



Summer Farm Living

2025

A Publication of the Steele County Times & Dodge County Independent

Owatonna man has nearly 1,500 butter boxes

BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN

People collect all sorts of things. But it's safe to say not many people collect butter boxes—the small cardboard boxes found in grocery stores containing a pound of butter.

Scott Krause and his father, Loren, previously milked about 100 cows in Havana Township until 2021. While they got out of the milking business, they continue to raise beef cattle.

It was about 20 years ago that Krause said he got interested in butter boxes. He said he had always been a collector, but when someone gave him some old boxes from creameries in Steele and Dodge Counties, it “kind of took off.” It's become almost an addiction, he said.

Now, he figures he has about 1,500 butter boxes. Some of the boxes go back to the 1920s, he said, although most are from the 1950s and 1960s. Most are also from Minnesota, and many are from Steele and surrounding counties.

That is a time, he said, when there were many creameries in Minnesota and the Midwest, making butter and in some cases cheese.

A large number of the boxes are displayed on a very large makeshift table in a shed on his father's See **BUTTER BOXES** on 15 ►



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Breakfast on the Farm in Olmsted County

Dodge County does not have a Breakfast on the Farm as many other counties do during June Dairy Month, but there is such an event next door in Olmsted County.

This year's Olmsted County Breakfast on the Farm is Saturday, June 21, at the North Creek Dairy in Chatfield. The event runs from 6:15 to 11:30 a.m.

The breakfast will feature "Chris Cakes" pancakes, sausage, milk, juice, cheese and coffee.

There will be a variety of other events including horse-drawn wagon rides, educational agricultural displays and exhibits and kids activities.

It also is the kick-off event to Rochesterfest.

Cost for the breakfast

is \$8 for adults, \$5 for kids 5 to 12 and free for those 5 and under. The farm is located at 9500 Highway 30 SE, Chatfield. There is limited parking at the farm but there are free bus rides to and from Mayo High School in Rochester.

Steele County had its Breakfast on the Farm June 7 at the Balzer Dairy Farm east of Medford.



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PURE MILK, PROUD HERITAGE

Balzers one of 12 dairy farms left in Steele County

BY RICK BUSSLER

While dairy cows have been roaming the Balzer family farm for the past 76 years, it wasn't until 10 years ago when the family took a major step forward to ensure the operation will continue to thrive for decades more.

In 2015, Rick and Cathy Balzer's son, Scott, decided to join the family dairy operation. That's when the Balzers made a major investment in building a new barn and getting two robotic milkers. The barn was designed around the robots to provide as much comfort as possible for the cows.

"Scott wanted to milk and that drove us into the robots," Rick said.

Rick's father, Lawrence, started the farm east of Medford in 1949.

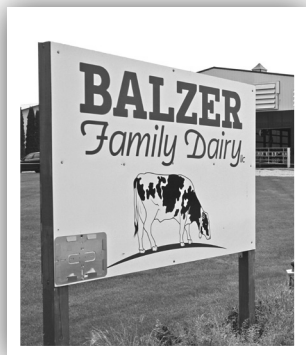


PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

The dairy barn on the Balzer farm was built in 2015 to accommodate robotic milkers for their 110 cows.

"It was always my plan to come back to work on the farm."

Scott Balzer

Steele County Dairy Farmer

Rick and Cathy are thrilled to have the third generation on the farm today. They are among 12 dairy farms left in Steele County and the only one with robotic milkers.

Scott went off to college at the University of Wisconsin River Falls, where he obtained a degree in dairy science prior to returning home to join the family operation. Prior to coming back, he worked as a herdsman for a large dairy operation of 800 cows near River Falls.

"It was always my plan to come back to work on the farm," Scott said. "When you grow up doing it, it's natural to do it," he added.

Currently, the Balzers milk 110 cows, which Rick said is on the low end of what they've had. The most they've milked is 130 cows. They also have 70 newborn to 6-month-old calves in the calf barn.

One of the greatest challenges in dairy farming is dealing with the fluctuation in milk prices, according to the Balzers. Milk prices have averaged \$17 to \$18 per

hundredweight in recent months. The high has been \$24 with the low around \$15. Rick is hopeful the tariffs will help increase overall milk prices.

Rick knows the dairy operation that he worked hard to build for many years is in good hands with his son. He said the greatest enjoyment he gets out of farming is "working with family," though they experience the natural ups and downs that come with life. "I like to watch them progress and grow," he said of his family.

