

## SOUTHEAST

# Being all they can be

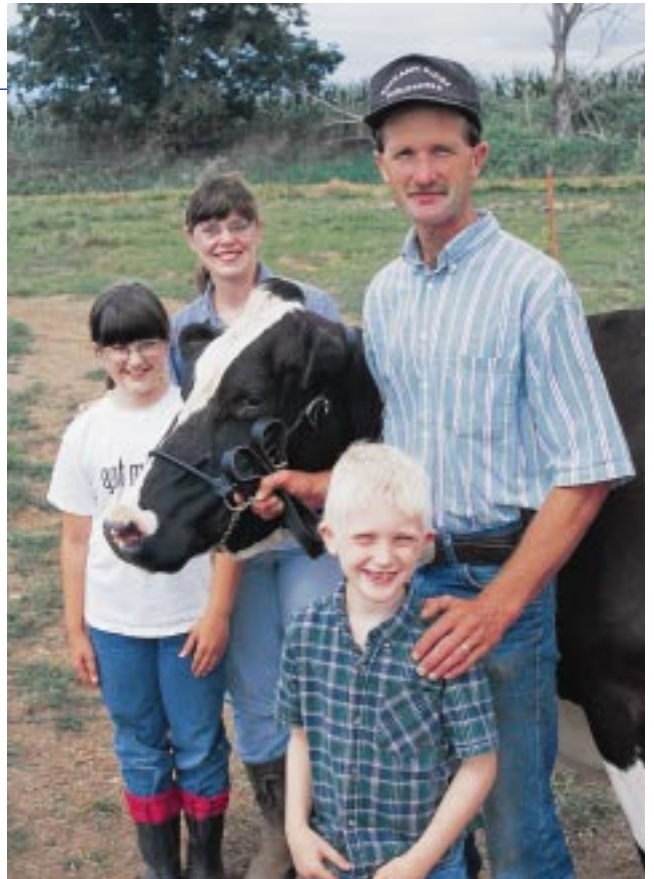
**T**he motivation to put quality milk into the bulk tank is partly internal, partly external for Pat Carletti, Rayville, Mo. “We want to give consumers the best product possible,” says Pat, who farms in partnership with his wife, Ann, brother, Dan, and sister-in-law, Kathy. “But it’s also a matter of pride. Whatever activity I get involved in, I want to do my best. If you don’t have that attitude, why would you bother to milk cows?”

For Pat, quality milk production starts in the housing area. The goal is to keep cows clean, comfortable and healthy. As part of his postmilking routine every morning, Pat uses a rake to level and clean debris out of the 40 stalls in the freestall barn. “I’ll go after some pretty small pieces of manure when I’m raking,” says Pat. “That makes it pretty time-consuming. But in my opinion, it pays off.”

He follows up with a lighter raking (focusing on the alley curb) before the afternoon milking and then once more after evening feeding. As another part of his daily routine, he scrapes alleyways with a skidsteer loader and hauls manure to the fields in a box spreader.

All the hard work in the freestall area pays off at milking time. “The cows come in very clean now,” says Pat, who handles all of the milking chores. “A lot of it is due to the fact that they very rarely lay down in the alleyways. The stalls are designed well and the cows are very comfortable in them.

“It also helps that we don’t let our cows out on pasture if it’s at all muddy. The net result is that we don’t have to



Pat Carletti (right), shown with his wife, Ann, and children Trish and Ben, operates from the premise that if it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing well.

## SOUTHEAST REGIONAL WINNER

### Carletti Farms

*Owners/Managers:* Dan and Pat Carletti

*Location:* Rayville, Missouri

*Nominated by:* Glenn Brown, University of Missouri

*Herd size:* 40 cows

*Production:* 22,153 lb. milk (2X)

*Somatic Cell Count (Avg. 12 mos):* 99,632

*Somatic Cell Count (Low):* 66,000

*Mastitis cases (12 months):* 3

*Antibiotic residue violations:* 0

## SOUTHEAST MERIT WINNER

### Lindwedel Dairy Farms, Inc.

*Owners/Managers:* Calvin, Ray and Wayne Lindwedel

*Location:* Hillsboro, Missouri

*Nominated by:* Larry Pellikan, Dairy Farmers of America, Inc.

*Herd size:* 135 cows

*Production:* 22,051 lb. milk (2X)

*Somatic Cell Count (Avg. 12 mos.):* 134,000

*Somatic Cell Count (Low):* 98,000

*Mastitis cases (12 months):* 24

*Antibiotic residue violations:* 0

spend a lot of time cleaning up cows for milking.”

Even so, Pat is still a stickler for adhering to a solid milking routine. Cows enter the flatbarn parlor six at a time. Pat washes teats with an iodine solution, then strips each quarter into a strip cup. After drying with an individual paper towel, he hangs the milking machine.

“I try to get the units on within 45 to 60 seconds from when I first start washing,” he says. As the milking machine is removed from each cow, Pat postdips with a 1% iodine solution. “Some people wait until the units are off all the cows on one side before dipping,” he says. “But I want to get that dip on while the sphincter muscle is still pulled down a bit so it will draw some of the dip up inside the teat canal.”

Pat also believes keeping his milking equipment in good working condition makes his job in the parlor easier. He stays on schedule for changing inflations and routinely cleans the vacuum pump and filters. He also regularly inspects air tubes and rubber parts for wear and tear. Once a year, a rep from his equipment company graphs the vacuum pump and pulsators.

A solid dry-cow program is Pat’s first line of defense against mastitis. At the last milking before the start of the 60-day dry period, Pat milks the cow out thoroughly. When the milking machine comes off, teats are dipped in an iodine solution, then wiped with alcohol. Next, he infuses dry-cow tubes up into the udder, massaging the teat ends as he goes, and teat dips one more time.

“The facilities and cows on this dairy are the cleanest I’ve ever seen,” says Glenn Brown, regional extension dairy specialist with the University of Missouri. “They work hard to keep somatic cell counts at the lowest possible level. What impresses me most is that they’re always looking for ways to improve. And by a lot of people’s standards, they’re already doing a great job.”