

Dairy owners pictured on yogurt cover

By Norma Martinez
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What started out to be a small family dairy in 1914 where all the cows were being milked by hand, has become a dairyman's dream come true for the third and fourth generation McCarty families. In June of 2012 an open house was held for their newly constructed milk processing facility, capable of processing 500,000 pounds of raw milk daily. The family dairy signed a contract with Dannon to become the primary supplier of condensed skim milk for Dannon's Dallas/Ft. Worth yogurt plant.

This was a big step up for the McCarty Farms and positive progress for Bird City, Rexford and Scott City. Recently, Dannon unveiled Dannon Creamy Yogurt which is made exclusively from milk produced on the McCarty Farms and is sold exclusively in Sam's Clubs nationwide. The packaging features photographs of Tom McCarty and his four sons; Mike, Clay, David, and Ken on the front.

This special event all began forming in 1914 when the first generation owners of McCarty Dairy were milking cows by hand in Pennsylvania. In 1999 Tom and Judy bought a wheat farm near Rexford and sons Mike and Clay joined them in the year 2000 and started milking 750 cows. By 2008 they had increased the herd to 2,000 with 2,350 cows on site.

With a goal of promoting community and economic development for Bird City, Cathy Domsch, executive director of the Century II Development Foundation, created a Dairy Team that visited the Rexford Dairy in 2007 and asked if they would be interested in owning and operating a dairy in Bird City. The timing was right as at this time the McCarty's were seeing a need to expand their present facility.

With the help of a partial loan

through Century II's revolving loan payment program and working with banks in Texas and northwest Kansas, Kansas Department of Commerce and United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development/Midwest Energy, the Bird City Dairy became possible.

Mike McCarty, his wife Amy and their three children, Colton, Logan and daughter Taylor moved to Bird City and in 2008 The Bird City McCarty Farms began milking 1800 cows. Today they are milking 2700 and producing 225,000 pounds of milk daily.

In November of 2011 the McCarty's leased a dairy north of Scott City and began milking approximately 2000 head. The McCarty's also expanded the farms at Bird City and Rexford, adding capacity to housing calving areas and milking parlors for an additional 1500 cows. At the present time the three dairies milk a combined 7200 cows in order to fulfill the needs of Dannon.

In conjunction with running a dairy farm and a milk processing plant the McCarty family also raises a portion of their heifer replacement needs. This program allows the McCarty's to better control the health, growth, welfare and reproduction of those heifers, ensuring that they are happy, healthy and productive. This brings the total of cattle amongst the three locations to 12,300.

The McCarty Farms are not only producing top quality dairy cows and milk but they add to the economy of the counties they live in many ways. In Rexford they conserve water through the condensation process. Milk is 87 percent water and the dairy reuses the water that comes off the condensing process to conserve ground water.

With the last two years of drought the dairy has helped the local farmers by buying 35,000



MIKE MCCARTY is showing Rod Klepper the carton specially designed for Sam's Club that contains the yogurt made exclusively with McCarty Farms milk.