The Balzers are planning to make some improvements to their cattle facilities this year. "We're trying to make things more efficient with improvements," Rick said, adding there haven't been many updates since 2019.

Asked if he enjoys working with his son, Rick replied with a chuckle, "As long as I listen to him, we're fine. He's had to set me straight a couple times." Rick admits that "as a dad, it's hard to relinquish some of the duties and tasks."

The Balzers enjoy

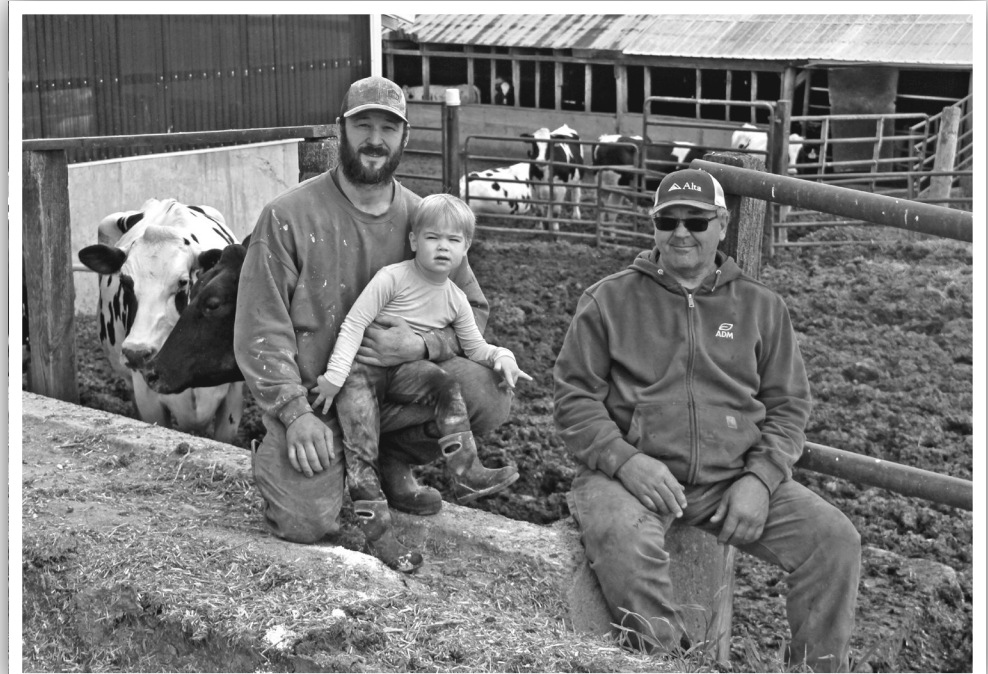


PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

The Balzer dairy farm east of Medford has been in the family since 1949. Scott Balzer, left holding his 3-year-old son Brantley, farms with his dad, Rick Balzer. The Balzers are hoping Brantley, who represents the fourth generation, will continue the farming tradition when he grows up.

opening their farm to groups in an effort to educate the public about the dairy industry. About 1,000 people attended the annual Breakfast on the Farm at the Balzers' on June 7. It was the fifth time since 1998 that they have hosted the event for June Dairy Month.

Earlier this year, the Balzers hosted 115 home school children with their parents. They have also had ag classes from area schools as well as groups from the local chamber.

"It's good to get the city kids out here to see where

their food comes from," Scott said. "They need to know it's not just coming off the shelves at Walmart."

Rick said many people have a vision that all cows are on a pasture. The Balzer cows are mostly in the barn, which is climate controlled for the comfort of the animals. The ventilation system keeps them cool in the summers and they have water foggers during extreme heat. They also have access to food and water.

"They are in their own little world out there," Rick said. "They don't

want to leave their stalls. They look so comfortable."

Some cows, however, have a mind of their own. Rick shared how one of their cows likes the robot so much that she is always in the robot room even when she's not supposed to be and creating a little trouble. Recently the cow broke a screen valued at \$2,000. "You have to remain calm with her," he said.

Besides milking, the Balzers also farm 500 acres of corn, soybeans, oats and alfalfa. They said the robotic milkers allow

See **DAIRY FARM** on 18 ►

3 young women represent Dodge County as dairy princesses

BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN

Ellie Sauder, Alita Rinehart and Josie Sauder will be representing Dodge County dairy farmers this year after being named the county's dairy princesses.

