

Women of the Farm Event

Save the Date
Saturday, January 20, 2018

Ladies, can you believe another year has gone by? We can't wait to welcome you to the Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery once again for our 4th Annual Women of the Farm Luncheon!

More details and your official invitation will be coming your ways soon (watch your December milk checks). However, for now, we ask that you reserve Saturday, January 20, 2018 on your calendar.

We look forward to bringing you another opportunity for learning, relaxation, fun, and socializing.



Here we are at the 2017 Women of the Farm event. The room was filled to capacity, but that didn't keep us from having a great time together! We look forward to doing it again in 2018!



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232 North Wallace Street
Ellsworth, WI 54011
(715) 273-4311

www.ellsworthcheese.com



November 2017

Congratulations Mark Anderson

Please join us in congratulating Mark Anderson as he transitions to a new role within our organization. Mark is currently in training to assume a position in our sales department where he will be handling cheese curd sales for our foodservice and retail sales division, in preparation for the upcoming retirement of long-time sales representative, Tony Birkel.

Mark began his career with Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery in 1987, working with us for four years before purchasing his own milk-route and hauling milk for our Creamery's patrons. After 17 years an opportunity presented itself for Mark to rejoin our organization as a shift supervisor in our Ellsworth plant. It was just a year and a half later that Tony Birkel left his position as a field representative to join the sales team. You can probably guess who filled Tony's field representative position... Yes, it was Mark.

In January it will be 10 years since Mark first began visiting patron farms as a field rep. "I've really enjoyed working with our patrons and visiting their farms," Mark says. "There's always something new every day, which was great because I enjoy helping the farmers solve problems. It's time for a new challenge, though, and I'm really looking forward to this new opportunity."

In addition to continuing in his current role, Mark's been training for his new responsibilities. Part of his training has included attending various trade shows and expos with the sales team. "One thing that has been interesting so far is the variety of people I've met at the shows," says Mark. "One minute you're talking to the owner of a mom and pop shop, and the next person you meet is a salesperson for a big national corporation."

Most recently Mark took the lead on corporate gift box sales for this year's holiday season. While it may seem that the holidays are still a few weeks away, in

the corporate world the season is already here! Mark's been busy working with companies and organizations, assisting them with their gift box orders for their clients and special employees, suggesting options for custom gifts, and arranging for shipment and delivery.

Mark is going to be a great asset in his new position," says Paul Bauer, Manager/CEO. "His many years of experience with us gives him a base of knowledge for how our organization works. I always know I can count on Mark; he's always willing to jump in wherever help is needed, going the extra mile without complaint."

We know Mark will do a great job in his new positions, and also understand that he'll be missed by the patron farms who he has served so well over the last 10 years. Rest assured that field representatives, Dean Hines and Shane Bamman will take good care of you.



In 2018 Mark Anderson will be transitioning into a Sales Representative position within our sales department. Once again he'll be following in Tony Birkel's footsteps, stepping into Tony's role overseeing cheese curd sales for foodservice and retail.

ellsworth cooperative creamery

dairy proud for over 100 years.

Forecasting 2018 Milk Prices

Paul Bauer, CEO, Manager

To look forward we need to see where we have been. 2017 started with high hopes and then came the milk, a lot of it. We had full plants from Texas to Virginia, with the Dakotas all processing all the milk that they could accept into blocks. At one point during the year we had a \$0.30 spread between block and barrel cheese. Over the past 20 years the average of that spread has historically been only \$0.03. This year we are over a dime.

Butter is back and it's causing problems in the US, Canada, and France. The related cost of butterfat is too high to make cheese economically. The Canadians are making butter and then selling the protein at less than world-market prices just to get rid of the product.

So at the end of 2017 we have stable cheese prices, strong butter prices, weak nonfat dry milk prices and corresponding whey prices, and slightly positive milk production. We also have the problem of trade agreements being at risk of collapsing.

What's in store for us in 2018? My guess for the year hinges on the milk production from the farms. If milk production stays neutral to slightly positive, then we will see slightly declining milk prices, and cheese prices in 2018.

We may see some increasing prices – my prediction is to around \$17 per hundredweight in late 2018. Of course all this is contingent upon having a trade deal either equal to or better than what we have currently.

What Is Your Brand?

By Paul Bauer, CEO, Manager



Before you say you don't have one, or don't need one, you better read on...

