

Dairy Donation from Area Native

Having grown up with livestock (cattle and hogs) outside Little York, transitioning to dairy farming was an easier move for Carrie Pollard than it would be for most people. Carrie, the daughter of Tom and Sue Bertelsen, resides in Rockford, IL with her husband Brent, where they own and operate a 75-cow dairy operation. In addition to dairy, Carrie and Brent also grow cash crops on acres that have been in Brent's family for multiple generations. The biggest change regarding dairy vs. the livestock she grew up raising? The timing. "I was used to weekend chores, etc., but I've found the mornings and timing to be a challenge. I am not a morning person as the Campbell and Leary clan that I grew up showing with will attest to!"

As a dairy farmer, Carrie recently had the opportunity to fill out a grant application through Midwest Dairy to name and donate a refrigeration unit to a local food pantry. These commercial-grade refrigeration units were made available through Community Relief Grants as part of Midwest Dairy's Undeniably Dairy Grant Program. Carrie found the grant to be a good way to move funds that couldn't be spent on farm tours during COVID-19 to help those in need. Knowing there are very few dairy farmers in western Illinois, Carrie thought her native area would be greatly impacted by this grant and named Jamieson Community Center in Monmouth as the recipient of the refrigeration unit in the application. As refrigeration is often a hurdle for pantries in getting protein (milk and meat), Carrie saw this as a gift that could keep on giving.

The application was accepted, and the refrigeration unit was delivered to Jamieson Community Center at the end of April. After having received word of acceptance, Carrie reached out to Warren-Henderson Farm Bureau. Since then, W-HFB has partnered with both Jamieson Community Center and the Family Outreach Community Center in Stronghurst and set up bi-weekly milk donations with each food pantry. These Centers increase food security and have programs that help thousands with essential services in Warren-Henderson counties and surrounding areas. To learn more, visit www.jamiesoncommunitycenter.org and www.familyoutreachcommunitycenter.org.

Carrie, a Yorkwood High School graduate and past Warren-Henderson Farm Bureau Foundation scholarship recipient, earned her B.S (2003) and M.S. (2005) degrees from the University of Illinois. Since 2007, she's been the Technical Services Manager for Bethany Swine Health Services (now a part of the Pipestone System). Carrie states the best part of her job is getting to work with and keep competitive swine operations just like the one she grew up on! When asked about the various livestock she's worked and works with, Carrie stated, "Growing up with hogs and cattle, I always said I liked showing cattle better, but I preferred raising hogs! Now, I get the individual nature of animals with the cows yet the routine and predictability of raising hogs with my day job!" With the circumstances and supply chain disruptions surrounding COVID-19, while the Pollards didn't personally have to dump any of their milk, many of their neighbors did. As she works closely with hog farm clients, Carrie has seen first-hand the challenges hog farmers now face.

Carrie and Brent are very active in Farm Bureau, with Brent having served as the State Young Leader Chair in 2013, and together, they were past Top 10 National Finalists for the Young Leader Achievement Award. Carrie serves on the Illinois Pork Producers Association Board of Directors, while Brent is Vice-President of the Illinois Milk Producers Association and serves on the Illinois Farm Bureau Environmental Advisory Team.

As if all the above isn't enough to keep them busy, Carrie and Brent just welcomed their third child in March, son Ethan, who joins sisters Ainsley (6) and Charlotte (2). We're glad Carrie found the spare time to fill out Midwest Dairy's grant application.

