



Hoard's Dairyman Farm

EDITORIAL COMMENT

HOARD'S DAIRYMAN FARM MILK HAS A NEW HOME

THIS May, we began shipping to Torkelson Cheese Co., Lena, Ill. It was a business decision based largely on what we feel is fair pay for our high-solids Guernsey milk. We had been shipping to Saputo. Many of you might recall that Saputo, a Canadian-based company, purchased Alto Dairy Co-op in the spring of 2008. We had switched to Alto in September 2004 because the co-op offered cheese-yield pricing.

Saputo is a solid company, but we questioned its long-term interest in having its own milk supply. The company's pattern in other areas is to purchase milk from co-ops. Plus, Saputo changed its payment structure which affected our price. As an Alto member, we received full payment of our equity following the purchase. Plus, there were incentive payments for two 12-month periods for those who stayed with Saputo. At the end of the first incentive period, we began to look for a new market.

That was when we experienced firsthand the changing milk marketing landscape in Wisconsin. (See August 10, 2009, issue, page 488.) Buyers did not line up for our 16,000 pounds a day of 200,000-SCC, 3.5 percent-protein, 4.8 percent-fat milk.

But, through a milk hauler (how else?) we heard that Torkelsons might be interested. It is a family-owned company that makes a lot of wonderful Muenster. We evaluate our checks by comparing our mailbox prices to Class III prices (on both a dollar and percentage basis), and we are happy with what we are getting . . . as happy as anyone can be with their checks these days.

We still are members of Manitowoc Milk Producers Cooperative for test verification and because of its NMPF membership. We continue to have a dime taken out of our check for Cooperatives Working Together.

Our switch to Torkelsons has been a good move. A special treat is dealing directly with the owners when we have a question.