

Milk As It Should Be

Wisconsin Family Farm Develops Raw Milk Program



The Brunner family (Wayne and Janet at left) began their organic transition after learning about the benefits of whole, unprocessed foods from the Weston A. Price Foundation.

by Patrick Slattery

Janet Brunner's past health problems led her and her husband to farm in a fashion they couldn't have imagined some years ago. Today they are excited about what they are doing, and confident that they can help others attain better health by eating real foods — in particular, the healthy fats available in unprocessed whole milk products.

The Brunners' Midvalleyvu Farms is a family-owned, MOSA Certified Organic, Grade A Dairy farm located in Pepin County, Wisconsin. The family consists of Wayne and Janet Brunner, sons Jacob and Joseph, oldest daughter Becky and her husband, Josh, and their daughters, Jordin and Alexandra. Midvalleyvu is one of the few true family farms left in the state. The Brunner family has owned this farm since

the 1940s, and Wayne has carried on this family farm tradition since his folks retired and built a new home across the road two decades ago. They work about 350 acres of land and milk about 85 cows.

Wayne said in times past he was like most younger dairy farmers: ambitious to grow more crops, put more milk in the bulk tank, and get a bigger milk check, without thinking much about milk quality except how it might affect his premium payments.

In the mid-1990s, however, Janet became very sick, and conventional doctoring, including visits to the Mayo Clinic, wasn't coming up with any answers. One doctor told her she had advanced cancer, and there wasn't anything they could do for her. Her weight fell below 100 pounds, and she was quite weak.

Janet says she was finally helped by a physician who diagnosed her as having candidiasis, a yeast-like fungi infection that grew out of control in her gastrointestinal tract. The doctor suggested a change in diet to more natural foods might help. The Brunners did so, Janet's health took an about-face for the better, and today she reports being fully free of her past ailments.

Key in her recovery, she believes, has been the change in her family's eating habits as guided by the counsel they have received from the Weston A. Price Foundation. Dr. Price was a Cleveland dentist who traveled the globe in the 1930s to study the health of populations untouched by Western civilizations. Stunned by their beautiful straight teeth, he researched their traditional diets and found these isolated people were eating 10 times the norm of fat-soluble vitamins from animal foods such as butter, fish eggs, shellfish and organ meats — the very cholesterol-rich foods now shunned by most Americans as unhealthy.

It was Price's contention that fat-soluble vitamins A and D are catalysts to mineral absorption and protein utilization. Price, who died in 1948, presented his research in a book titled *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration*. His work is carried on today by a Washington, D.C.-based foundation and has been popularized in recent times, especially in organic circles, by the Sally Fallon cookbook, *Nourishing Traditions*, which the author describes as being politically incorrect for

going against the low-fat advice of “the diet dictocrats.”

Following this line of thinking, the Brunners have switched to eating mostly whole, unprocessed food. They use animal fat, especially butter, liberally, and drink their own milk from their own bulk tank.

While the *Nourishing Traditions* cookbook is highly pro-dairy products, its counsel runs against many of the standards that have long been the norm for Wisconsin’s dairy industry. Its emphasis is on eating full-fat milk products from pasture-fed cows, preferably raw or fermented, such as raw milk, whole yogurt, kefir, cultured butter, whole raw cheeses, and fresh and sour cream.

The Brunners believe in these principles and are critical of the effects of pasteurization and homogenization. “Basically, all that heat destroys the enzymes and turns milk into a dead product, which makes it easier for the processor and retailer, but doesn’t do consumers any good,” maintains Wayne. Furthermore, he adds, the dairy industry “shot itself in the foot” when rBGH (recombinant bovine growth hormone) was made legal, and he believes it’s going to turn many people away from conventional milk.

This is shameful, believe the Brunners, because they believe raw milk has many health-regenerative properties. Many of their convictions are spelled out in *The Milk Book*, by William Campbell Douglas, and they have shared their copy of this book with many.

As a result of what the Brunners have learned in recent years, Midvalleyvu Farms has drastically changed many of its farming practices. During the farm’s transition period, Wayne put 80 acres of former crop land into rotational grazing paddocks and was well pleased with the results, estimating that he cut his feed costs by about half. During warmer weather, his cows are on pasture all the time except for returning to be milked in their tie stall barn. Cow cleanliness and herd health has improved considerably as a result of pasturing, he reports.

