

# Cloverleaf Creamery and Dairy: Integrated from cows to stores

By HEATHER SMITH THOMAS  
For the Capital Press

BUHL, Idaho — Bill and Donna Stoltzfus have been farming near Buhl, Idaho, since 1973 and started their dairy in 1992. They now have 90 to 100 cows on their 200-acre farm, selling milk products to customers through their own store and several restaurants.

“We farmed in southeastern Pennsylvania before moving to Idaho,” Bill said. “Development was encroaching on farmland in that area. I had a good friend in northwest Washington and decided to move west and have cows out on pasture. We looked for places in Washington and Oregon, but ended up in Idaho,” he said.

“We raise our own forages. The cows have corn silage and pasture. The only feed purchased is a grain mix to balance the ration.”

The heifers, dry cows and milking herd are on a rotational grazing program, supplemented with a little hay and corn silage, but pasture is their main source of feed.

“I like having them on pasture; the cows are healthier, and improve the pasture by spreading manure themselves,” he said. The cows are all registered Holsteins.

“My son Eric and son-in-law Eric Butterworth are both involved, and my wife Donna works at the processing plant. She’s also in charge of the girls who run our store,” said Stoltzfus.

For about 10 years the dairy supplied milk to a small processing plant in town. “We purchased that plant in 2007 and now process all our milk. We do cream top whole milk, skim, 2%, half-and-half, cream, butter and ice cream.”

Some processing equipment had to be upgraded, including the ice cream equipment, since that’s the product their customers are most interested in.

The processing plant, with store front, is Cloverleaf Creamery.

“This location is fantastic because tourists stop by, along with our regular customers. We also do a

milk route 5 days a week, delivering milk to stores and restaurants as far east as Pocatello. We also go to Boise and Sun Valley,” he said.

They recently expanded to include a location in Twin Falls — also called Cloverleaf Creamery but part of the Second Street South Market. They sell dairy products through that outlet as well as their local store.

“We sell our milk as local, fresh and natural. We’re not certified organic but do things as naturally as we can. Our milk is in returnable glass bottles. Printed on our milk bottles is an invitation to see where the milk comes from. We’ve given many tours through the creamery and farm so people can see the cows and feed the calves,” he said.

Many of the people who come to see the farm are customers. Families come and bring their kids, to show them where milk comes from —and ice cream and other

products they love. Kids enjoy seeing cows grazing. Many families come to a farm for an outing, especially families from the city who don’t get much chance to see animals.

There weren’t any tours during the COVID pandemic but there are several lined up for this spring and summer.

“One school in Sun Valley brings their high school kids every other year, and we did manage to get that group here last year. Hopefully, things will stay opened up and we can get back into that a bit more,” he said.

“We are part of a program called Idaho Preferred, through the state Department of Agriculture. There is an Idaho Preferred label on much of our packaging, and this tells people it is locally grown,” said Stoltzfus.

His daughter, Olivia Butterworth, is opening a store in downtown Twin Falls, selling their milk and ice cream, plus products from other Idaho producers.

“She will be handling some craft beers and wines, and is also hooked up with a bakery in Boise that will be furnishing really good pies,” he said.



Bill Stoltzfus

# Schoch Dairy & Creamery: Surviving by changing directions

By BRENNA WIEGAND  
For the Capital Press

HELVETIA, Ore. — When the going got tough, Casey and Dave Schoch of Schoch’s Dairy and Creamery in Helvetia, Ore., were able to stay afloat thanks to the generosity of their friends, neighbors and lot of people they’ll never meet.

Casey and Dave moved back to the family farm in 1991, partnering with his parents at their conventional dairy where they milked, at their peak, about 200 cows.

“For 20 years we sold all our milk to Darigold,” Casey Schoch said. “There were some good times but there were a lot more really tough times for a small family farm trying to support two families.

“When you work that hard every day you at least want to go to bed at night knowing you can pay your bills,” she said. “It was hard on us, and we didn’t like how hard we had to push the cows, and we finally reached the point where we needed to do something different.”

The Schoches sold their milking herd, thinking they might go organic in hopes that it would generate more income. They got busy preparing their land for certification, but right about the time their heifers were coming online, organic creameries in the area announced they weren’t accepting any new shippers.

“Our choices were to bail or do something different with our milk,” Schoch said. “We came up with creating our own little creamery where we could process all our own milk, put in it glass bottles and sell it ourselves.

“Nobody was really doing that,” she added.



Schoch Dairy & Creamery  
Casey and Dave Schoch of Schoch Dairy & Creamery in Helvetia, Ore. Crowd-funding allowed them to change their operation and stay in business.

Dave, a mechanical engineer, drew up the blueprints, reimagining an existing barn as their new processing facility. However, they now faced a formidable challenge in realizing the conversion — how to feed their cows and pay their bills during the building process.

They made a budget and tried to stick to it, but, as with many such projects, it took much longer than anticipated and they ran out of money.

Someone suggested they run a Kickstarter campaign. The crowd funding platform let them tell their story, set a financial goal and, if they made it, they could keep the funds.

The family exceeded its goal by nearly \$2,000, crowd funding \$50,345 in the 2016 campaign.

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