's a report about the starch becoming more digestible the longer it's ensiled.

A high degree of starch digestibility is a good thing.

Says Hall, "High starch digestibility is desirable to ensure that the cow and her microbes can extract the greatest amount of nutrients from the diet. Pieces of cracked or whole corn or grain coming through in the manure represent a loss of feed that was not digested. Poor digestion of feed can depress feed efficiency."

She adds, "The more rapidly fermenting the starch is, the more care needs to be taken to maintain the balance. If starch is well digested and is balanced with forage to maintain rumen health, it can be an excellent diet component for maintaining desired animal performance."

By Ron Johnson

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<b>Calendar of Events</b>					
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Managers Academy	Phoenix, Ariz.	<b>Jan. 22-24</b>			
Dairy Connect	Fond du Lac	Jan. 30			
<b>PDPW</b> Nutrition Innovation Seminars	Green Bay/Madison	Feb. 6 & 7			
ACE Regional Meeting	Kimberly	Feb. 12			
Annual Business Conference	Madison	March 11-12			
Dairy Connect	TBD	March 18			

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# Solving the Profit Puzzle

We're "Solving the Profit Puzzle" at the 2008 PDPW Annual Business Conference! This unparalleled event links you with the resources for success. It will take your business to the next level and complete your picture of success.

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Scott O'Grady will be the final piece as the keynote speaker at this year's Annual Business Conference.

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You'll leave the Annual Business Conference ready for the fast-pace of today's business world. This conference will help you customize your business, reach professional goals and frame the way you expand your bottom line... selecting the right piece and making the next move.

# Twohig, Rietbrock & Schneider

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## PDPW Helps Connect the Dairy Industry With Local Communities

After recognizing the need for a structured program to help producers better connect with neighbors, media and opinion leaders, PDPW developed the Dairy Connect communications training program and held two training sessions this fall.

The program gives producers and industry leaders the skills and experience they need to be successful in even the most trying situations. It addresses the ins and outs of environmental stewardship, food safety and nutrition, and animal health and well-being, while intermingling presentation skills and media knowhow.

Graduates of this program have been busy putting their new skills to work. Bruce Berth, Don Robaidek, and Kari Stanek have connected with local community groups to share a positive message about the dairy industry.

Berth, a dairy producer from Coleman, farms with his wife, Tracy, and three sons, Brenden, 16, Joshua, 14, and Andrew, 8. The 60-cow dairy farm has been in their family for 125 years and Berth would like to one day pass it along to the next generation.

Through the Dairy Connect training, Berth says he learned to listen to the concerns of others and to answer their questions in a way they'll understand.

"It's better to answer from an emotional standpoint, then back it up with science," he says, noting it's good to mention that dairy producers are just as concerned about health and food safety and that "we live here too."

Berth recently had the opportunity to address the beginning ag class at Lena High School. There his talk was more geared for students to keep them engaged. "They're different than adults," he says, adding he had to adjust his talk for the younger audience.

Berth also serves on the Board of Directors for AgSource. The Board's December meeting addressed many of the issues Berth had learned about at Dairy Connect this fall - viewing "the big picture," he says.

"We as an industry may have to address the concerns of our business," he says. These concerns are animal welfare, environmental issues and food safety. "We have to get ahead of this stuff."

With his Dairy Connect training, Berth is looking forward to helping AgSource better communicate its message. "We have to assure...that we're providing high quality products," he says.

He adds that he found the training to be a good review of presentation skills. He had a lot of practice in college, but hadn't used those skills in a long time.

Dairy Connect put him back into the consumer mindset and gave him a great understanding of where they'll be coming from as he continues to educate others and serve as an advocate of

the state's dairy industry.

Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board Member Don Robaidek also says he feels more prepared to give a presentation. He gave his first talk last month at the Shawano Rotary. Thanks to the training, he had more confidence and was better be able to connect with the audience.

