

The Farmer's Cow Story



The seed was planted for The Farmer's Cow when our six Connecticut dairy farms, with shared concerns, began planning for the future of our family farms. With the growing interest in fresh, locally grown foods we believed consumers were looking for just what we produce: fresh Connecticut milk from Connecticut cows. So we formed our own milk company.

The Farmer's Cow is dedicated to putting a face on Connecticut Agriculture – educating people about farming, sustainable agriculture and ensuring farmland preservation. Our farm tours are one way we do this, offering the public a first-hand look into our working dairy farms. We understand the important role our dairy farms play in the economic health of our communities. We are committed to producing natural, Connecticut milk and other farm products, fresh daily.

Our Growing Product Line:

Milk • Half & Half • Heavy Cream • Ice Cream
Eggs • Apple Cider • Summer Beverages • Coffee



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Welcome to MAPLELEAF FARM



Farming has been a way of life in Hebron for the Ellis family since the mid-1700's. The family moved from several farm sites during the 1700 and 1800's until 1903 when the great-grandfather of current owner, Ned Ellis, purchased Mapleleaf Farm in the Gilead section of town.

The Ellis family has witnessed dramatic changes since the 1700's when farming was the predominant way of life and milk was delivered to market by ox cart. Although, farming methods have changed greatly over the years, the family's dedication to the land and their cattle remains the same.

Mapleleaf Farm recently constructed new barns and the dairy herd has grown to 400 head of Holsteins. Ned Ellis loves to talk about farming and through the seasons Mapleleaf Farm welcomes visitors of all ages for farm tours. The Ellis family is committed to the future of farming in Hebron and has protected their fertile fields from development by selling the development rights to the State of Connecticut. Over 400 acres are now protected and ensure that farming will continue on Mapleleaf Farm for future generations.



The Farms of The Farmer's Cow

Fairvue Farms, Woodstock • Hytone Farm, Coventry
Mapleleaf Farm, Hebron • Fort Hill Farms, Thompson
Cushman Farms, Franklin • Graywall Farms, Lebanon

THE
**FARMER'S
COW**[™]
MEMBER FARM

Owned by
The Ellis Family
Since 1903

768 Gilead Street
Hebron, CT 06248

Facts about Mapleleaf Farm

HOW MANY COWS?

Mapleleaf Farm has 240 milking cows plus 260 heifers & calves.

MILKING FACILITY

The cows are milked twice each day. Milking times are 4:30am and 4:00pm.

The milking parlor was built in 1967 and was expanded from a double six herringbone to a double eight in 1990. One person can milk 55 cows per hour. Another person works outside cleaning the barn stalls and moving the groups of cows to the milking parlor.

Cleaning the barn stalls is like fluffing the sheets on a bed – it freshens them up and makes them comfy.

As the cows are milked, the milk flows through the plate cooler which cools down the milk before it goes into a stainless steel refrigerated storage tank. The herd produces about 1,850 gallons of milk a day. Each milk cow averages about 73 pounds or 8 gallons of milk per day.

FEEDING THE COWS

The cows are fed twice a day. The ration includes corn silage, grass silage, cottonseed, citrus pulp, and nutritious grains with minerals.



FEEDING THE COWS (continued)

Fresh, clean water is always available.

Single bar restraint at feed bunk for cow comfort and easy access to feed.

To provide a nutritious diet, as much feed as possible is home-grown on the farm.

Crops grown include:
300 acres of corn silage and grain.
80 acres of alfalfa for silage.
40 acres of grass and hay silage
50 acres of pasture.

In order to have enough land to grow the crops for the herd another 190 acres is rented.

CALVES AND YOUNG STOCK

Healthy calves are important to the future of the herd. Cows calve in a pasture or in the calving barn. Newborn calves are quickly fed colostrum – mother's first milk.



Calves are raised in individual pens in the greenhouse – called the “nursery”.

After weaning, they are moved to small group pens and fed grain, hay and silage. Here, they learn how to socialize. It's just like going to “kindergarten”.

At six months the calves are ready to graduate to “elementary school” and are moved into larger groups.

Heifers are bred artificially at 13-16 months. Heifers calve at 24 months.

IN THE BARN

The milking cows are housed in a free stall barn where they are free to walk around, eat, drink, rest or use the groomer as they desire.

The stalls are bedded with sawdust twice a week to provide a soft, comfortable bed to lay on. Curtains on the north wall are lowered in the winter to cut the wind and blowing snow. The curtains are raised in the warm months to provide good ventilation by taking advantage of cooling breezes.

Fans and misters cool the cows when it gets hot. This is important as cows prefer to be cool.

Solar panels provide 40% of the electricity used.

MANURE SYSTEM

Manure is scraped from the barns twice each day into the manure storage pit. This enables the manure to be spread on the cropland when the crops need the nutrients.

The manure is pumped from the pit into a tanker and spread on the fields. The cropland soils are analyzed annually to see how much nutrients are needed.

