

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MSU Dairy Farmer of the Year to host Breakfast on the Farm June 26 in Manchester

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 26, if you're interested in enjoying a free Michigan-made breakfast while experiencing family fun and a chance to learn about local farm families who produce the food you eat.

Breakfast on the Farm is a family-oriented program that welcomes neighbors and area residents to enjoy a complimentary breakfast along with a self-guided tour of a family-owned farm. Attendees will be able to visit various educational stations and have opportunities to ask local farmers questions about raising animals, growing crops and living on a farm. The June 26 breakfast and farm tour takes place rain or shine from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (breakfast served from 9 a.m. to noon) at Horning Farms in Manchester.

The event will be hosted by Earl and Diane Horning, winners of the 2010 Michigan State University (MSU) Dairy Farmer of the Year award, along with their son, Jeff, and his wife, Lynda, at the family's six-generation family dairy operation started in 1877. Today, the farm consists of 360 milk cows, 410 head of young stock and 700 acres of cropland.

The Hornings milk their cows twice a day in their state-of-the-art milking parlor, which will be one of the stops on the event's self-guided tour. There will be a variety of tour highlights, and the young and young at heart will be eager to stand alongside and climb aboard modern-day farm equipment as well as to pet baby calves, take a tractor and wagon ride, and touch and smell the feeds that cows eat.

Dean Ross, MSU Extension dairy educator, says that the event was created to help non-farm families learn how a modern-day dairy farm operates.

"Dairy farming has changed immensely since the 1970s and 1980s, and many people are not familiar with the new technology," he says.

Ross admits that there is a lot of conflicting and confusing information in the media today about farming and food production.

"Dairy farmers are our best examples of what it means to be a steward of the land and their animals," he says. "Providing the best nutrition, health care and living conditions for the animals, which are the backbone of a dairy farmer's business, is still priority No. 1."

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With all the new technology, one thing hasn't changed: most Michigan farms are family-owned and small businesses.

"We are very fortunate to be living here in the United States, where we have an abundant, affordable and safe food supply," Ross says. "Farmers are people just like you and me. What better way to learn the real story behind modern-day farming than by coming face to face with the people who are actually producing our food? That's what Breakfast on the Farm is all about."

Agriculture, with dairy production contributing the highest percentage, adds more than \$71 billion annually to the Michigan economy.

There is no cost to attend the event or take the tour, but tickets are required for the free breakfast. Free tickets can be obtained from Downtown Home & Garden; the Washtenaw County Farm Bureau; the Washtenaw County MSU Extension Office; the Washtenaw Dairy in Ann Arbor; the Wayne County Farm Bureau in Canton; the Chelsea District Library in Chelsea; Dexter Mill in Dexter; the Monroe County Farm Bureau in Ida; the Jackson County MSU Extension Office in Jackson; the Manchester District Library, and Wacker Oil and Propane in Manchester; the Monroe County MSU Extension Office in Monroe; the Saline District Library in Saline and the Ypsilanti District Library (Whitaker Road Branch) in Ypsilanti.

Breakfast on the Farm is organized by the Washtenaw County MSU Extension Office and the Washtenaw County Farm Bureau.

Statewide sponsoring partners for the 2010 Breakfast on the Farm are Dairy Farmers of America, Dairyland Seed, Greenstone Farm Credit Services, the Michigan Milk Producers Association, Pioneer and the United Dairy Industry of Michigan.

Domino's Pizza will be supplying and preparing the food for the breakfast, which will include the introduction of a new breakfast pizza product that has, up until now, only been sampled in school meal programs.

In addition to the Washtenaw County Breakfast on the Farm, two other breakfast-farm tour combinations are planned for this summer. The second annual Clinton County Breakfast on the Farm takes place June 19 at the Steenblik Dairy Farm near Pewamo (14 miles north of Portland). On July 24, Joe and Beth Bryant will host a breakfast and farm tour on their livestock operation located near Shepherd in Isabella County. Both events, scheduled to take place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., are organized by their respective county MSU Extension and Farm Bureau offices.

For more information about Breakfast on the Farm or to download directions to the Horning farm, call the Washtenaw County MSU Extension Office at 734-997-1678, or visit the Washtenaw County MSU Extension web site at <http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/extension/breakfast-on-the-farm> or go to www.breakfastonthefarm.com.

WASHTENAW COUNTY, MI

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