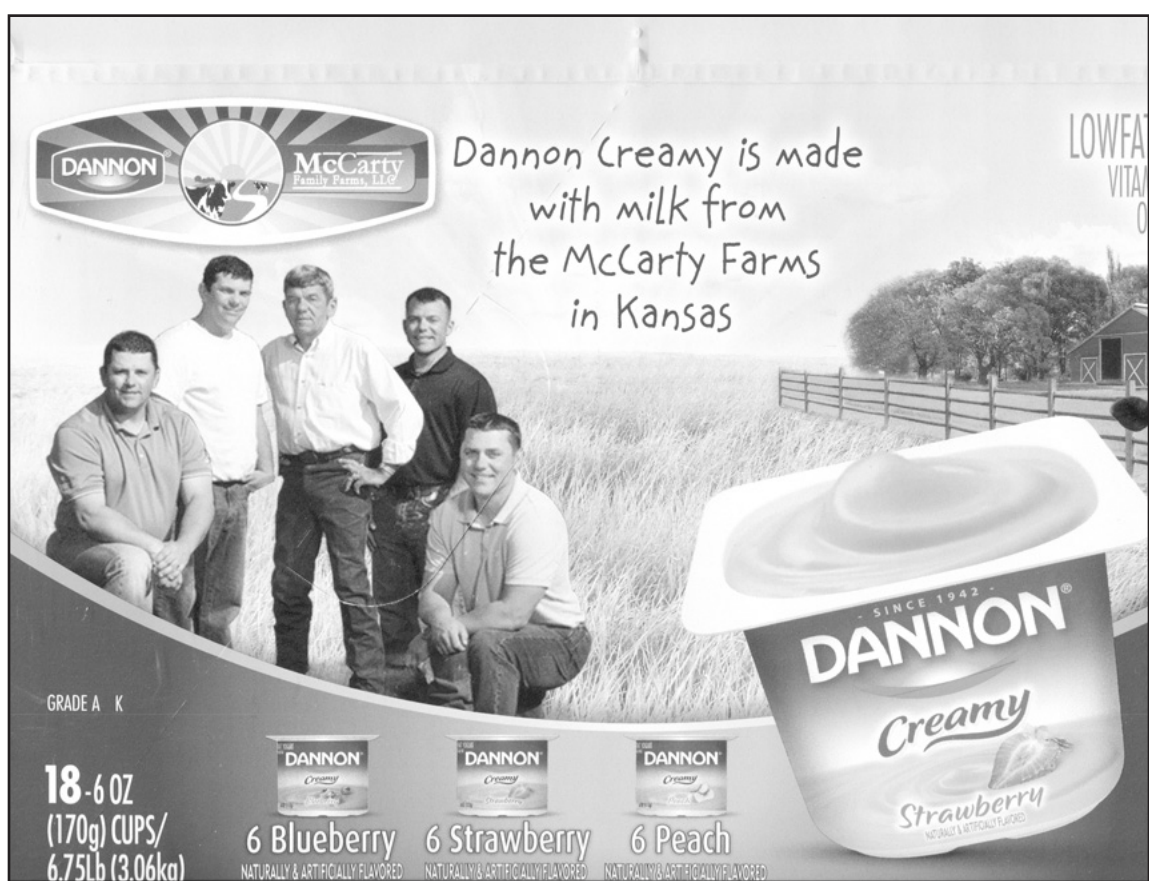
Times staff photo by Norma Martinez

tons of corn silage, 7,000 tons of alfalfa hay, 5,000 tons of sorgham silage, 2,500 tons of straw and 150,000 bushels of corn from local farmers.

The Dairy brings in workers with their families who live in the community, pay utilities and buy groceries and fuel. Last year they employed 32 workers at the Bird City Dairy. With the addition of Scott City and the condensing of milk they have doubled the number of employees Bird City and Rexford each began with.

As a large employer for both communities, Bird City and McDonald, McCarty Family Farms directly impacts our student body population. Currently 20% of our student population has ties to the Bird City Dairy. The school district has 13 teachers who are certified in English as a second language. One of the main objectives of Century II Foundation for bringing in the dairy to Bird City was to increase school enrollment.

Last year school menus were changed, vending machines were stocked with healthy treats and sugary items and pop were eliminated as a means of providing our youth with more healthy balanced foods. The McCarty family along with the help of checkoff organization Southwest Dairy Farmers, has



THE MCCARTY FAMILY pictured on the Dannon Yogurt carton.

begun a new program titled "Yogurt for Youth". This program currently provides free of charge, over 3800 individual servings of yogurt per week to the school systems in which the three dairies are located. There have been inquiries from

surrounding school districts about expanding the program and the McCarty family hopes to be able to do that in the future. Both Mike and his wife Amy McCarty contribute time and efforts by being involved with community events. Amy

Coaches the girl's volleyball team and Mike coaches the younger boys for little league football, and volunteers his time working with various community events. That's what community development and growth are all about.

'Homestead Heritage' picked for day's theme

By Marsha Magley

The 85th annual Kansas Day celebration in Bird City is set for Wednesday, Jan. 29, at the American Legion hall. There will be a potluck lunch at noon with the program starting at 1 p.m. The theme is "Homestead Heritage." Guest speaker will be Tina Miller (see related article elsewhere in this issue).

The following is a homestead heritage story with excerpts from "Dust On The Sunflowers," (1983).

Into this cheerless, treeless, forbidding land came the new settlers, many fresh from German and the Scandinavian countries, others from the already crowded midwest, all seeking free land. The answer to a lifelong dream.

They were not conscious of their status as pawns in the changing annals of the West, from the wild, scalp-raising, nomadic Indian tribes, to a stationary taxpaying, law-abiding, citizenry. They sought nothing more than sufficient land to make an honest living, raise their families and enjoy freedom from arbitrary regulation. To this, they were willing to labor, long and hard, from sun to sun, with extra time donated to take care of the multitudinous chores that are an inherent part of mixed farming, such as, a few cows to milk, hogs to feed, chickens to attend, horses to care for, some calves to see to, a vegetable garden to weed and water. All this, in addition to a 12-hour day in the field, planting, cultivating, harvesting, threshing and storing.

