

Why I farm

By Blane Murray
Special to the
Reveille/Between the Lakes

Ahen I think about why I chose to be a dairy farm owner, three words come to mind: family, passion and pride that comes with ownership. My wife, Mary and I, are the second generation at Muranda, Waterloo (Fayette). My parents, Tom and Nancy Murray, started the farm in 1991 and in 2010 after graduating from Cornell I chose to come back to the dairy full time.

We are a little unique in the dairy industry in that we only milk 90 registered Holsteins and we direct market a portion of our milk through the cheese company my dad started in 2007. Muranda is very

the growing demand to understand where your food comes from. The cheese company has also allowed me to come home to the farm without adding more cows. And finally it gives my dad a full time job while allowing me to be solely responsible for the dairy operation.

Growing up in my family we were always told, "Whatever you do, you have to have passion if you want to be successful." I can honestly say there's something about being your own boss, putting in a hard day's work and physically seeing the results. Dairy farming is not a 9-5 job so, if I didn't have this passion, I know there's no way I could be successful here.

Dairy farming isn't all family fun and hanging out with cows every day. It comes with a lot of challenges that require me to constantly juggle my focus from cows, to employees and the business end of the operation. Some days this can be a lot to handle.

Right now majority of the farms in the northeast are being paid less for milk than what it cost them to produce milk. Knowing the financial numbers allows me to keep my head above water when my margins are low to negative at times.

With such tight margins it can be very hard to be my age and be a dairy farmer. According to the 2007 agricultural census, dairy farm operators under the age of 45 has declined 14% since 2002. I consider myself very fortunate to have a family which welcomed me back into the dairy farm because without this I don't know what I'd be doing right now.

Muranda Cheese has a full tasting bar that's open every day, located right across from the dairy.

I've been very fortunate for this because it allows me to give anyone a first-hand experience about what dairy farming is and share why I'm so passionate about what I do. Many times Muranda is the first dairy they've ever set foot on and I'm thankful I can share my family farm story in why the dairy operates the way it does.

A few main points I hope you were able to really take home are, whether it's my family's farm or a farm with a few more cows, we are all in the dairy industry together and face the same triumphs and

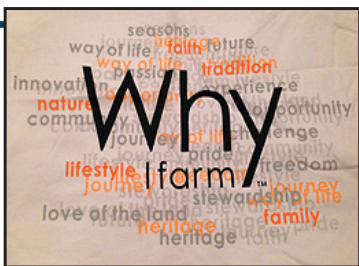


trials that come with dairy farming. We take measures to ensure our milk is the best quality it can be.

I want this to be a business I can bring Ryan into if he wants to, however I know the statistics show a declining number of new farmers. And that number scares me because I want my milk to come from local dairies here in the U.S.

I frequently visit www.adadc.com to stay up to date on what other farms in production agriculture are doing as this is an ever evolving industry. I would encourage you to visit the website or even stop by our farm when you are driving past.

Murray is the farm manager at Muranda, Waterloo (Fayette)



This is part of the NY Farm Bureau/SCFB Promotion-Education initiative to connect local farmers with non-farm consumers for understanding why farmers do what they do when they farm.

much so a family farm and that's something I love about my job.

Mary works full time off the farm as a dairy nutritionist, but is involved in the cheese company on the business end and my one year old son Ryan loves visiting the cows every day. One of his first words was "moo." My mom also works off the farm, but is responsible for the accounting and keeping everything running smoothly.

Having the cheese company has been a great accompaniment to the dairy for many reasons. It's been very successful because of our location right on the Finger Lakes wine trail and because of

the **JOY OF THE LORD** APRIL 6-9, 2016
FAMILY LIFE SPRING SHARATHON

Though the tears may fall my song will rise.

I love the lyrics of that song by Rend Collective especially when we look at our world today. There really doesn't appear much to be joyful about. Believers are being martyred for their stand for Christ; violence and animosity permeate streets of cities both in the U.S. and around the world; biblical morality is made to appear archaic and hate-filled; and confusion and chaos seem to reign supreme with governments and world leaders. It would be easy for you to throw your hands up in despair and give up. But there is hope because *The Joy of the Lord* indeed is our strength!

Family Life's mission is to share with you and others the freedom you can have in Christ; the hope you can have for eternity; and the joy that can be yours daily in walking with the Lord. That mission becomes even more important in today's culture – a culture where meaning and purpose in this life are very distorted, even non-existent. But where darkness, despair, and depression abound, the message of freedom, hope, and joy is essential and relevant!

You can help Family Life share this message with hundreds of thousands of people each day. As a listener-supported ministry, it is the generous and sacrificial giving of you and many others that keeps Family Life operating and thriving. You might be in a position where you think you don't have much to contribute. It's important to realize God doesn't look at equal giving, but rather equal sacrifice!

Twice a year, we hold Sharathon to present the monthly needs of the ministry and ask the Lord to speak to your heart to help Family Life with its financial commitments. Operating nearly 70 radio signals along with the other outreaches associated with Family Life is not inexpensive. God has used your sacrificial support, and that of many others, to reach listeners all across New York, Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, on the Internet and around the world with His message of redemption.

We appreciate you and your involvement with the ministry of Family Life. If you can join us in person on Friday night or throughout the day on Saturday, we'll have great meals available for you and your family. Plus, you will get to experience first-hand how God moves in the hearts of so many to partner with Family Life. It's an experience like none other.

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