Ellie Sauder is completing her sophomore year at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls, where she is majoring in ag marketing and communications. This is her third year as a Dodge County Princess. She will be spending the summer as an intern with Midwest Dairy, where she will be working with state dairy princesses. Midwest Dairy is the sponsor of the Prin-

cess Kay of the Milky Way program.

Alita Rinehart is also a returning dairy princess. She currently works at Saint Marys in Rochester. Her goal, she said is to be a child life specialist and work with kids. She adds that dairy is very important to her and she “talks about cows all the time.”

Josie Sauder has just completed her senior year in high school. This is the first year she has been a dairy princess, following in the footsteps of her sister, Ellie. Growing up on a dairy farm with 600 cows, she said she is involved with milking and feeding them as well as driving the tractor. Off the farm, she said, she is involved in trap

shooting and church activities. She said ever since she was a little girl, she thought it would be fun to give out ribbons at the fair. “I’m super excited and hope to learn a lot,” she said.

Both Ellie and Josie Sauders attended the May leadership event for dairy princesses from throughout the state.

During the weekend, attendees had an opportunity to hear from speakers about building a brand image, how to advocate for dairy and learning more about dairy innovations.

At the conclusion of the event, 10 young women were chosen to vie for the title of Princess Kay of the Milky Way, including Natalie Clemenson of



Dodge County Dairy Princesses for 2025 are, from left: Ellie Sauder, Alita Rinehart and Josie Sauder.

Zumbrota, who represents neighboring Goodhue County. Princess Kay will be announced the evening before opening day of the

Minnesota State Fair.

All the princesses will be busy during the summer as they make appearances at events in Dodge

County as well as some in Olmsted County. Look for them at all the local festivals and at the Dodge County Fair.

State Holstein Show coming to Dodge County June 17-21

BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN

The dairy barns at the Dodge County Fairgrounds will be filled with activity June 17-21 as the 2025 Minnesota Holstein State Show comes to Kasson.

So far about 300 animals have been signed up to arrive to take part in three separate shows, said Jeff Pagel, show co-chair.

The event rotates around the state each year, Pagel said, with local Holstein clubs taking turns as sponsors. This year's

show is being sponsored by the Rochester Area Holstein Club that includes members from Olmsted, Dodge, Winona, Wabasha, Fillmore and Mower Counties. The Rochester Club has hosted the state event before, he said, the last time in 2016. This is the first time that the event has been held in Dodge County.

The event holds three separate shows, he said, Red and White, Junior Holstein and Open Class. Although the first of three shows will not happen until Thursday, there will be

activity at the fairgrounds all week.

Barns will be open for bed down on Monday although no animals will be arriving. The first animals will arrive on Tuesday, June 17, continuing through Wednesday, June 18.

The shows get under way at 9 a.m. on Thursday, June 19, with the Red and White Show. Although the most common coloring for Holsteins is black and white, Pagel said, there are some red and white animals.

The Junior Show begins at 8 a.m. on Friday with the Open Show for all animals beginning at 8 a.m. on Friday.

Although all the shows are open to the public, Pagel said that the largest turnout is generally for the Open Show.

Judging is done on specific criteria, he said, and all the judges for the show come from a national list of approved judges. To be approved as a judge, he said, an individual must complete training and attend judges' conferences.

The state show, he said, is followed by the Midwest Holstein Show in the fall. The World Dairy Expo, he said, is held every year in Madison, Wis.

Participants have different reasons for taking part in the shows, Pagel said. For some, it's just a hobby, and they want to show their animals.

For those involved more in marketing and genetics, the shows take on greater importance. In the show world, he said, if a calf goes to shows and places first versus fifth



for example, there can be tens of thousands difference in the animal's sale price.

Pagel said the Rochester Holstein Club has known for three years that they would be hosting the 2025 show. Getting ready for a big show like this, he said, is a lot of work and requires fundraising and getting sponsors.