A brand is a "collection of "perceptions" people have of a product, service, business, or organiza-

tion - it is what sticks in their minds and helps them make buying decisions. Apple's brand is innovation and outstanding design. Amazon is known for being "the everything store". Disney is known as the "bringers of joy".

You and your farm have a brand, too. The question is, what is it? What are the perceptions your neighbors, customers, and peers have about you and how you do business?

Here are a few things to consider when evaluating your own farm's brand:

- Do you mow your lawn and keep your yard picked up?
- Do you wave to your neighbors when you pass by their homes?
- Do you pay your neighbors a regular visit (at least once a year) just to say hello?
- Do you keep up your farm buildings and home?
- Do you ensure your farm equipment is parked in an organized fashion?
- Do your cows regularly stand in filth?

- Do you leave manure on the road-way?
- Do you participate in and attend local and community events?
- Do you look and smell like a professional when out and about?
- When communicating about your profession and the farming lifestyle (in person or via social media) do you balance the negative comments and complaints with all the positives that come with being a farmer and your own boss?
- Do you get involved in the community by actively participating in church, school, and civic organization events and initiatives?
- Do you take advantage of opportunities to serve your cooperative and fellow-cooperative members?
- Do you advocate for agriculture and actively promote dairy at the

local (or state or national level)?

How many of these questions could you answer "yes" to?

While these examples may seem random, and even unimportant, they say a lot about who you are

and have an impact on your farm's reputation. They demonstrate the pride you have in your farm and profession, the value you place on the farming lifestyle, and that you're a good neighbor, who cares about and contributes to the community. A positive brand-identity such as this goes a long way toward growing the respect and support of your neighbors and community.

"What are the perceptions your neighbors, customers, and peers have about you and how you do business?"

Just in Time! Expansion Project Update

It's been a year since we announced to you an expansion project underway at our Ellsworth plant. We are now starting to experience the benefits of this completed project!

The expansion was necessary to keep up with the demand for our value-added products. We had maxed out our capabilities and needed to decide whether to expand or stop growing.

The 28,000 square foot addition added cooler and dry storage space, along with square footage to expand from two to four production lines; two for cheese cutting and wrapping and two for cheese curd packaging.

The second cheese curd packing line up and running, and just in time! Packaged curds are up 125% so far for the year. Two-ounce packaged curds are up 338% based on tonnage and represents a huge growth area for us because the packaging hits a sweet spot for what consumers want today.

Packaging of small-batch artisan cheese has now transferred entirely to Ellsworth from Comstock, freeing up

valuable space for cheese production there. The second cutting/packaging line will be in use soon and we continue to evaluate opportunities to maximize our existing equipment.

One interesting external features of the building is a mural of historic photos depicting work at Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery throughout history. This has already become very popular with visitors to our retail store.

The mural is a work in progress; we hope to add additional photos with various scenes from the early days of our cooperative, as well as a key to explain each photo for visitors.

Finding quality photos that can be enlarged is a challenge. If you have old original photographs of Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery in your family's archives, we would like to talk with you. Your photo would be scanned and returned to you in its original condition. Please contact Brenda by phone at 715-273-4311 ext. 201 or by email at brendab@eccreamery.net. She can put you in touch with our marketing team.



News Bites...

Prepare To Pass Your Next Inspection

While farm inspections may not be your favorite thing, they're necessary. Here's our top tip for preparing for your next one:

Review the results from your last inspection, particularly the areas where you failed to pass. Ensure that all of these areas have been corrected. It's a simple common sense tip, yet one that is often ignored and upsets inspectors.

Receiving two consecutive debits in the same area is an automatic fail, resulting in re-inspections. Your goal should be no double debits.

Updated Cheese List

We recently updated our retail store Cheese List to include all our most current offerings. You should have received a copy with your last milk check. To request additional copies, or to place an order, call 715-273-4311, ext. 225.

New: Gift Boxes for Holiday 2017

We're so excited to roll out our newly designed gift boxes for the 2017 holiday season. Featuring all our most popular products, and our newly design branded gift boxes, they are sure to be a hot gift idea!

Plus, a new limited edition box that's sure to be a collector's item. The Country Crate collection features several cheese favorites in a hand-crafted distressed wooden box stamped with the Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery logo! Hopefully, we made your gift-giving easier this year!