



Producers Honored for Their Commitment to Milk Quality

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Winners of the 2006 **National Dairy Quality Awards** (NDQA) program were announced during the NMC 46th Annual Meeting, January 21-24, 2007 in San Antonio, Texas.

Now in its 13th year, the goal of the NDQA program is to honor dairy producers who successfully have placed top priority on producing milk of the highest quality. The NMC, along with Hoard's Dairyman, DTN Dairy, Fort Dodge Animal Health, WestfaliaSurge, Inc., Ecolab Inc, IBA Inc., Holstein Association, Cover-All, and QMI, sponsored the awards.

Dairy farms are nominated for the award by professionals in the dairy industry who work with producers, such as dairy plant field representatives, veterinarians, DHI supervisors, or extension personnel. Over 130 dairy farms were nominated in 2006.

Finalists from this year's program were judged by milk quality experts who looked at quality indicators such as somatic cell count, bacteria count and incidence of mastitis. The judges looked beyond just numbers however -- applications were also evaluated for milking routine, systems of monitoring udder health, protocols for detecting and treating clinical and subclinical cases, record keeping, and strategies for overall herd health and welfare.

Silver, Gold and Platinum winners were designated from the group of finalists.

Top-rated Platinum winners, honored during the NMC Annual Meeting, are pictured below [\[click here for photos and brief bios\]](#).

For a complete list of all **Silver, Gold, and Platinum winners and nominators**, [click here](#).

Read the "**round table discussion**" article from the *January 10, 2007 issue of Hoard's Dairyman*, featuring the five NDQA Platinum winners and their day-to-day strategies to produce high quality milk [file size 900 KB] [click here](#).

2006 NDQA Platinum Winners

click on images for larger view



Shirley and Tom Carson, Hesperia, Michigan

With their sons, Ryan and Eric, the Carsons have established an enviable track record of high milk production and high-quality milk. Their 85 Holsteins average 24,600 pounds of milk on 2x with no BST. They had an average cell count of 64,600 with a high of 86,000 in June 2005. Less than 12 percent of their cows had clinical cases. Tom takes the lead on ensuring milk quality. Shirley tracks herd somatic cell count daily by going on-line with Michigan Milk Producers Association. Only Tom treats cows, and only family members milk in the Carsons' flat-barn parlor where nine units are used. Cows on this western Michigan farm are housed in a sand-bedded free stall barn. The Carsons' milk quality ranks in the top 2 percent in our co-op, said nominator Dean Letter, Newaygo, Michigan. Tom and Shirley were asked to participate in an MMPA survey of the practices used by low cell count herds.

Terri and Robert Ketchum, Utica, Minnesota

Less than 2 percent of the Ketchums' 118-cow herd was culled for mastitis, and they had only 2.5 percent of their herd experience a clinical case. No wonder they were able to have an average SCC of 68,750 for the year and have achieved a rolling herd average of 26,967 pounds of milk. The central Minnesota herd is housed in sand-bedded free stalls and milked in a double-8 parallel. Their udder health cycle starts when cows are dried off with treatment in all quarters and given an internal teat sealant, followed by a postdip. Fresh cows get temps taken, have quarters CMT'd, and have culture samples run, if needed. Environmentals have been their most worrisome pathogens. The Ketchums CMT cows routinely to detect subclinical cases and forestrip and look for hard quarters to detect clinical cases. "This farm has quality milk like this year after year with little outside help," said Swiss Valley Farms nominator Bob Zielsdorf.



Mary and John Rademacher, Melrose, Minnesota

This couple represents another great combination of high milk and low cell count, despite switching cows in and out of their stall barn. Rolling herd average on their 88 head is 25,200 pounds of milk. Bulk tank cell count averaged 79,000. Their stalls have rubber-filled mattresses bedded with oat straw. Stall beds are cleaned three or four times a day as needed. The Rademachers forestrip to detect clinical cases. Routine culturing shows that they are dealing with some Staph. aureus mastitis in their central Minnesota herd. The Rademachers vaccinate with JVAc three weeks after dry-off. They CMT fresh cows on the fourth milking to check for infections that may have developed during the dry period. "You know immediately that they take their profession seriously," said their nominator Glen Brase about the impression visitors to the farm get. Brase is with Meire Grove Co-op, Meire, Minnesota, an affiliate of Land O'Lakes.





Gordon and Cathy Speirs, Brillion, Wisconsin

The Speirs are repeat Platinum winners. That means at least 24 consecutive months of producing extraordinary quality milk. During the past year, Shiloh Dairy averaged 83,000 SCC and nearly 25,000 pounds of milk per cow — all of this in a herd numbering nearly 1,200 cows. Milking in the farm's double-16 parallel is done by 12 different people. They wear gloves and follow a written milking procedure of strip, predip, dry, and attach. The Speirs have Lisowe Dairy Service check their milking system every week. The herd is housed on sand-bedded free stalls which are raked three times a day. Dry-off involves every-quarter treatment and an internal teat sealant. All fresh cows are cultured. Jonathon August, Lomira, Wisconsin, representing Grande Milk Marketing again nominated the Speirs. He says that employees at Shiloh Dairy do a great job of putting Gordon and Cathy's philosophy to work on an everyday basis. "Cow comfort and cow health always are at the top of the "to do" list at Shiloh.



