

# Progressive Dairy

By Gary Booy

It started out as a tour for 40-45 progressive dairy men and women from Ontario. They came to BC to tour a number of progressive dairy operations in the Fraser Valley, to glean new ideas and to observe the differences and similarities between our western operations and their eastern operations.

There was a glitch however for the organizers, as the enticing tour created and doubled the demand anticipated, and so a second bus was reserved and of course, quickly filled. Organized by the Progressive Dairy Operations group in Ontario, the very well-organized tour had ambitious plans of visiting 16 operations in three days, and much to the relief of the organizers, was certainly achieved.

Farms chosen for the tour were decided by checking the lists of farms which had been on our own very

popular BC Dairy Expo Farm Tours over the previous years. The farms on tour featured robotics, rotary parlors, composters, separators, digesters, new and impressive facilities and some of Canada's largest dairy operations. Everybody on tour was provided with head-sets so that all participants would have all the information provided by the hosts while doing their own little self-tours. An excellent idea for such a large group! Many interesting questions were asked and very interesting answers given. The wide variety of farms on tour was well-presented with something to be learned from each. A very well-organized and informative undertaking!

A thank you goes out to all the organizers, sponsors (for support and meals), and all the following progressive dairy operations for opening their gates and doors to our eastern guests and providing them with such valuable information!

**Gifford Acres** - the Mulder family  
**Vandeburg Farms** - Brian and Ken Vandeburg and families  
**Marlena Farms** - the Vermeer family  
**UBC Dairy Education & Research Centre**  
**The Farm House Cheese Factory and Store**  
**Fraserdijk Farms** - the Treur family  
**Dickland Farms** - the Dick family  
**Kloot Farms** - the Kloot family  
**Gracemar Farms** - the Ten Brinke and Kampman families  
**Walrose Farms** - the Stam family  
**Corners Pride Dairy**  
**Chilliwack Cattle Co.** - the Kooyman families  
**Cedarbrink Farms** - the Van Den Brink family  
**Birchwood Dairy**  
**Bakerview Eco Dairy**  
**Krause Berry Farm**



Buses of Ontario dairy operators unload at Gifford Acres, the first stop of 16 progressive operators throughout the Fraser Valley.



Jack Rodenburg, tour coordinator for Progressive Dairy Operators, adjusts a head-set on Allan Mulder of Gifford Acres, while Curtis DeLange looks on. The head-sets, a great idea, allowed all tour participants to clearly hear all information given by farm hosts.



Brian Vandeburg of Vandeburg Farms gives insight to management decisions on their Dewdney farm to the Ontario farmers.



Brian Rodenburg (Lely) does a masterful job of flipping steaks, providing a delicious lunch, sponsored by Lely Canada, for over 100 guests, on the Progressive Operators tour at Marlena Farms.



Ontario dairy farmers listen intently while Fred Vermeer (right) details the farm operations at Marlena Farms.



The Juno feed pusher at Marlena Farms works tirelessly and stops for no one as it goes about its duties.



Farmers grab handfuls of separated and composted bedding materials as George Dick of Dickland Farms answers a multitude of questions about the process.



Never-ending questions for George Dick as he explains the workings of the Doda screw press manure separator at Dickland Farms!



Alf Kloot of Kloot Farms (right), standing outside the farm's beautiful facilities, talks about the farm's new 50-cow DeLaval rotary parlour, which can milk 300 cows in an hour and a half, and cows are milked three times a day.





# Operators Bus Tour



Lots of fresh air and light in the magnificent steel framed drive through barn at Klood Farms.



John Kampman of Gracemar Farms explains their farm's manure management with sand systems to intent listeners.



The simple sand lanes at Gracemar Farms intrigue the dairy farmers from Ontario.



A unique bedding system made for lots of discussion at Walrose Farms. The very neat, well-managed farm milks 70 cows with two DeLaval VMS robotic milkers and cows have access to pasture 24/7.



Jack Rodenburg shares a laugh with Neil Stam of Walrose Farms, as Ryan DeLange of J&D Farmers Dairy Services looks on.



Bernie VanderMeulen of Corners Pride Dairy in Chilliwack receives a gift and much appreciation from tour goers on his very informational and interesting tour of the farm's operations, which milks 1600 cows and has a team of 36 employees.



Lots of information to digest as Ontario dairy farmers fan out to check feed and manure systems at Corners Pride Dairy



Mind boggling for Ontario's Progressive Dairy Operators as they check out the 72-cow rotary parlour, which milks over 3000 cows a day at Chilliwack Cattle Co., Canada's largest dairy farm, run by the Kooyman family.



Jack Rodenburg thanks Jeff and Ken Kooyman for letting the tour visit their show barn facilities and see some of North America's premier show cows.



Nigel Van Den Brink addresses the crowd in front of their farm's picturesque buildings at Cedarbrink Farms, and discusses the farm's latest expansion and innovative ideas, which sparked a lively question and answer period throughout the tour.



The latest expansion at Cedarbrink Farms consisted of a six row We Cover barn, built for light. The steel and tarp for the 150 x 128 foot barn went up in eight days, and has Cedarbrink's own uniquely designed comfort stalls in use.



The final destination for the Progressive Dairy Operators tour was not a dairy farm, but a berry farm. The 200 acre Krause Berry Farm was indeed something different but very interesting indeed! Operated by Alf and Sandee Krause, the farm grows and produces some of the Fraser Valley's best berries and vegetables. A visit to their market will delight all your senses, featuring mile-high berry pies, shortcakes, bread and buns hot out of the oven, corn pizza made daily on site in the farm kitchen and bakery. A new learning experience to end off a very enjoyable, successful and information-loaded three day tour! □