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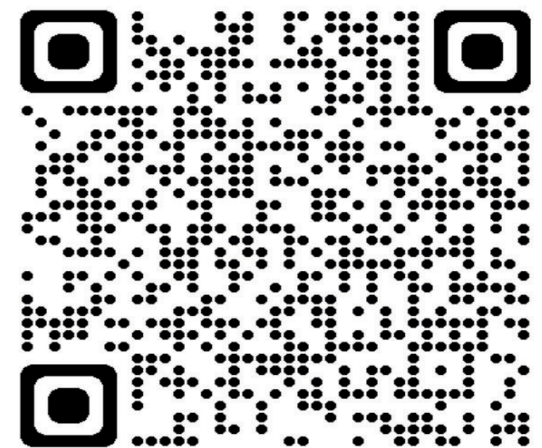
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MEET THE DAIRY PRINCESSES

Seven young women are representing Steele County as dairy princesses this year. We would like you to meet them this week and learn more about what has led them to becoming ambassadors of the dairy industry.



Princess:
Isabella Schultz-17

Parents: Grant and Julie Schultz

Home: Owatonna

Why serve as dairy princess:

I have a strong passion for the dairy industry and love to share my knowledge about agriculture with others.

What do you look forward to as dairy princess:

Teaching others about the importance of the dairy industry.

High School/college activities:

I am involved in cross country, track, student council, DECA, National Honor Society, Concert Choir, Concert Band, Marching Band, Carolers and the musical. I am also

involved in my 4-H club and a 4-H ambassador.

Describe your dairy farm:

I began getting involved in the dairy industry after I joined Cow Camp, a community education summer camp that introduced kids to the dairy industry. I began showing through 4-H with Clover Glen Farms. Clover Glen was a small dairy farm that had Brown Swiss and Holstein cattle. I have been a part of Nelsonway Farms for the past year and am extremely grateful to be able to be a part of the dairy industry even though I do not live on a dairy farm.

Your responsibilities on the dairy farm:

Because I do not live on a dairy farm and I lease my animals, I do not have specific responsibilities; however, whenever I am able I try to help out as best as I can. I often help with calf chores, which include feeding and bedding the calf hutches.

Accomplishment most proud of:

The accomplishment I am most proud of was becoming a cross country and track captain. I am not the number one runner but being chosen by my peers meant that they valued my character which means so much more to me than any race time.

Future goals:

My goal for the next five years is to receive my mas-

ter's in occupational therapy so that I can become a licensed occupational therapist. Within the next 10 years, I hope to move back to the Owatonna area and work as a pediatric occupational therapist. I hope to start a family while also keeping agriculture and the dairy industry a part of my life.



Princess:
Samantha Fredin-23

Parents: Julie Evers and Scott Fredin

Home: Owatonna

Why serve as dairy princess:

I would like to serve our county as a dairy princess because I want to make an impact. This impact can be with the youth of the community or people who are curious to learn more about dairy cattle. Having this platform enables us to use our voices to educate the public about important topics within the dairy industry.

What do you look forward to as dairy princess:

I'm excited to engage with the youth in our community. Sharing the

message about the importance of dairy products and where they come from is what I'm most excited about. During these conversations, you never know who you might spark an interest in for dairy cattle and what possible impact they could make in this industry in the future.

High School/college activities:

University of Minnesota activities: Animal Science Graduate Club, tutor and teaching assistant and Dairy Journal Club.

Iowa State activities: Alpha Zeta (former president and treasurer), Dairy Challenge, Dairy Product Evaluation Team/Club (former treasurer), undergraduate research, Genetics Club, Dairy Science Club, dance marathon and Kairos.

Describe your dairy farm:

Stranshome Dairy is home to dairy cattle, beef cattle, chickens, swine and cash crops. There can be anywhere from 5-10 calves I get to assist in feeding and caring for. On the farm, the cattle are broken up by age into different barns. Along with this, there is a hoop barn where the show cattle are housed to receive specific diets. The rest of the milking cattle are in a tie stall barn. During the summer months, I help with weekly washing of their showstock and assisting the youth with their projects.

Accomplishment most proud of:

When I think of accomplishments I've received over the years, the one that comes to mind initially is my Genetics and Dairy Science bachelor's degrees. During my four years at Iowa State, I pushed myself to complete my studies within the normal amount of time one degree requires. This meant I enrolled in 20+ credits a semester and countless hours studying on top of my extra circulars and jobs I held during my four years. I'm proud of myself for accomplishing the goal I set in the early days of my college education.