Julie, Sandy and Tim VerHage, Allegan, Michigan

Rolling average for this 65-cow herd is an impressive 32,000 M, 900 P, and 1,400 F (4.38 percent). With that, they managed an average SCC of 74,333 for the year. No cows were culled because of mastitis during the application year, and only three cows were culled from the herd for any reason. There were no cows on quarter milkers and only one cow with less than four quarters. The VerHage Holsteins are milked in a flat-barn parlor using 10 units and are housed in free stalls with sand bedding. Free stalls are groomed, and alleys are scraped twice daily. Sand is added to stalls weekly or more often, if needed. Strep. uberis has been their most troublesome pathogen, according to lab culture results. They've been able to control and cure it with Spectromast. The VerHages were nominated by Steve Baroza, a representative of Michigan Milk Producers Association, who lives at Delton, Mich. He says this couple has great desire and makes extreme effort to produce the best quality milk.

Overall Results from the 2006 National Dairy Quality Awards Program

2006 NDQA Platinum Winners

Tom and Shirley Carson, Hesperia, Michigan

Nominated by: Dean Letter, Michigan Milk Producers Assn.

Robert and Terri Ketchum, Utica, Minnesota

Nominated by: Bob Zielsdorf, Swiss Valley Farms

John and Mary Rademacher, Melrose, Minnesota

Nominated by: Glen Brase, Meire Grove Co-op (LOL)

Gordon and Cathy Speirs, Brillion, Wisconsin

Nominated by: Jonathon August, Grande Milk Marketing

Tim and Sandy VerHage, Allegan, Michigan

Nominated by: Steve Baroza, Michigan Milk Producers Assn

2006 NDQA Gold Winners

Donald Beattie, Holton, Michigan

Nominated by: Dean Letter, Michigan Milk Producers Assn.

Lloyd and Sueann Higgins, Grant, Michigan

Nominated by: Dean Letter, Michigan Milk Producers Assn.

Robert and Patricia Horst, Bristow, Iowa

Nominated by: Roger Lenius, Swiss Valley Farms

David Hunt, Florence, Indiana

Nominated by: Steve Gilland, Dairy Farmers of America
Ron, Beth, and Kevin Litwiller, Perrington, Michigan
Nominated by: Steve Lehman, Michigan Milk Producers
Michigan State University, Lansing, Michigan
Nominated by: Phil Sears, MSU College of Vet Medicine
Randy and Sara Mikshowsky, Bangor, Wisconsin
Nominated by: Bob Zielsdorf, Swiss Valley Farms
Charles and Julie Nelkie, West Branch, Michigan
Nominated by: Tracy Goodroe, West Branch Veterinarian
Jerome and Carole Rosa, Gervais, Oregon
Nominated by: Steve Kretchmer, Organic Valley
Stanley and Sandra Tucker, Jefferson, Maryland
Nominated by: Ed Wurmb, Mid-Maryland Dairy Vet
Philip and Carol Uhlenhopp, Sumner, Iowa
Nominated by: Brian Gomer, IBA

2006 NDQA Silver Winners

David and Kathy Buck, Dennison, Minnesota
Nominated by: Tim Simon, IBA Dairy Supplies Division
Colt and Christy Clough, Prescott, Michigan
Nominated by: Ronald Bazuin, Dairy Farmers of America
Robert and Denise Colson, Rib Lake, Wisconsin
Nominated by: Richard Hintz, MTC Dairy Supplies
Randy and Cindy Dragt, Howard City, Michigan
Nominated by: Katie Pierson, Michigan Milk Producers Assn
Greg and Mary Erickson, Sebeka, Minnesota
Nominated by: Glen Brase, Meire Grove Co-op (LOL)
Orville and Sherry Gutknecht, Athens, Wisconsin
Nominated by: Kathy Ritzert, Lynn Dairy, Inc
Mike Haines, North English, Iowa
Nominated by: Tom Tegeler, Swiss Valley Farms
Paul Hellenbrand, Lodi, Wisconsin
Nominated by: Ken Ley, Swiss Valley Farms
Brent Helsel, Woodbury, Pennsylvania
Nominated by: Michael Kidd, Maryland/Virginia Milk Producers
Jeff and Shannon Kane, Enosburg Falls, Vermont
Nominated by: Tom Gates, St. Albans Co-op Creamery
Joe Machado, Hanford, California
Nominated by: Norm Kedrowski, Land O'Lakes
Ken and Ruby Meekhof, McBain, Michigan
Nominated by: Ronald Bazuin, Dairy Farmers of America
Meyer Family, Hardwick, Vermont
Nominated by: Tom Gates, St. Albans Co-op Creamery
Rothenberger Family, Lansdale, Pennsylvania
Nominated by: Dale Streams, Quakertown Vet Clinic
Dan and Mary Tekippe, Manchester, Iowa
Nominated by: Mike Roete, Wapsie Valley Creamery
Larry Turner, Brown City, Michigan
Nominated by: Steve Steely, Dairy Marketing Services
James and Robert Wilson, Jefferson, Ohio
Nominated by: Don Mihoci, Dairy Farmers of America
