

# Farm produces milk from start to finish

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**  
For the Capital Press

Third-generation dairy farmer Garry Hansen has found a clear niche selling milk in glass bottles.

In 2000 Hansen purchased a dairy farm near Mulino, Ore., a stone's throw from the farm where he grew up. He has raised and managed cows since childhood and is dedicated to his herd of registered Jersey cows and the Jersey breed.

Like his family before him, Hansen sold his milk to the Darigold co-op but grew weary of government-regulated prices and other limitations. When financial troubles hit the dairy in 2003 he decided to go it alone and set out to build Garry's Meadow Fresh brand.

He purchased processing

equipment from a retired milk producer-processor and spent five years putting the infrastructure in place that would allow him to produce milk from start to finish.

The going was slow; for two years Hansen and his team raced around to five Portland farmers' markets every weekend.

Hansen bottles his milk in both glass bottles and plastic jugs. One Saturday in 2009 he brought an equal number of plastic and glass containers to Beaverton's Farmers' Market. The glass-bottled milk sold out within the first two hours.

"That kind of unclouded our vision and put us on the right path," Hansen said. Over the next year they worked in earnest to build the brand and get it on local



Courtesy of Garry's Meadow Fresh Dairy

Garry's Meadow Fresh milk makes a splash on store shelves. The independent dairy found its niche in glass-bottled milk and gentler processing methods.

store shelves. Hansen said his training and experience as an auctioneer proved helpful in his marketing.

Another pivotal point came in 2010 when Garry's Meadow Fresh got the nod from New Seasons Market, an upscale Portland-based chain. Hansen finally withdrew from the co-op.

"New Seasons is good about giving local people a try and they're really growing," said Hansen. At this time, 60 percent of the dairy's milk goes to New Seasons.

In 2009 Hansen was milking about 50 cows; he now milks 85, bottling



Courtesy of Garry's Meadow Fresh Dairy

Garry Hansen is shown with Kiss, one of his registered Jersey cows.

about 300 gallons of milk a day in glass half-gallon, quart and pint-size bottles.

Beyond the glass, the milk appeals to customers because it's fresh, locally grown and processed differently from the norm.

The milk is vat pasteurized — heated to 145 degrees and held there for 30 minutes. Most milk is ultra

pasteurized — brought to 280 degrees for two seconds.

"It doesn't have as long a shelf life — ours is 18 days to three weeks," Hansen said, "but it preserves far more active enzymes and the flavor is better."

Another difference is that Hansen doesn't homogenize to break down the milkfat and blend it into the milk.

"Except for the fat-free, the cream will be on top, just the way it came from the cow," he said, adding that many older folks claim its taste harkens back to the milk of their youth.

Running a dairy and processing plant, finding a niche, building a brand and staying on top of supply and demand is hard work.

"The price points may look high — whole milk averages \$4.50 a half gallon with a \$2 bottle deposit — but you've got to put heart and soul into all aspects of the business," Hansen said.

## NORTHWEST DAIRY SERVICE

**NOW SELLING  
IRRIGATION SYSTEMS!**

### DAIRY SALES

- Stalls
- Headlocks
- Troughs
- Gates
- Waterbeds
- Pasture Mats
- Alley/Parlor Rubber
- Pumps
- Separators
- Scraper Systems
- Cow Brushes
- Float Valves
- Lights
- Fans
- Automation



Carter Clark

### IRRIGATION

- System Design
- Drip Systems
- Automation
- Pod Systems
- Irripod/Irriland
- Toro Ag
- Fresno Valve
- Dura Gheen
- Berkely Pumps
- Stocking Nelson Gun Parts & PVC



Dave Morgan

Visit us at:

**Northwest Dairy Service**

9525 Rickreall Rd • Rickreall, OR 97325  
www.nwdairyservice.com • 503-831-9770

D16-4#7

## THANK YOU TO THE DAIRY FARMERS OF OREGON & WASHINGTON

**WE APPRECIATE YOUR PAST BUSINESS AND  
LOOK FORWARD TO BEING OF SERVICE  
IN THE FUTURE.**

Contact us anytime for a confidential discussion to buy or sell.

**David Wood, CCIM**  
PRINCIPAL BROKER  
503-983-1585  
dwood@ccim.net  
www.oregon-ag.com

**John Lee, ALC**  
PRINCIPAL BROKER  
503-245-9090  
johnlee@remax.net  
www.oregonfarmbroker.com

**RE/MAX Advantage Plus - Farm/Land/Dairy Division**

D16-4#7