Future goals:

In five years, I will have received my master's degree in animal science from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and have established my career with three/four years of experience. My career will focus on biostatistics and/or genetic consulting within the dairy industry. During the next five years, I hope to travel to conferences to continue to expand my knowledge in academia research and how it might impact the dairy industry. Ten years down the road I find myself continuing to grow in my position and earn a promotion. During my career I want to maintain a job that is centered around working with farm data to align breeding programs for progressive producers.



Princess:
Anna Cox- 18

Parents: Andy and Lindsay Cox

Home: Owatonna

Why serve as dairy princess:

I am passionate about the dairy industry and enjoy spending time with others spreading knowledge about dairy. I enjoyed my many years of being a dairy ambassador and was excited to take a higher role of involvement in becoming a dairy princess last year and loved my experience.

What do you look forward to as dairy princess:

Going to public events where I get to personally interact with others creating positive relationships with the community establishing a strong bond between our dairy farmers and the local public.

High School/college activities:

In high school, I ran track and cross country and was involved in FFA, NHS and 4-H, which I am still involved in. In college, I am majoring in business management. Though I

am not as heavily involved in college compared to high school, I do enjoy participating in intramural sports, being involved in discipleship/bible groups and exploring around Arkansas.

Describe your dairy farm:

I grew up showing for and helping on Clover Glen Farms, with a herd of Holstein and Brown Swiss. Summer of 2023 they began to sell their herd and are no longer an active dairy. I now plan to show and help around at NelsonWay they have a herd of Holstein, Brown Swiss, Ayrshires and Guernseys.

Your responsibilities on the dairy farm:

Previously I would help with calf chores, miling and would come to help for other animals upkeep such as hoof trimming and vet checks. At NelsonWay, I plan to help with similar chores and tasks, anything else they need my help with around the farm and am looking forward to learning the ins and outs of their operation.

Accomplishment most proud of:

Graduating high school with high distinction. This was something that I worked very hard towards throughout high school and pride myself in my abilities. I also was involved and excelled in many other areas such as athletics, being a varsity athlete and qualifying for state, as well as my involvement in school clubs. Though grades aren't everything and the experiences I had, friends I made and lessons I learned are much

more important, it shows my high work ethic and ability to manage my time and balance being heavily involved in many areas.

Future goals:

In five years, I will have hopefully graduated from Harding University with a degree in business management and will have found a position that allows me to use my degree and in a position that allows me to move up. In 10 years, I hope to have settled into a career that I love and am passionate about and am able to grow in. I also hope to have traveled around increasing my knowledge of different cultures and continuing to learn, perhaps going back to college to get my masters.



Princess:
Madison Homuth- 19

Parents: Jon and Casey Homuth

Home: Owatonna
Why serve as dairy princess:

I want to promote the dairy industry to the younger generations in order to keep the dairy industry from fading and becoming non-existent. I want to be a leader for other girls that are wanting to become a dairy princess and show that hard work does pay off and after years, you can still accomplish your dreams.

What do you look forward to as dairy princess:

Learning new things and working with the younger kids to teach them about dairy cows, production of milk, farm life, hard work and why it is important to keep dairy farms around.

High School/college activities:

National Honor Society, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Best Buddies and Miracle League. In college, I am part of the Green Bandana Group and project, a part of Student Activities Committee.

Describe your dairy farm:

The dairy farm that I am with is Schmity Holsteins. They have 450 head of Holsteins, and they milk about 200. The cows are milked twice a day. The farm is a family-owned farm with over 200 acres of land where corn, grain and alfalfa are grown to feed the animals.

Your responsibilities on the dairy farm:

When I help on the farm, I help work with the animals for show season as well as helping with chores, feeding, sometimes milking if needed, and helping with cutting their hair for show season as well. I make sure that the animals have easy access to their water and food.

Accomplishment most proud of:

My ability to work full time as a resident assistant at Ecumen Brooks and also managing to stay on track with school. I have done this for about two years now and I am very proud of being able to maintain my grades

and manage to work as much as I do already. Another accomplishment that I am proud of was being inducted into the National Honor Society my sophomore year. This was a big accomplishment because it is not a club that very many students can get into because it is based on your academics and your grades and how well you are able to maintain your GPA. These are just two of the many accomplishments that I am proud of.

Future goals:

My goals for the next five years include graduating from St. Mary's University of Minnesota from the nursing program, becoming a registered nurse and working in pediatrics, hopefully in the NICU or PICU. I also want to add a minor in sign language. I have watched how much sign language has helped my little sisters in communicating with them while they are learning to speak. With this added knowledge in pediatrics, I'll be able to help communicate with the littles and will also be able to communicate with others who might be hard of hearing.



