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NEWS RELEASE

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Historic Dairy Farm Wins Rhode Island’s 2011 Outstanding Dairy Farm of the Year Award By Rhode Island Green Pastures Committee; Wright’s Dairy Benefits From Technical and Financial Assistance Provided by NRCS



Wright’s Dairy Farm, founded in 1900, processes 1,000 gallons of milk per day where customers can purchase fresh dairy and bakery products at its onsite retail store.

WARWICK, RI (October 24, 2011) – Wright’s Dairy Farm in North Smithfield, Rhode Island has been named Rhode Island’s 2011 Outstanding Dairy Farm of the Year by the Rhode Island Green Pastures Committee. The award recognizes a dairy farm each year based on its quality animal care, implementation of conservation practices, and high quality dairy products. The Rhode Island Green Pastures Committee is led by DEM’s Department of Agriculture and includes the R.I. Farm Bureau, R.I. Dairy Farm Cooperative, R.I. Farm Service Agency, and Agri-Mark Cooperative.

their husbands Steve, David, and Paul conscientiously oversee the entire operation which includes a milking parlor, dairy processing plant, bakery, and retail store. The farm consists of the main property on 100 acres with 160 Holstein cows which were specifically selected for the quality and quantity of milk they produce. In addition, the family rents 160 acres of additional land to grow corn silage and hay used to feed the cows.

Wright’s Dairy Farm is a fifth generation family farm where 10 family members actively run the operation which includes approximately 70 full- and part-time workers. Clayton Wright and his three sisters Ellen, Jen, and Elizabeth along with

The 160 cows are milked twice per day in the milking parlor yielding 8,000 pounds of raw milk which equates to 1,000 gallons of milk. The raw milk is then processed at the onsite dairy plant where it is pasteurized to kill any bacteria and homogenized to blend the milk and cream so they will not separate. The finished product is then bottled as whole milk, 2 percent milk, skim milk, light cream, and heavy cream. Such products are ingredients used at their onsite full bakery to make high quality custom cakes, brownies, puddings, custards, cookies, and pastries. The newest addition of products includes ice cream produced onsite and cheddar cheese and cheese



Customers can view the cows being milked each day from 3PM - 5 PM in the energy efficient milking barn.



Over 900 customers visit the retail store each day to purchase fresh dairy and pastry products all made on the premises.

cow's milk is not used until it is tested to be free of antibiotics. The cows are well cared for where sand bedding is used to reduce the prevalence of bacterial infections and automatic fans are installed in the barns to keep the cows cool during hot weather. In addition, the farm recently implemented a new breeding program which has resulted in heifers calving in less than 24 months and peak milk production has risen. To enhance productivity and efficiency, all cows have radio id transponders which include a history of milk production. In 2009, a new double 10

parallel milking parlor was built with several energy efficient attributes. It includes variable speed pumps, tankless hot water, energy efficient lighting, and a cooling system that uses well water to cool the raw milk in tanks. A radiant floor heating system was installed to reduce heating costs during the winter months.

curd produced at an artisan cheese plant in Vermont. Wright's Dairy Farm only sells its quality products at its onsite retail store where over 900 customers from Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts visit each day.

Wright's Dairy received the Outstanding Dairy Farm of the Year Award based on the quality of animal care, implementation of progressive procedures on the farm, and quality products sold at its retail store. All cows have a diet balanced by a nutritionist. They utilize high-quality forages to form the base of the rations which include corn silage, hay, and grain. These rations are balanced with vitamins and minerals. The cows receive no synthetic hormones and antibiotics are only administered when a cow's life is at stake. In such cases, a



The cows eat a balanced diet consisting of hay, corn silage, and grain supplemented with vitamins and minerals.



NRCS Soil Conservationist Nina Bhattacharyya consults with Clayton Wright on the conservation plan.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has a long history working with the Wrights to implement several conservation practices on the farm. Such technical and financial assistance was funded under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). For over 20 years, NRCS staff has worked closely with the Wrights to address several natural resource concerns including soil erosion, water quality, plant health, and water quantity.

Among the numerous conservation practices implemented, NRCS provided cost share assistance to design and install a waste storage facility which is particularly beneficial when it is difficult to access the field during wet or cold weather. In addition, NRCS designed and installed a composting facility where the

composted manure is used on the farm and also sold to residential homeowners. Other conservation practices implemented include a highly erodible land plan for fields that they own and operate and a filter strip and catch basin that address drainage and water quality issues on the property. A comprehensive nutrient management plan was completed for Wright's Dairy Farm in 2004 and is currently being updated to reflect changes made to the operation. Additional NRCS practices planned for the future include addressing waste utilization to increase the amount of compost produced and sold, installing roof runoff structures that divert water from the barns, and building a temporary manure storage area to help with the management of waste from the milking parlor and heifer barn.

Wright's Dairy is a prime example of how a successful partnership with NRCS promotes conservation of natural resources while creating local, high quality dairy and bakery products which can be enjoyed by local consumers.