The training brought things to the table that Robaidek hadn't realized. One such item was the existence of the Meatrix II (www.meatrix2.com) – an online animated clip that sheds a poor light on animal agriculture.

A dairy producer near Pulaski, Robaidek is looking forward to correcting some public perceptions. "(Dairy Connect) will help me show the positive things people need to know," he says.

He will also be more comfortable when he leaves his 50 registered Holsteins at home to attend WMMB meetings. "The

See Connect, on Page 15

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## - Connect

**Continued from Page 14** training will make it a lot easier for me to communicate at meetings," he says, adding he will be more prepared and know how to say the right things. He now thinks he'll be able to voice his opinion so everybody can understand what he's trying to achieve.

It happened to be Robaidek's birthday when he attended the Dairy Connect training and he proudly proclaims it was one of the best birthday presents he'd ever received.

Kari Stanek, communications and public relations coordinator at Accelerated Genetics, says "the seminar itself was a good overview of media relations and public speaking." It provided information on environmental stewardship, food safety, nutrition and animal well-being and tied it into how to relate to the media and consumers.

Having attended other

media training events, Stanek took more away from the issues portion of the training. "Dairy Connect training had a lot of new information about what was going on in the industry," she says.

Stanek plans to utilize the knowledge she gained from PDPW and implement it in her young producer training with Accelerated Genetics.

The training also empowered her to continue her dairy promotion efforts. "I've been very active in promoting the industry ever since I was a little girl," she says. "This will provide me with the opportunity to connect with more people in the community – to go out there and keep spreading the word."

Stanek recently had the opportunity to address the Wisconsin Dells Kiwanis group on how the dairy industry works. She put together a

See Training, on Page 16

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## PDPW Education Foundation Auction

Don't put on your lucky auction shirt yet, but be ready March 11 at the PDPW Annual Business Conference. The annual live and silent auctions are stacked with great items, with all proceeds benefiting the PDPW Education Foundation. Here's a sneak peak of this year's live auction items:

• Registered Jersey calf, donated by: Alto Dairy Cooperative, Cooperative Plus Inc., Land O'Lakes Cow's Match Jersey Match, Wisconsin Jersey Breeders Association, and Wisconsin Junior Breeders Association

• WestfaliaSurge rotat-

- Training -Continued from Page 15

PowerPoint presentation with pictures from her parents' farm and integrated her background and position at a dairy related company.

The next PDPW Dairy Connect communications training programs is scheding cow brush, donated by: Westfalia Surge

• "Solving the Profit Puzzle" quilt, donated by: Karla Zimmerman, Buttercup-D Farm, Fox Lake

• Ten-person pheasant hunt, donated by: Diamond V Mills, Inc.

• Kalahari Waterpark Resort \$400 gift certificate, donated by: ARM & HAMMER Animal Nutrition and Church & Dwight

To donate to the PDPW Education Foundation silent or live auctions, contact the auction chairperson JoAnn Maedke at 920-477-2806.

uled for Jan. 30 at UW-Fond du Lac. The program is limited to 15 people, so those interested should call 800-947-7379 today to secure a spot. Or go to www.pdpw.org to register online.

By Karen Lee







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## Candidates

#### Continued from Page 6

ward motion of this industry and organization going."

She feels that her many leadership roles would be influential to the board, in addition to her ability to help facilitate learning.

"Being part of the board, you not only offer time, but also ideas through talking to producers and what they need and bringing that back to the board," she says.

"It would be a great honor to work on the board," says Endres. "I really have admired this organization for a lot of years and that's one of the reasons why I chose to run because I really believe in what the organization provides to its members."

#### **Roger Erickson**

Roger Erickson has been involved the dairy industry all of his life. Currently, he holds the position as manager of Erickson Farm Inc., a 700-cow dairy located in Clark County in Neillsville.

The operation is a familyowned corporation, which is

owned by Erickson and his parents.

