

Farmer's Collection Tells The History Of Milk

It's a pretty sure bet you've never seen as many butter churns, cream separators or milk bottles in one place as you'll find in Gerald and Barb Surbrook's basement.

The Surbrooks are senior partners in a Rives Junction, Michigan, dairy farm, along with their son, Rick and grandson, Jim. Over the years, they've accumulated thousands of dairy antiques, collectibles and memorabilia. Most of the collection consists of items used in the home or by dairy processors to package, process, or serve milk and milk products. They even have a 1940's vintage home delivery milk truck.

Gerald says he began collecting dairy memorabilia when he inherited 10 bushel baskets full of milk bottles from an aunt. "At one time, there were 122 different producers bottling and selling milk here in Jackson county, and I have bottles from 50 of those," he says.

They also have one of the most complete sets of Dazey butter churns around, from the earliest wooden model to the last of the glass ones. "Dazey made a number of quart-sized glass churns that were decorative and intended to be set out in the kitchen," Surbrook says. "We have one of almost all of those. And we have both the smallest and largest of the wooden box-type churns they made."

They also have several crockery churns and two treadmill churns from the late 1800's, which used dog or sheep power to make butter. In all, they have 450 churns with 300 of them on display.

The collection also includes butter molds and presses, cheese dishes, and both tabletop and floor model cream separators from



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several different companies. Of particular interest to many is the John Deere cream separator.

They also have several of the small milk cans used for home delivery prior to the introduction of the returnable glass bottle. "People would set these out on their doorsteps and the milkman would come along with a bucket and pour milk into them," he explains.

Included in the memorabilia in the

collection are an unused Delaval equipment dealer sign from the 1920's and a couple of cabinets used by dealers to store separator parts.

Surbrook says most of the collection was put together in the 1970s, by attending farm auctions and flea markets. They continue to add pieces from swap meets and shows and through connections with collector clubs across the country.

Surbrook says their basement is not a museum, but the couple willingly opens up to school groups and others who want to look. If you're looking for something specific, he can probably tell you where you can see it or direct you to someone else who can.

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Rare Wild Horses Brought Back From The Brink Of Extinction

Environmentalists are always reminding us about the growing number of threatened and endangered species in the world. But the story of Przewalski ("shaw-vol-ski") horses is a success story that shows how we can sometimes save a species from extinction.

Thanks to decades of effort by zokeepers, wildlife biologists and others interested in conservation in Europe, North America and Australia, growing herds of the oldest and only remaining truly wild horse species again roam the grassy Mongolian Steppe, in a 150,000-acre national preserve set aside primarily for re-establishment of the "original" wild horse.

Przewalskis are considered by some scientists to be the wild ancestor of all domestic horses. The Mongolian breed was once so close to extinction that scientists had all but given up on saving it. At the end of World War II, only 12 Przewalskis remained in captivity, mostly in zoos (three studs and nine mares).

Credit for discovering the species goes to Russian naturalist Col. Nicolai Przewalski, who first observed them in 1878 while exploring Mongolia for the Czar.

The sturdily built animals differ from domestic horses in appearance and in genetics. Genetically, they have 66 chromosomes, while domestic horses have only 64. Crosses with domestic horses are fertile and have 65 chromosomes.

In appearance, Przewalski horses have stiff, upright manes, like zebras, and no forelock. Their jaws and skulls are thicker than those of domestic horses. Their tails extend from the body a short distance before long tail hair

begins. They stand 12 to 14 hands and are typically dun or beige-brown, with a lighter colored muzzle and a darker mane and tail, and a black stripe extending over the back from mane to tail. They also have stripes on their legs.

To save the rare breed, a private organization called the Foundation Reserves for the Przewalski Horse (FRPH) was formed to reintroduce the species back to its native habitat. Funds were raised to increase the captive-born herd and to find a safe reserve in which to release horses back into the wild.

With so few of the horses surviving in the mid 20th century, an international studbook and registry was established. Careful breeding records were then kept and horses were exchanged between captive herds in order to avoid excessive inbreeding and maintain genetic diversity in the species.

The effort to increase the size of the captive herd proved successful. Since 1992, several small groups of captive-bred horses from Holland and the Ukraine have been shipped to Mongolia for release into a 150,000-acre national park established primarily for reintroduction of the Przewalski horse. In May of last year, 20 horses, the largest group yet, were transported to Mongolia from The Netherlands.

Out in the far reaches of the reserve, the first generation of horses born in the wild have begun to break off from their herds to form new groups.

While European zoos have been at the center of the Przewalski's horse breeding efforts, a number of American zoos also have played a role in saving the species. The Bronx



A native of Mongolia, the rare Przewalski breed was once so close to extinction that scientists had all but given up on saving it.

Zoo, the Catskill Game Farm (near Kingston, New York) and the San Diego Zoo have breeding herds which can be seen by the public. The National Zoo's Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, Virginia, also has a herd, but it is not open for public view.

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