

YUMMY NORTHWEST

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HOLY COW, WHERE'S THE MILK?

Across America small-family farms, including dairies, are disappearing.

Taxes, environmental regulations, general high costs and the low price of produce and milk contribute to the demise. Milk prices for the consumer are about the same as in the 1970s, which means less profit for the farmer.

Carnation Farm in Carnation, Wash., at one time was known and admired around the world. In January, 2004, the "home of contented cows" hosted an auction where its once prized livestock fetched prices lower than they would have in the 1960s. The Nestle Company purchased the farm in 1985 and will keep a minimal staff at what is now a regional training center, but the cows are gone.

I spent several years of my childhood in Sequim, Wash., during the 1960s, and the background of all my memories is a montage of dairy farms. Those farms are gone now, replaced by lavender fields, the cash crop of a new generation. Times change, places change, but the need for good food remains the same. Support your local farmer.



Smith Brothers Farms: Old-fashioned service in a modern world

Tucked away in an almost rural corner of Kent, Wash., Smith Brothers Farms continues to provide quality dairy products to its many customers in the Puget Sound region. From Olympia to Arlington, from Bremerton to North Bend, and on Whidbey and Bainbridge Islands, folks can still have fresh milk delivered to their door.



Delivering the best

Home delivery of milk now accounts for 0.4 percent of all milk purchased in the United States.

Though this percentage is small – way down, in fact from the 100 percent of yesteryear – the Associated Press reported in July, 2004, that home delivery is becoming more popular. Dairy industry officials suggested nostalgia, convenience and perceived better taste contributed to the increase.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture tracks home-delivery sales, and a representative said that interest in supporting local farms and buying organic products might also play a part in consumers choosing to get milk at home.



"Washington will never run out of dairy farms," said Alexis Smith Koester, fourth generation employee and president of Smith Brothers Farms.

In one way this seems an optimistic statement. Western Washington milk producers are either closing down or moving most of their cows to the eastern part of the state. Longtime producers, Norman Brook and Vitamilk, are gone. Theno's, though still selling another milk brand (and delicious ice cream) in Woodinville, sold their cows in 1985. Where rural roads were once lined with cow pastures, now condos and large houses are populated by city folk who want to live in the country.

But Koester explained that fresh milk needs to reach large city populations and so dairy farms can't be located very far away.

Smith Brothers keeps 90 cows at their Kent farm, but to save costs over 3,000 cows now enjoy pasture near Royal City. The 25,000 gallons of milk they produce daily is trucked across the Cascades three times a day and processed in Kent into milk, sour cream and half-and-half. Delivery trucks are loaded continually throughout the day, so products are guaranteed fresh for homes, schools and businesses.

Koester said that quality is essential and so the best ingredients are used in their processed products, such as chocolate milk.

Only one local dairy, Faith Dairy, Tacoma, still uses glass bottles. Koester explained that glass is heavy in the small delivery trucks their contractors use, and customers find it awkward to return them. The cost of washing returned bottles is high, too, so Smith Brothers prefers to use cartons.

Though a freeway and high-speed roads now provide boundaries to the original Smith Brothers farm, the third and fourth generations are determined to provide old-fashioned quality to the community.

Smith Brothers Farms delivers a lot more than milk. Check out their product line at www.smithbrothersfarms.com.

Sooo smooth

Craving a nice, cool milkshake? Try this milky drink that is Zone-perfect: a balance of carbs and protein that will do your blood sugar good. That means that a glass of this should curb your hunger for 1-2 hours.

Melon Smoothie

1/3 ounce protein powder (or equivalent to 7 grams protein)
2 cups 1-percent milk
1/2 cup plain low-fat yogurt
3/4 cup cantaloupe chunks
4 teaspoons almonds, slivered

Place all ingredients except protein powder in a blender. Blend until smooth, then add protein powder. Serve immediately.

Makes 4 glasses

From "Zone Perfect Meals in Minutes," by Barry Sears



Something's missing

When drinking milk becomes a sour experience

MML, Woodinville, Wash., knew something was wrong when she ended up in the hospital with an IV stuck in her arm, but neither she nor the doctors knew exactly what.

The pain in her lower abdomen was diagnosed as irritable bowel syndrome, but MML says she "limped along" for four months until a vegetarian suggested cutting out milk.

Ultimately, MML found out she was lactose intolerant. She is one of many people who lack the lactase enzyme that breaks down the milk sugar called lactose. That means consuming no dairy products unless the enzyme is added back in to aid digestion. All babies are born with the lactase enzyme fully functioning, but 75 percent of adults become lactose intolerant.

Dairy is often hidden and diligent research is necessary to avoid it. MML says she thought for a long time she couldn't eat



Milking animals for all they're worth

Nine out of 10 glasses of milk consumed worldwide come from cows. Good grief, what other kinds of milk are there?

Camel – In the desert, this milk can last a week at 86 degrees Fahrenheit.

Goat – Fat globules in goat's milk are smaller than in cow's milk, so many people find it easier to digest.

Horse – Centuries ago, Mongolian warriors dried this milk and then added water to it during long marches.

Reindeer – This high-fat milk is the only one available to Laplanders because no other dairy animal can live in the extreme cold of the area.

Sheep – This milk makes yummy French Roquefort and chevre cheeses.

Water buffalo – Half of the milk consumed in India comes from these creatures.

Yak – In Tibet, people enjoy yak butter tea, which tastes like a salty, creamy soup that has been whipped to a froth.

These interesting facts provided by the Dairy Farmers of America at www.havemilk.com.

beef. But while talking to a chef, she learned that beef in restaurants is often slathered with butter before being served. Now she knows to ask questions when ordering.

Although cake mixes can be a danger (Duncan Hines is safe, but Betty Crocker and Pillsbury are not), MML says cooking is no problem with readily available dairy-free and lactose-free products, such as Nucoa margarine and Lactaid milk.

Lactaid pills are available in several strengths, which can be taken before consuming dairy products, but MML has built up a tolerance so that she can only eat small bites of dairy occasionally. If she consumes too much, MML suffers from what she describes as a feeling of "unwellbeing" accompanied by bloating and diarrhea. Some lactose-intolerant people report that yogurt is completely safe, but MML makes sure hers is soy-based.

MML says her "only gripe" is that her doctor insists she should be able to tolerate butter, but she can't. Otherwise, life is back to normal for MML as long as she watches what's in her food.

More information is available at www.lactaid.com.



About YUMMY NORTHWEST

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest.

Contact the editor

Comments, corrections, topic ideas and submissions are all most welcome. Yummy_Northwest@hotmail.com

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