

## HANSEN QUALITY JERSEYS

# Where the cows are stars

By **DIANNA TROYER**

For the Capital Press

RUPERT, Idaho — Wondering which of three breeds would be most productive and profitable for his dairy, Leland Hansen bought Holstein, Guernsey and Jersey cows in the late 1930s for his farm near Twin Falls, Idaho.

“He kept them all separate and kept track of the feed costs and what he sold the milk for,” said his grandson, John Hansen, 55, who now runs the family dairy his grandfather started.

“It was an easy decision. He kept the Jerseys,” Hansen said. “They’re easygoing and productive without needing as much feed as a Holstein. We still have the genetics from those 50 cows in our herd.”

They became the foundation of Hansen Quality Jerseys north of Rupert. The milk from the Hansens’



Hansen Quality Jerseys

**Cows on the rotary carousel at Hansen Quality Jerseys near Rupert, Idaho.**

dairy, prized for its high fat content, is sold to Gossner Foods in nearby Heyburn and is made into Swiss cheese.

“Grandpa moved the business from Twin Falls up here to Rupert in 1956,”

Hansen said. “My dad and his brothers came, too, so I grew up in the business along with my cousins.”

Hansen and his cousins run the dairy in partnership. About a decade

ago, they expanded from 1,000 to 3,000 cows. Wanting to diversify the genetics of the herd, Hansen bought Jerseys from dairies in Oregon and California.

To accommodate the extra milk production due to the expansion, Hansen built a rotary milking facility.

The business provides jobs for 40 employees.

“Our daughter and son are involved with running the dairy along with my cousins’ sons,” he said.

The Hansens and their extended family also grow feed for their Jerseys. On 9,000 acres, they raise hay, corn silage, and grain for the dairy as well as barley, sugar beets and potatoes.

“We’re grateful our Jersey dairy has provided a livelihood for all of us,” Hansen said. “Running a dairy is tough these days, but we’re glad to be able to continue our family’s heritage.”



### ON THE COVER

On the cover is a calf at Hansen Quality Jerseys near Rupert, Idaho.

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