

Ideal Dairy: Past to Future

In 1884 John L. Dickinson began operating his family's farm. Farming 97 acres on Vaughn road in Hudson Falls, John milked 8 cows while working the locks on the Feeder Canal at night. In 1908 John and his son Ezra purchased a milk route and began selling milk by the dipper, door to door in a horse drawn wagon.

Around 1913 one of John's younger sons, Nathan, left school to concentrate all his efforts on the family business. Shortly after Nathan purchased his father and brother's interest, named the business The Ideal Dairy Farms, and adopted the slogan "Where quality a service meet". New innovation brought pasteurization, packaging with glass bottles and constant expansion of Ideal's customer base and milk route. New barns and more cows were added to supply the seemingly endless growth.



Nathan Senior holding Nathan Jr.

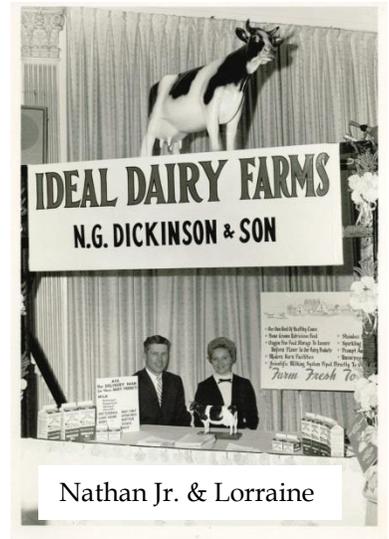
After returning from college in 1950 Nathan Jr. joined his father in managing the dairy. A well-balanced team, Nate Sr. focused on sales and marketing while Nate Jr. developed his expertise in operation and production. The father-son team led the business through a period of immense growth and operational changes. As the industry moved from home deliveries to Supermarket

shelves Ideal Dairy too retired their home delivery route and began marketing to Grocery stores, schools, and other institutions.

As Nathan Jr., with his wife Lorraine's meticulous efforts managing the office, transitioned into complete management of the dairy, expansion continued. Nate and Lorraine expanded the business to 1,850 acres, 750 cows and 28,000 pounds of milk per day, delivering to Washington, Warren, Saratoga and parts of Essex County.

In 1987, facing tight margins with a low milk price, and no interested successor to the business, at age 56 Nathan participated in the Federal Whole Herd Buyout Program. Selling the herd and transitioning into a beef cattle operation, the buyout program marked a temporary end to milk production at Ideal Dairy.

In 1992, after 11 years of milking cows on their own, Nate and Lorraine's son John and his wife Denise came back to Vaughn Road, merging their farm, Quiet Brook Holsteins, returning milk production to Ideal Dairy. Over the following 17 years the business grew internally from 300 to 700 head. Uncertain of a defined succession plan John and Denise limited investments, stalling growth in the business and initiated a replacement marketing program selling 10 % of the herd annually while maintaining herd size. This exposure provided Denise the



Nathan Jr. & Lorraine

opportunity to develop Ideal's reputation and commitment to superior genetics and built the foundation for success with Cookiecutter Holsteins and genomic marketing.

Cookiecutter was born at the Bacon-Hill Bonanza Sale in July of 2004. Kyle Getty, a distant relative and long-time family friend, was interested in a heifer with great potential from the "Dellia" family. Then a college student at Cornell, with limited funds, Kyle proposed to Denise the purchase of Kings-Ransom Haley as a joint venture. A strong believer in the value of deep pedigreed cow families, Denise happily agreed, forging the way for a "rags to riches" genetic adventure. Today, Cookiecutter still thrives as a partnership, housing their small and valuable herd at Ideal, where they compete amidst all the cows in the barns.

In 2009 following historic low milk prices, Kyle joined the Ideal Dairy team. After earning a degree at Cornell in Animal Science, Kyle spent two years working for Pro-Dairy before returning to production agriculture. Kyle brought a vast talent for reducing input costs and increasing operational efficiencies. His focus on data based decision making and benchmarking spurred another round of investment, growth and heightened profitability.

After teaching middle and high school Social Studies for several years, in 2011, John and Denise's daughter, Crystal returned to the farm. With no formal education in agriculture but a master's degree in Adolescent Education and a passion for sharing the beauty and necessity of agriculture, Crystal has focused on fostering open communication with the local community and beyond, maintaining a website, social media page and sending regular newsletters to Ideal's neighbors. She also manages the office, with payroll, compliance initiatives, bookkeeping, data entry and analysis, and many other human resource responsibilities.

October of 2013 marked another moment of intense growth for Ideal; Kyle's brother Luke brought his herd of 265 registered Holsteins, merging Ideal Dairy and Main-Drag Holsteins. Prior to coming to Ideal, Luke attended Cobleskill before returning home to Main-Drag, purchasing the cattle from his parents while leasing the facilities, milking cows on his own for two years. Sharing Ideal's values of commitment to cow comfort and superior genetics, Luke brings a strong knowledge of herd management and health practices as well as an intense passion for quality, high-producing, registered cows.

Expanding, predominantly internally, Ideal added barns, equipment and upgrades to match their growth, always accepting new projects and improvements as part of the "adventure". Believing in our product, and endlessly striving to improve has led us to where we are today.

In 1884 Ideal Dairy began with 8 milking cows and 97 acres of fertile land. Today, we have about 2,200 total head, produce 100,000 pounds of milk per day and farm 3,000 acres. While much changed, we are still committed to quality, raise our own animals, and their forage, just as we always have. In the past century hard work and a love for cows and the dairy industry has given us much to be thankful for. With the addition of new members to our business family we are excited for what the future brings and hope for another century at Ideal Dairy!