Princess:
Ali Slater- 19

Parents: Chris and Andrea Slater

Home: Owatonna
Why serve as dairy princess:

I want to teach kids about dairy. I want to help promote the dairy industry by teaching people where their dairy products come from.

What do you look forward to as dairy princess:

I look forward to interacting with people at the various events that are planned for this summer such as Breakfast on the Farm, parades and, of course, the fair.

High School/college activities:

Work and help plan activities for my residents.

Describe your dairy farm:

Our dairy farm has been in the Schmidt family since 1884. My uncle Jon took my grandpa's small herd of 34 cows and grew it into around 200 milking cows. My dad is in charge of feeding and maintenance of all the animals. My brothers Steven and Jacob both milk the cows. My grandpa Myron is in charge of feeding the young calves. I enjoy helping with field work and calf chores.

Your responsibilities on the dairy farm:

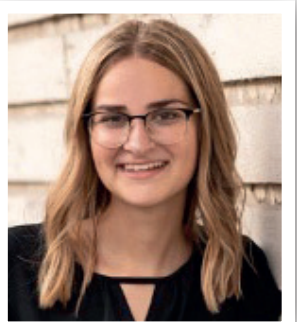
Making sure grandpa stays on task, field work when needed, getting the girls ready for the fair and chasing cows whenever they get out.

Accomplishment most proud of:

One of my biggest accomplishments was when my cow, Saige, got intermediate champion at the district show.

Future goals:

Finish college and getting a full-time job as a vet tech.



Princess:
Mady Murphy- 19

Parents: Kim and Jon Schmidt

Home: Owatonna
Why serve as dairy princess:

I want to support the dairy community and get kids interested in learning about the dairy community/industry.

What do you look forward to as dairy princess:

Working with kids in Steele County and helping them learn more about the dairy industry.

High School/college activities:

Working at Kids Korner Educare taking care of infants. Spending time with friends and family.

Describe your dairy farm:

We have a 450-cow dairy farm. Majority of our animals are registered Holsteins. We also have a small herd of 12 registered Jerseys. I am the owner of the Jersey herd. We currently milk around 200 cows twice a day. The farm consists of 250 acres where corn, alfalfa, winter rye, triticale and peas are grown and used to feed the cattle.

Your responsibilities on the dairy farm:

See **PRINCESSES** on 18 ►

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'Butter Capital of the World'

Steele County once produced 2.5M pounds of butter

BY KAREN M. JORGENSEN

It might be unknown to many Steele County residents today, but at one time, and well into the 20th century, Steele County was proclaiming itself as "Butter Capital of the World."

While that was a self-proclaimed title, there is no doubt dairy farming and creameries have played an important role in the history of the county.

A written history of creameries in Steele County ("History of Creameries in Steele County," BD Hanson 2001) recounts that farmers began increasing the number of dairy cows on their farms in the 1880s.

At the time, wheat was the dominant crop, and milk cows were owned by farmers to provide milk and butter for the family. Surplus milk was turned into butter and used to trade with the general stores.

As time went on, wheat production dropped, and farmers

increased their dairy herds. More cows brought a need for places to sell the milk, and that gave rise to cheese-making facilities. As time passed, farmers began to buy these private factories and formed cooperatives. The cooperative movement is thought to have started in Freeborn County by Danish immigrant farmers.

The number of privately owned facilities dropped, and most were farmer-owned cooperatives by the end of the 1880s.

In 1900, there were 21 creameries in Steele County, producing 2,500,000 pounds of butter annually. In 1913, there were only three counties in the state producing more butter than Steele County – Freeborn, Stearns and Wright. But because these three counties had a greater population, Steele County claimed the title "Butter Capital of World" as they had markets as far away as Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia.

An exhibit by the Steele County Historical

Society also addressed the county's dairy history in 2013.

The exhibit pointed out there were many reasons leading to Steele County considering itself the Butter Capital.

Two local women, Mina Holms and Marianne McRostie, won numerous national awards for their hand-churned butter. Since there were so many creameries, factories in Owatonna made the needed equipment, including churns and butter boxes. In 1893, Owatonna Manufacturing Co. invented a mechanized butter churn that revolutionized the dairy industry.

