



News Release

United Dairymen of Idaho

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For Immediate Release

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This Land Is *Our* Land. This Land Is *Your* Land. *Sustaining Natural Resources*

Boise, Idaho - May, 2007 — Today, not only do many people want to know that the food products they consume are healthy for them, but also that they have been produced in a way that is healthy for the environment. The nation's dairy farmers share this interest, too.

“As far back as I can remember dairy has been a part of my family's life,” said Mike Roth, a Jerome dairy farmer. “It started in the 1920's when my grandparents immigrated to the United States from Switzerland and continues today at our farm, Si-Ellen.”

With the vast majority of dairies being family-owned and operated in the United States, it shows the kind of history and heritage that has developed as generation after generation continues dairy farming. According to Roth, “My entire family, five brothers and three sisters, is actively involved in running our dairy. It gives each of us a sense of continuity and the opportunity to pass on long-standing family traditions. You are in this business because of your desire to create a wholesome food that people enjoy and for me, it goes even deeper. It's a personal endeavor to honor my ancestors and the way of life they created for our family.”

Dairy farmers share a lot with their neighbors and dairy consumers — air and water for starters. They also share a concern for the future. That's why they are not just farmers, but also stewards of the land and farms they call home. Whether it's recycling water, converting manure into usable energy or maintaining a clean, environmentally friendly farm, dairy farmers go the extra mile for the land we all live on. “The land we use for our dairy is important to us,” said Roth. “We truly appreciate its value and know we have to take care of it. At Si-Ellen Farms, we have planted hundreds of poplar trees that not only act as a wind buffer and prevent soil erosion, but they also create a natural habitat for birds and wild animals.”

(more)

Idaho's water supply is one of its greatest assets. According to Roth, "We want to make certain we use this valuable resource wisely, so we constructed a lake to catch excess canal water as a more efficient means to store it for future use. Not only did this make sense from an economic standpoint, but the lake also serves as a conservation project because it provides the perfect environment for fish and plants." Milk is made up of 80 percent water. It's no wonder that water is likely the most important resource on a dairy farm. Clean, fresh drinking water for the cows is essential for wholesome, quality milk. In addition to a dairy farmer's personal commitment, farms must abide by clean-water laws. Water quality is routinely checked as part of Idaho's dairy-inspection program. Dairy farmers use water responsibly and judiciously. For example, water used to clean the milking parlor is often reused to clean feed alleys and then to irrigate fields. Potentially, water could be recycled two to three times on a dairy farm.

It's important to my family that we are good neighbors. We make every effort to build strong relationships. We work with our neighbors, providing top-notch natural compost for their fields and they in turn provide feed for our cows, reducing everyone's dependency on commercial sources of fertilizer and feed. Our dairy farm has given us a unique opportunity to develop a give-and-take connection with our neighbors. It's one of the reasons my family and I enjoy what we do so much.

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To learn more about dairy farmers and their stewardship efforts, visit www.dairyfarming.org.

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United Dairymen of Idaho (UDI) is the local planning and management organization responsible for increasing demand for U.S. produced dairy products on behalf of Idaho's dairy farm families.