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PROGRESS



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DAIRY INDUSTRY

White Gold Milk 'puts milk back into milk'

New brand is U.S. produced and sold locally

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White Gold milk, sold at Shady Maple and Stoltzfus Market in Honey Brook, touts "high standards" and "superior taste" and challenges consumers to "taste the difference."

"I started this organization called Family Dairy Farm really because of the need for better milk," said Intercourse, Lancaster County dairy farmer Mike Eby, who is also chairman of the National Dairy Producers Organization.

As a dairy farmer, Eby realized milk is a commodity and dairy farmers need to produce into that commodity market. Dairy farmers are paid what is available on the market and need to find ways to better utilize more of their milk, he said.

"What better way to utilize more of our milk than to put more milk into the milk? So instead of creating a new yogurt, and putting the protein in the yogurt, why not put the protein in the milk?"

As the fat content is reduced in the milk, the protein content increases, following standards made mandatory since 1962 in California. Eby would like to see this become a national standard.

"It's about giving the consumer what they deserve," said Eby.

Eby said either dairy farmers control the amount of milk they produce or the excess of that milk will control the number of farmers producing; "the law of supply of demand will not be denied. It's a reality check."

He said there has been a 30 year decline in milk consumption.

"You cannot produce something you cannot sell." The goal is to make a product that sells. "We need to improve our milk."

Eby explained that when fat is removed, a void is created. "Therefore, to fill that void so the consumer is not cheated and the farmer is not cheated, protein is added," said Eby. "It's the protein and the calcium and the minerals you're tasting... We call it putting

more milk in the milk."

As a dairy farmer, his dream is to get multiple organizations in the same room together. National Dairy Producers Organization, Dairy Pricing Organization and Family Dairy Farms are the three main drivers that are making White Gold a reality, he said.

His goal is not to create a niche market but to raise the bar and create a superior product. White Gold milk is the show-me product to achieve that overall vision of the dairy industry producing a superior line of milk.

"Dairy farmers made it happen," said Eby.

National Dairy Producers Organization is helping with the overall promotion of the concept. Members of National Dairy, like Honey Brook dairy farmer David Stoltzfus, pay a portion to help promote White Gold milk.

"As a producer myself, the taste difference is exactly the same as raw milk," said Stoltzfus.

He also likes the idea that it's 100 percent produced in the U.S. "There's no added imports as some milk has," said Stoltzfus, who sees White Gold as the future of the dairy industry.

"This is a show-me opportunity and see where it goes. Now all you have to do is replicate it," said Eby, explaining that processors are show-me people. "Show me it can work and I can support it."

Eby also likes that White Gold "tastes great."

"There's nothing that will reach a customer better than through their mouth," said Eby. "It'll help the consumer like milk again. It



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Holding jugs of White Gold milk at Stoltzfus Market in Honey Brook are James Reider, store manager, with Lancaster County dairy farmer Mike Eby, who is also chairman of the National Dairy Producers Organization.



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White Gold milk at Stoltzfus Market in Honey Brook.

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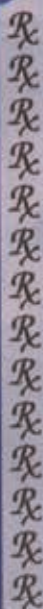
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New Photo Kiosk



Milk

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will in the long run help producers sell more milk. Dairy farmers benefit by having reduced milk sit in inventory."

The name White Gold milk was inspired by the fact that "milk is gold to dairy farmers," said Eby. "I thought this has kind of a neat ring to it. Then the word ring entered my mind..." Moving away from the traditional milk promotional icon of the cow, he wanted to use something unique to attract attention to the milk. Ignoring the typical marketing concepts, he said, "I'm going to go straight to quality and go straight to country of origin labeling and go straight to the concept that milk can be superior and should be superior."

The label depicts a white gold ring to get people asking what a ring has to do with milk. "Now that they've asked the question, now they've opened up their mind to why."

Pam Stafford, of Honey Brook Borough, heard about White Gold milk from Eby and began buying it at Shady Maple in East Earl, which began offering the new brand in May 2014. She said there is a taste difference.

"It tastes real, not watered down, and it almost has a sweetness to it. I have never been a milk drinker, but just put milk on my cereal since I was a child. With White Gold milk, I can drink it, straight from a glass," said Stafford. "I like the richer taste, consistency. I feel that it's healthier."

Stafford not only likes the milk's taste, she likes that it is a local product.

"The milk is local, made in the USA, without any additives from other countries. I did not know what was going on with our milk until Mike Eby told me

that all milk is not created equal. Who would think that in this area, with all of the dairy farmers around, that milk being sold in local stores could possibly be produced in another country? Or sent over as a powder, then watered down? It was a shock to me."

While other milk brands might use imported powder, White Gold is 100 percent U.S. made, according to Eby.

Eby said about 5,000 gallons of White Gold milk (from Pennsylvania and Maryland dairy farms) is processed at Dairy Maid in Maryland (owned by Dairy Farmers of America) and sold at Shady Maple and Stoltzfus Market IGA in Honey Brook. Several markets are interested in selling White Gold in Virginia and two more in Lancaster.

"In their cooking alone, Shady Maple uses 1,000 gallons of whole milk in a week," said Eby. "The reason they like our whole milk is because it has a higher fat content... the amount that the cow naturally produces."

"Once people get a taste, they're going to realize the difference," said Joel Stoltzfus of Stoltzfus Market. "It's definitely a fuller, creamier tasting milk than other milks on the market. Once you put chocolate in it and once they get a taste of

a good chocolate milk that will help sales."

Stoltzfus Market store manager James Reider is also glad to see White Gold milk on the shelf.

"I prefer a richer milk, which is this. It seems to be doing very well here and we hope to grow in the future."

Once White Gold was available at Stoltzfus Market IGA in Honey Brook starting this past fall, it was more convenient for Stafford.

"When I go into Stoltzfus Market, the White Gold is normally almost sold out, but there is plenty of (other brands of) milk left on the shelves. I think this tells the story," said Stafford. "I would pay a higher price for it, even though it's the same price as (the other brand) at my store, to know my milk was produced locally."

Eby emphasized that the Dairy Pricing Organization has paid the difference to make the pricing the same as other milk brands.

"We didn't want a limiting factor to be that it cost more," said Eby. "Dairy Pricing Organization is funding all of the fortification of all White Gold milk as well as every aspect of purchasing the White Gold milk end product from Dairy Maid."

The fact that the milk is local is important to Stafford also.



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White Gold milk at Stoltzfus Market in Honey Brook.

"I think if others realized what was going on, many would agree with me. The consumer needs to be educated so they can make their own decision as to what to buy and serve to their family," said Stafford, who is "patiently waiting for Chocolate Gold to hit the stores!" For more information, visit www.familydairyfarms.com or call 1-866-727-4506.

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