



Rural Portraits

Farm family: Don and Diane Hamm

Hometown: Fredonia, Wisconsin

Children: Heather

Brothers: Rick and Randy

FarmFacts: Operates Hamm family dairy operation, 151 years old.

There was a day when news of the time pertained to Harriet Beecher Stowe, and whether slavery was right for America. A time when a young Abraham Lincoln was running for the U.S. Senate, and intense political turmoil gripped a struggling nation.

It was during those times that relatives of a young Fredonia, Wis farm family settled on a special plot of land, and began what is today the Don Hamm family farmstead. Just 25 miles north of Milwaukee with a population of 2000, Fredonia is rapidly

expanding, and attempting to cope with change.

The dairy farm, with 150 Holsteins and 120 head of youngstock, grows alfalfa for haylage and corn for silage, and has been in the Hamm family for 151 years.

Highway 57, newly made into 4 lanes runs alongside the operation, which Hamm anticipates will undergo future development pressure. "My closest neighbor that farms is about 2 miles away," said Hamm. "We're probably about 10-15 years away from a lot of houses coming in."

Don has been working the land for 14 years, and is partners in the operation with his wife Diane, and brothers Rick and Randy, and Randy's wife,

Mary.

Diane works part-time off the farm as a waitress, and Randy breeds cows full time in the area. Rick works full-time on the farm, while Mary is a deli manager in a local grocery store.

Don serves on the national NFO Board, NAFCOR Board and is Wis. NFO President. He

works part-time for the Dairy Department and helps with the local Wisconsin Dairy Promotion Board.

Area development has had a silver lining for the Hamms, who own a sand pit on their farm, and market the sand to sewer building companies and other building-site businesses. The

income has helped subsidize the dairy operation in recent years, as price volatility has become the norm.

Don has served on the church school board for 8 years, and as chairman for the last 3 years. Diane is general leader for the 4-H Club, and Mary is the Dairy Leader.

Once a month Diane volunteers at a Milwaukee soup kitchen. The Hamm's donate a cow a year for hamburger to the kitchen. "I've been down there a couple of times," said Don. "It really hit me pretty hard, that we as farmers can't get a price for our product because there is a surplus (yet you see people in need)."

Don and Diane Hamm family farm

- ◆ 151 year old family farm specializing in milk production
- ◆ 150 Holsteins and 120 head of youngstock help support the partnership