



Tetzner Dairy Farm in Wisconsin operates an on-farm processing plant where they produce 1-gal. bags of milk in plastic bags.

Dairy Farm Has Milk “In The Bag”

More than 800 Wisconsin dairy farmers closed their operations in 2019, but Pete Tetzner has no plans to join those ranks anytime soon. Even though Tetzner Dairy has just 60 milk cows, way below the Wisconsin average of 200 head, his family operation is doing well because they sell 300 to 400 one-gallon bags of branded milk every other day. They also produce and sell fresh ice cream.

The Tetzner farm sits on 420 acres, overlooking Lake Superior near Washburn. The operation has been in the Tetzner family for 4 generations, since Pete’s great-grandmother sold raw milk in bottles several decades ago. In 1976, Wisconsin passed a law banning the sale of raw milk and that same year, the Tetzner family opened a processing plant with plans to sell packaged milk directly to consumers.

“My grandpa found used equipment at auctions and back then there was a lot of smaller equipment around,” Tetzner says. “Even today our equipment isn’t very large, but it works well even though it’s older. Our separator, homogenizer and pasteurizer are all from the 1950’s and 60’s.” Tetzner says it would be difficult to find replacement parts for their decades-old processing equipment, but the family keeps the equipment running smoothly.

With bottled milk customers would sometimes forget to return the bottles or, after consuming the milk, would use the bottles to store other liquids such as gas and pickle juice. “Those bottles would sometimes come back and if you got anything like that in the wash water it was a real problem,” Tetzner says. “Those problems caused him to look for an alternative and he found it at an auction where people were talking about milk in plastic bags. A short time later he acquired the equipment to bag milk. The Tetzners now use a machine Pete’s grandfather purchased in Canada in 1995. The upgraded mechanical model isn’t slowed by humidity and Pete says it’s “been a really good machine.”

At the operation’s peak, the dairy was bagging 600 to 700 gallons of milk every

other day and the Tetzner’s milk nourished many families along the Chequamegon Bay for several years. “There were a lot of big families around, and when you have kids in the house they drink a lot of milk,” Tetzner says. “That part has changed over the years with smaller families, and people just don’t drink as much milk as they used to.”

Even though their bagging volume is half what it was, they’ve maintained a successful business by adding ice cream to their product mix. That occurred when they started selling 2 percent rather than just whole milk, and the additional cream opened the door for ice cream production. Tetzner says it seemed like the logical thing to do and it’s worked out well.

Their current sales facility offers self-serve products and the Tetzners rely on honest customers to stay profitable. Customers select their items, list them on an envelope, drop money into the envelope, and place it in a cash box. “It’s interesting when we have out-of-towners stop in and they’re not used to this approach,” Tetzner says, “but for the most part, it’s worked out great.”

In addition to the retail store Tetzner also sells his products in several stores around the Chequamegon Bay. He says expansion to additional markets is unlikely due to the high cost of transporting the products and the fact demand for traditional milk is going down.

“People tell us they can taste the difference in our milk compared to regular store bought milk because of the quality and freshness,” Tetzner says. “I think it’ll be more challenging to sell bagged milk in the years ahead, but we look for ice cream to keep things moving. Right now we’re having a hard time keeping up, and I don’t see that going away. We’re able to stay in business because of our processing plant, which allows us to operate with a smaller herd. Without our processing plant it would be tough to stick around with the way milk prices are,” Tetzner adds.

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The farm sells 300 to 400 gal. of branded milk in bags every other day.



Butterfly Boutique is a one-stop shop that raises butterflies for sale and helps others do the same. They say raising butterflies can be a profitable business that the whole family can take part in.

Raising Butterflies For Fun And Profit

Looking for “livestock” you can raise in a spare room or shed to make a little extra money?

Raising butterflies can be a viable business, says Linda Rogers, co-author of manuals and free books about the business of raising and selling butterflies.

“Raising butterflies is a little business that the whole family can take part in - starting up at a very low cost,” she says.

With renowned butterfly expert Nigel Venters, his wife Grace, and IT manager Paul Chesterfield, Rogers is business manager and co-author of Butterfly Boutique, a one-stop shop for butterfly information. She and her husband ran “Swallowtail Farms”, shipping out over 125 dozen live butterflies weekly for 5 years before she decided to concentrate on helping others get into the business.

There has always been more demand than supply for butterflies to be released at events like weddings, funerals, open houses and other social gatherings. While those activities have curtailed recently due to the coronavirus, other customers have emerged - many involved with education.

“They make great school projects, or for homeschoolers,” Rogers says. Butterfly growers put together educational kits for families at home as well as senior gardening

and other groups. For fundraisers, people buy butterflies to release for a cause.

She suggests starting with Painted Lady butterflies that can be raised in a month.

“They are easy to raise,” Rogers says. “They can eat plant material or a powdered diet sold by several companies. You can raise them on a farm in Nebraska or an apartment in New York.”

Rogers offers free booklets to help people get started, including a recent one: *All About Professional Butterfly Farming*.

For more complete information that covers raising, marketing, and all the aspects of the business, the Butterfly Boutique sells *The Professional Butterfly Farming Manual* (\$95) coauthored by Rogers and Nigel Venters.

“With a simple, one-page website, one person working on sales and contacts and the daily chores of taking care of the butterflies doesn’t amount to over 4 or 5 hours at the very most, for a large volume of “livestock,”” she says.

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Portable mini insect farms are housed in shipping containers and convert food waste into fly larvae, which make good livestock feed.

Turnkey Insect Farms Produce Animal Feed

“We design, build and install portable mini insect farms housed in shipping containers. It’s a way to produce excellent livestock feed using food waste,” says Miha Pipan, co-founder and chief science officer of the British tech startup company Better Origin. “Our X1 system has been tried and tested on chicken farms, but can be used to produce feed for other livestock.”

Pipan says their system works by converting waste food into seed larvae of the black soldier fly. The larvae metabolize food waste into fats and proteins, growing to about 5,000 times their body weight in 7 to 14 days. They’re harvested and fed direct to animals without any processing or additives. “The larvae is nutritious, healthy and rich in nutrients for the poultry, not much different than what they’re finding in the soil while

grazing on open land,” Pipan says. One X1 unit can produce up to 5 tons of protein per year.

The main benefit of the Better Origin system is making something useful out of wasted food, which totals nearly 10 million tons in the UK alone, says Pipan.

The company hopes to grow a network of decentralized insect farms that are electronically connected and can be grouped into a scalable system. “We see owners not only supplying their own needs, but supplying other producers who don’t own a system but need feed,” Pipan adds.

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