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Friend wife also had a few back-breaking jobs. Up before dawn, getting breakfast, washing dishes, preparing vegetables from the garden, gathering eggs, skimming cream off the milk in crocks, churning butter, sewing most of the family's clothing, cooking three hearty meals, mending, patching, darning and doing the family wash on a washboard set in a sudsy tub and later ironing with an old-fashioned flatiron, heated on the kitchen stove.

The most harassing duty was the training, restraining and entertaining of her growing children. At times, she might feel like including, "Braining," to the above list. But, at night when she made her final check on her brood, noted their innocent red-cheeked faces, their grotesque body postures, with out-flung arms and legs, a feeling of sweet contentment crept over her, and she knew she would not willingly have exchanged places with Lily Langtry as she accepted a goblet of champagne from the hand of the Prince of Wales.

A bone-chilling north wind of late April, passed over the plains of the Dakotas and across the sandhills of western Nebraska, to screech an eerie wail around the corner of a sod house in northwestern (Cheyenne County) Kansas. It had blown in blustering gusts for three days and nights without ceasing. Inside the farm house, a 37-year-old woman tossed and moaned on the wooden bed, gritting her teeth during the agonizing spasms of imminent childbirth.

She was alone in the room, having banished her 12-year-old eldest daughter, together with the four younger children into the only other room the house contained. Between paroxysms of pain, she lit the kerosene lamp and glanced at the carved wooden clock on the wall. Eight o'clock, and already dark. It seemed hours since her husband had left to pick up the midwife, whose services had been procured earlier. He must have had more than enough time to make the round trip by now. Perhaps something had happened, maybe the woman was not home, maybe she was too ill to come. Surely he wouldn't leave her to face this crisis alone. No, that was unthinkable. Whatever his faults, she was certain he would not do that. But perhaps there had been an accident. The wagon might have turned over. Her mind flew from one possibility to another, trying to account for this untimely delay.

She was growing distraught every moment. Why, oh why, hadn't they stayed in Chicago? At least there were doctors available to take care of emergencies like this. Here, there wasn't a physician of any kind within a dozen miles. Why had she permitted her parents to influence her into making a move to this comfortless wasteland? Her husband had been opposed to the step. He knew nothing about farming and was not adaptable to this kind of life. But she had thought the children should have a chance to grow up in the country. Where

they would have ample room to develop in the freedom of rural living. Well, they had room enough, there was no doubt of that, though not much of anything else. The closest neighbor was a mile away. It was 12 miles to the railroad. There was sand and sagebrush everywhere. And, to make matters worse, the last 12 months had been the least financially productive of the 14 years of their marriage and the future outlook was even more dismal.

Again a constricting spasm wracked her pelvic cavity and she writhed with excruciating pain. The labor contractions were reoccurring with greater frequency, and she knew from prior experience that there was little time left. "Where, oh where, was that midwife?" Cold sweat stood out on her face like heavy dew. Another glance at the clock told her it was now 8:30.

"O God, please stop this wind, if only for a little while. I can't stand it much longer. I wonder what can be keeping him all this time? Surely, something must have happened."

Suddenly the door flew open and the husband, with midwife in tow, rushed over to the bed.

"Now that you're back, I'm feeling better already. I was really getting scared; and that horrible wind. Why can't it let up even for a few minutes? Go and see how the children are making out. They must be frightened half out of their wits."

Park ranger talks during program

Tina Miller will be the speaker for the Bird City Kansas Day festivities held at the Legion hall on Wednesday, Jan. 29.

Ms. Miller is a park ranger and Homestead National Monument of America's Education coordinator who specializes in distance learning and the use of technology for teaching and learning, especially in social studies. She has written numerous curriculum units, conducted various teacher workshops and presented at several conferences.

She holds a master's in management from Doane College in Crete, Neb., and a bachelor's degree in information technology from the University of Texas-Arlington.

She said she likens herself to Forrest Gump, going where the wind blows her. She honorably served in the United States Marine Corps for 10 years. She has worked in professional sports



Tina Miller

as the director of Promotions and Game Entertainment for the Dallas Stars Hockey Club. She has also worked in politics in the Nebraska Attorney General's office and as an event planner for Dave and Buster's.

**Bird City
Kansas Day**
Wednesday, Jan. 29
American Legion hall

