

# Dairy owners pictured on carton

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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 their 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 among 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 where 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 farm economy by buying 35,000 tons of corn silage, 7,000 tons of alfalfa hay, 5,000 tons of sorghum silage, 2,500 tons of



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

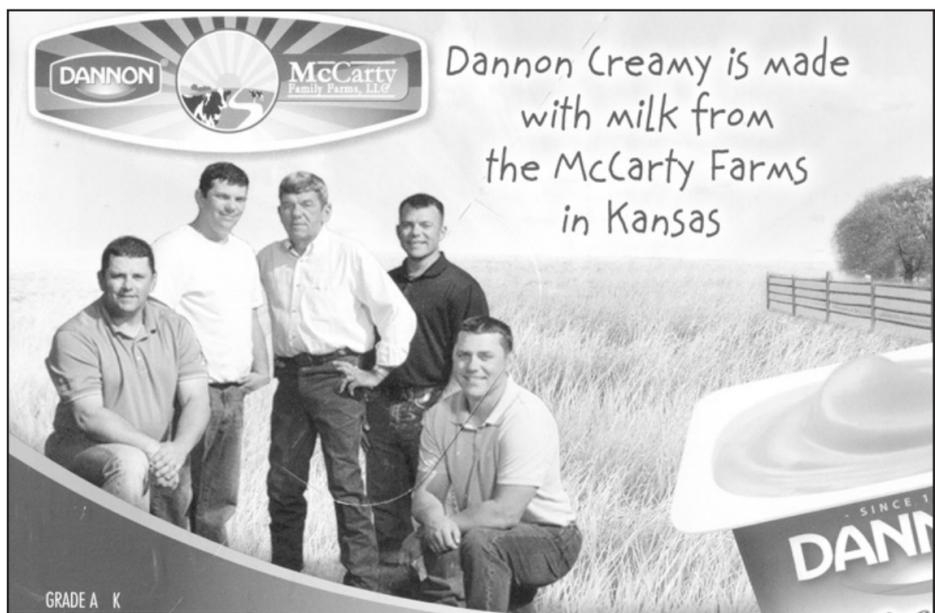
Herald staff photo by Norma Martinez

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 the Cheylin student body population. Currently, 20% of the 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 South-



THE MCCARTY FAMILY pictured on the Dannon Yogurt carton.

west Dairy Farmers, has begun a new program titled "Yogurt for Youth". This program currently provides over 3800 individual servings of yogurt per week, free of charge, 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 effort 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.

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