Erickson and his wife, June, have three sons, Travis, 28, and twins, Tyler

and Tony, 24, who all are an

active part of the operation. The farm is completely a family-run farm, with everyone taking an active part in all aspects of the farm from cropping to maintenance.

Ericksons operate a total of 1,850 tillable acres, with 1,300 owned acres, where they grow alfalfa and corn. Their Holstein herd is milked in a double-10 herringbone parlor.

Erickson has always been

involved in the dairy industry through growing up on a farm. Their current operation was originally his grandfather's farm. Erickson began purchasing cattle growing up and progressively became involved in the dairy industry and farming. He attended Mid-State Technical College for their farm short course. Since then, they have been continuously expanding their herd, which originally started as a 50-cow herd in the '60s.

Since the second year that PDPW was formed, Erickson has been involved with the organization. He joined because of the opportunity to network with other producers as well as the ability to acquire new information about the dairy industry.

He firmly believes in the organization having a valuable place in the future of the dairy industry through "the education aspect of bringing information to producers and being able to find the practical knowledge that they can use," he says.

Erickson has had many valuable leadership experiences in the past through serving on numerous extension board committees, as well as being an active FFA alumnus, in which he served as president twice.

He feels that a position on the board would allow him "to further some of my knowledge of PDPW and also to get progressive in the dairy industry."

"I would like to help fellow producers gain more knowledge of the industry and help bring producers together," he says.

#### **Dan Siemers**

Dan Siemers farms with his family in Newton, located in southern Manitowoc

#### See Siemers, on Page 20



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## - Siemers

**Continued from Page 18** 

County. Their current herd consists of 2,500 cows and 3,700 acres. They expanded the farm in the mid-'90s on their existing site and have been slowly adding on since.

They have mostly Holsteins, with a majority of them being registered, as well as a few crossbreds.

The farm is a family corporation which consists of Dan and his wife, Janina, who serves as the business manager. His brother Paul is the farm's operation manager and his wife Jenny serves as herd manager. Dan's sister, Sherry, and brother, David, are also involved in the operation.

Siemers serves as the general manager for the operation. He oversees the day-to-day management of the operation as well as helping with the nutrition, the breeding program and any other areas that are in need of attention. Siemers graduated from UW-Madison with a bache-

lor's degree in dairy science in 1991. Following graduation, he sold semen for Sire Power for a few years. Then

he came back to the fam-

ily farm and has been there for about 14 years.

"My family, we're fifth generation dairy producers, so it's been in the family for a long time," Siemers says. "We grew up farming and we all really enjoyed it. It's just kind of interesting that in today's age when everybody's fighting to keep kids on the farm – there's four of us and we're all still on the farm."

Siemers has been married to his wife Janina for just over 12 years. They have two sons, Jordan who is 11 years old and Connor who is 7 years old.

Siemers has been involved with PDPW since the beginning and attended the very first PDPW meeting. There are many reasons why he believes in PDPW and is a part of the organization.

"For one it's a good organization that pulls the dairy industry together – it doesn't matter if you milk 40 cows or 4,000 cows, everybody is there to learn," he says. "It's basically a nice melting pot of the whole dairy industry."

Siemers also admires the organization for the many educational opportunities that it offers "for most of the 'hot button' topics that are affecting the dairy industry.

"My favorite thing about the whole organization, summed up into one word is – optimism," he says. "When you go to the events, everybody's always very optimistic and the whole way they go about things is always very proactive."

"As far as either thinking of a better way to do things or a more profitable way to do things, you can't help but leave a PDPW meeting feeling better about the industry and your position in it," he adds.

Giving back is just one of the many reasons why Siemers would like to become a part of the PDPW Board of Directors.

"I've been involved with the organization now for a long enough time that for one, I know the organization and how it works pretty well," he says, adding, "and for two, I feel like I've gained a lot of leadership over the years in growing our operation and seeing what's worked here as well as what's worked within PDPW, that I think I can add some of my experience from over the years to the group."

By Kelsi Hendrickson



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