

GRIST FOR THE MILL

I hope you'll enjoy this fall issue brimming with stories about New Hampshire's bounty and the folks that make it possible.

As I meandered around the state over the summer, meeting more inspirational people, I was especially moved by the plight of our dairy farmers. New Hampshire was once home to some 2,600 dairy farms. Figures from July suggested that the state had a mere 130, while last month it was reported dairy farm numbers slipped quickly to just 123. You don't have to be an accountant to realize that you just can't stay in business if it costs \$18-20 to produce a hundred pounds of milk that sells for only \$10-12.



Meeting USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack at Carter Hill Orchard Photo by Barry Wright

England dairies just can't compete. The dairy company Dean Foods, based in Dallas, Texas that controls a large percentage of the fluid milk market in this country, announced second-quarter earnings last month of \$64.1 million, a 31% increase over last year.

So what's to do? Both state and federal legislators appear to be trying to address this huge uphill battle, involving complex issues for both the short and long term. Most recently, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack authorized small and temporary price support increases for cheese and nonfat dry milk. Over the summer, Vilsack held a town hall meeting at Carter Hill Orchard in Concord. As former governor of Iowa, he appeared both empathetic and understanding for the dire situation our dairy farmers face. While policy in D.C. is in the works, please consider taking any opportunity to talk with and write to your state and federal legislators about your concerns for the fate of New Hampshire dairy farms. On a personal level, perhaps you can try to buy one NH dairy product a week or month, including cheese and ice cream—I know, tough assignment!

Consumers may question why some locally produced food at times might cost more than foods made with commodity ingredients by a low paid labor pool. Consider the fact that in the 1960's, Americans spent 18% of their household income on food compared to less than 10% today. Good, clean and fair food has not become expensive, rather agri-business has become so efficient at producing highly-processed, low quality food cheaply.

Who would have thought there was so much to consider about something as simple as food? Since the adage 'Attitude is Everything' has proven to be rather powerful, perhaps during these tough times, it's important to keep the glass half full—of local milk that is!

Please continue with me on this journey—Let's get to know the faces and shake the hands of those who feed us!

KC

We haven't seen farm milk prices this low in 30 years. In contrast, costs for dairy farmers including land, feed and fuel have escalated. These farmers continue to lose money on every gallon of milk they produce. The cause? A national, dysfunctional milk pricing system that's been around since the Great Depression. The federal government limits milk prices without restrictions on production volume. Large agri-business dairies have much cheaper production costs—our small New

edible WHITE MOUNTAINS

PUBLISHER & EDITOR
KC Wright

CONSULTING EDITOR
Gregg Found

DESIGN
Melissa Petersen

CONTRIBUTORS
Hattie Bernstein
Helen Brody
Michelle Collins
Lisa Garcia
Barbara Michelson
Tracey Osborne Miller
Susan Nye
Adam Prizio
Carole Soule

PHOTOGRAPHY
Carole Topalian
Barry Wright

CONTACT US
Customer Service
Subscriptions • Advertising
PO Box 249, Elkins, NH 03233
603.526.9081
info@ediblewhitemountains.com
ediblewhitemountains.com

edible White Mountains is published quarterly, to complement New Hampshire's seasons, by Wildberry Communications, LLC, distributed throughout the entire state and by subscription. Every effort is made to avoid errors and omissions. If however an error comes to your attention, please accept our sincere apologies and notify us. No part of this publication may be used without written permission of the publisher. ©2009 Thank you.



Printed by United Litho -
Dartmouth Printing Co.
Contains 10-30% post
consumer waste.