After years of hard work to meet legal requirements and regulations in their state, the Brunners developed a program that would allow them to provide fresh, organic, raw milk, butter, cheese, cream, yogurt and buttermilk — all rich in CLA (conjugated linoleum acid) — to con-

Investing in Nourishment

Wisconsin consumers can purchase one share of a Midvalleyvu Farms milk producer license, allowing them to legally buy raw milk products. The creation of this program was a long and difficult process, but the Brunners finally developed terms and conditions, as listed below, that satisfied legal requirements. Note that shifting interpretations of state law mean the program is subject to change, as is the following language.

Purpose & Definition of This Equity Share



The purchaser/owner of this share must read and agree to the following purpose and definition of this share:

The purpose of this share is to allow ownership of the milk producer license #14958 currently owned by Midvalleyvu Farms, Inc., located in Arkansasaw,

Wisconsin, as stated in Wisconsin Statute 97.24(2)(d)2., which clearly allows regular distribution of ungraded raw milk to the “persons” shipping the milk and their employees. The person shipping milk includes the underlying owners, if the entity holding the milk producer license is a partnership, association, corporation, firm or any other legal business entity.

Ownership of this share at a purchase price of \$10.00 (share ownership limited to one share per person or family) exclusively allows for the purchase of any and all products produced or provided for its owners under the milk producer license; which includes, but is not limited to, non-pasteurized milk, cream, butter or buttermilk.

All Dairy products produced or provided on the farm will be available for sale to corporation share owner/owners only.

The Owner/Owners of this share fully understands the health warnings and risks of consuming non-pasteurized dairy products, as issued by the State of Wisconsin Department of Trade and Consumer Protection and the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

The Owner/Owners of this share fully understand that as a share owner, you will be directly responsible for the safety of the dairy products you receive from Midvalleyvu Farms, Inc., which relieves the State of Wisconsin Department of Trade and Consumer Protection and the United States Department of Health and Human Services of any responsibility for regulation of these Dairy Products.

The Owner/Owners of this share fully understand that (1) Midvalleyvu Farms, Inc. has no assets other than the milk producer license; (2) This share does not allow or provide for any voting rights, common interest or dividends, nor does this share entitle the Owner/Owners to any profits, losses or assets of the family farming operation of Midvalleyvu Farms. The sole purpose of this share is to allow the purchase of non-pasteurized dairy products.

The Owner/Owners of this share fully understand that the transferability of this share is restricted. Midvalleyvu Farms, Inc. holds the exclusive buy-back right to repurchase this share of stock at the same price paid by the Owner/Owners should they decide to sell their share.

Reprinted from



May 2003 • Vol. 33, No. 5



Midvalleyvu Farm is a certified organic dairy farm in Arkansaw, Wisconsin.

sumers who have grown tired of the denatured product available on supermarket shelves. By purchasing a share of stock in Midvalleyvu Farms Inc. (a separate corporation that has as sole asset the milk-producer license), consumers are able to purchase legally any of the raw dairy products the farm sells. The stock share comes with certain terms and conditions that the consumer must agree to at the time of purchase (see the sidebar, “Invest-

ing in Nourishment”). Interested readers should contact Midvalleyvu Farms for the current terms and conditions of the program.

The Brunners desire to work with others to promote the return of nutrient-dense foods to Americans’ tables through education and activist activities. They encourage others who share their interest to contact them.

Wayne and Janet Brunner can be reached at Midvalleyvu Farms, W8481 County Road Z, Arkansaw, Wisconsin 54721, phone (715) 285-5331, e-mail <wajabrun@nelson-tel.net>, website <www.midvalleyvu.com>. The Weston A. Price Foundation can be contacted at PMB 106-380, 4200 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20016, phone (202) 333-HEAL, e-mail <westonaprice@msn.com>, website <www.westonaprice.org>.

Sally Fallon’s Nourishing Traditions is available from the Acres U.S.A. bookstore for \$25, plus shipping. To order, call toll-free 1-800-355-5313, or visit our website at <www.acresusa.com>.

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