At its peak in the first half of the 20th century, there were more than two dozen creameries making primarily butter but some also cheese. Although the numbers began dropping, these small cooperative creameries were still in business into the 1950s and 1960s.

Today, privately owned Hope Creamery, which makes butter, is the only creamery still operating in the county.



Owatonna man has nearly 1,500 butter boxes

◀ **BUTTER BOXES** from 2 farm. A quick glance at the display showed butter boxes from Owatonna, Hope, Meriden, Ellendale, Havana, Claremont, Dodge Center, Hayfield and Moland. There was a box from Pine Island, where the creamery also made cheese. Owatonna boasted several creameries at the time, including Gilt Edge and Marigold butters.

Some creameries in the display have multiple boxes, as they changed the box design or had a different scene on each of the boxes' four sides. Krause said butter boxes seemed more creative then. Often, there was a picture on the box that had some connection to the town where it was made or perhaps a wildlife scene.

Several of the boxes come from towns in Minnesota he had never heard of. One such town is Delbo, in the northern part of the state. Northern Minnesota, he added, is not an area where one thinks of dairy farms.



His collection is not limited to Minnesota. He said in addition to Minnesota, he has boxes from Iowa, Wisconsin, and North Dakota, as well as a few from as far away as Montana.

As one might expect, there are not a lot of people who collect butter boxes.

Krause said there are some small groups of collectors on Facebook that he talks with. If he finds someone who has a duplicate of a box he doesn't have, he will offer to buy it. Or if he has a box the other

collector wants, and they have one he wants, they will just exchange them.

Other times he will find a box he doesn't have at an antique store or a farm auction. Wherever he goes, he always keeps a lookout for a butter box he does not have.

For now, the boxes will be staying on the table in the shed, but Krause said some day, he may give them to the Minnesota State Fair in hopes they will be put on display in the Dairy Building.

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CONGRATULATIONS DAIRY PRINCESSES!



This year's Dairy Princesses for Steele County are, from left: Chloe Garten, Ali Slater, Samantha Fredin and Isabella Schultz. Three of the princesses are missing but represented by the bags being held: Ana Cox, Madison Homuth and Madi Murphy.

We want to thank these young women for representing our industry throughout the year.

Come join us at our Malt Stand at area events this summer, including Blooming Prairie's Fourth of July Celebration, Gem Days and Steele County Free Fair.



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MEET THE DAIRY PRINCESSES

◀ PRINCESSES from 11

I helped milk cows from August 2021-July 2023. I work with the animals and clip/wash them to get them ready for the Steele County Free Fair.

Accomplishment most proud of:

Getting accepted into the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Future goals:

Going to college and obtaining my degree in elementary education and finding a good job in my field of study.



Princess: Chloe Garten- 18

Parents: Joel Garten and Denise and Tim Nelson

Home: Owatonna

Why serve as dairy princess:

I would like to serve as a

dairy princess because of me just being part of the dairy ambassadors and me just looking up to dairy princesses. I remember thinking I want to be one of those one day because they're able to help teach little kids and adults learn more about the dairy industry.

What do you look forward to as dairy princess:

As a dairy princess, I look forward to teaching little kids

more about the dairy industry and being able to tell them and show them that you don't have to be on a farm or live on a farm to participate in the dairy ambassador programs.

High School/College activities:

I am a hockey manager and partake in AP classes.

Describe your dairy farm:

When I am on the farm, I help with cow chores and any other chores that need to be done.

Accomplishment most proud of:

One accomplishment I am most proud of is that I have been accepted into a college nursing program.

Future goals:

In five years, I plan to be just freshly graduated and starting to figure where I want to go in life and where I want to work. And, in 10 years, I plan on being in the pediatrics field.



PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

It's milking time at the Balzer farm as a cow makes its way into the stall to be milked by a robot. The Balzers have been utilizing robots for milking for about 10 years.

Balzers one of 12 dairy farms left in Steele County

◀ DAIRY FARM from 5

them to focus more on the crops and other areas of the operation.

Rick and Scott are hopeful that the fourth generation, Scott's 3-year-old son, Brantley, will someday take over the operation. "We

want to make it fun for Brantley and not work him to death," Rick said.

As Rick looks over how his operation has grown and improved, he's confident about one thing.

"I know my dad would be proud of me and Scott."

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