In many industries it is common for a parent to pass down the family business to the next generation as we have seen in the U.S. for centuries. However, not many businesses can boast that they have eleventh generation family members working for them on a daily basis and that the business has been in the same place since its very beginnings.

When Boaz and Lydia Stearns settled in Mansfield, CT to start their mulberry farm, they probably wouldn’t have guessed that in 2019 the farm and its land would still be owned by their family and would be a prosperous vertical integration dairy, one of forty in the country.

Mountain Dairy and the Stearns family have been in Mansfield since the beginning, selling silk for the town’s bustling industry and then establishing the Dairy name that is so well known to UConn ten years before the college was founded. According to UConn Extension employee and 10th generation Mountain Dairy farmer Stacey Stearns “having the university community close by has always been beneficial” for the growth of the farm, especially with advertisement right in the dining halls of UConn.

Moving forward, Mountain Dairy hopes to look into A2 milk, cheese production, and a farm store for its customers. According to Stacey, one of the largest
"Having the university community close by has always been beneficial."

Stacey Stearns
UCONN EXTENSION EMPLOYEE & MOUNTAIN DAIRY FARMER

challenges facing the dairy industry is that “consumers just aren’t drinking enough milk, so we must look into other products.” Innovation and change are two concepts that the Stearns family knows all too well, from using steam pasteurization to create a unique delicious milk, to selling land development rights as an act of conservation. Mountain Dairy is making true progress in bettering our environment all the while trying to keep in touch with consumers.

The divide between environmentalism and agriculture seems so large, yet Mountain Dairy has aimed at becoming more sustainable through practices such as recycling water used for the processing plant, and using more no-till methods of planting. Mountain Dairy definitely continues to be an industry leader in the Northeast that isn’t afraid of change and always aims to be better.

Even ten generations down the line the Stearns family still embodies an immense passion and love for agriculture. When Stacey was asked what the biggest issue in agriculture is right now, she replied “there aren’t enough voices”.
Mr. Woolam is an industry professional that has been on the UConn Animal Science Committee for about 10 years. Dr. Zinn, head of the Animal Science department, asked him to fill in as instructor for the livestock management class this semester due to his knowledge and experience in the agricultural and livestock industry.

He is from originally from Connecticut and attended UConn. He started in the 2-year Ratcliffe Hicks program to be able to play polo, but then transferred into the 4-year program. He earned a job in the livestock barns and by the time he graduated, he was managing the hog barn. He claims he is “just a 2 to 4 year guy whose fed beef cattle for 30 years” when asked about his knowledge.

After graduating with his degree, he was offered a job as a herdsman in New Hampshire for a beef cattle farm. He was there for a bit then transferred to a job in Maine where he was a herdsman at that beef cattle farm for 20 years! He then came back to CT and worked in a feed co-op doing sales and consulting for 13 years until it closed down. While he is teaching, he is still doing minimal feed sales and consulting for Pleasant View Farm in Somers, CT.
The UConn Block and Bridle Club is one of the larger clubs in the College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources. It was founded in 1921, and has carried on several traditions of the club since its start. The club’s mission is to educate members and the public about animal agriculture through hands on activities with the five different livestock species here at UConn. The members of Block and Bridle gain hands on experience through a few of their biggest events: the Little International Livestock Show, Collegiate Livestock Judging contests, and the National Block and Bridle Convention. Block and Bridle raises funds for these events through their Ham Sale, which occurs once every semester.

The Little International Livestock Show, or more commonly known as Little I, was held the first weekend of November this semester, and is hosted by the Department of Animal Science and Block and Bridle. Students in the Introduction to Animal Science classes work with a species of livestock of their choice for 6 weeks, learning how to train, fit, and properly show their animal. On Little I show day, the students have the opportunity to show off their animals and the skills they’ve learned against their classmates. Little I is one of the largest events of the year for Block and Bridle, and they even celebrated the 90th Anniversary of Little I this year. Sarah Ammirato is a senior at UConn and this year’s Block and Bridle fundraising chair. According to Sarah, “Block and Bridle gives students looking to get into the animal agriculture industry hands on experience, connections in the industry, and a great community of people who have similar interests.”

For more information and updates on Block and Bridle, you can follow them on Instagram @ucblocknbridle.
UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

Connecticut Agriculture Wellness Summit
Thursday, Dec. 5 | 8:30am - 3:30pm
Maneely’s Conference Center

CAHNR Pop-up Shop
Thursday, Dec. 5
Wilfred B. Young Building

Holiday Evergreen Workshop
Saturday, Dec. 7 | 10:00am - 12:00pm
Litchfield County Extension Center

CLIR: Ecology Education for the 21st Century - What Should Each of Us Know?
Thursday, Dec. 12 at 1:45 p.m.
Vernon Cottage, UConn Depot Campus

UConn Extension’s Vegetable & Small Fruit Growers’ Conference
Monday, Jan. 6 | 8:30am - 3:30pm
Maneely’s Conference Center

Cut Flower Grower Workshop
Tuesday, Jan. 14 | 8:00am - 3:30pm
Maneely’s Conference Center

HAPPY NEW YEAR

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