

**Museum on Main Street, Smithsonian Institution**  
**Stories: Yes | Student Digital Storytelling Project**  
**The Future of Farming in DeKalb County, Illinois: Dairy Farming**

Bill Lanschow: The cooling was one that had tremendous affect in the industry, but then the improvement of the genetics of the livestock, the cows. And that was done mainly by a lot of the breeding studs, where we could share the genetics of the male side, or the bulls. But then we have developed embryo transplant, what actually changed a lot of this, because you could transfer better genetics to improve the milk of those cows.

Bill Deutsch: [0:51] Genetics had been an important role in the improvement of dairy. I think some of the technology has helped our understanding of milk production and what we can achieve by production and today's standard. I mean when I first started, cows would maybe give maybe 7,000 pounds, which would be equated to maybe a 1,000 gallons in a year. And now we're probably three times that, so we're lookin' at a huge jump in production.

Bill Lanschow: [1:31] Getting up at 4:30 in the morning to milk cows that has to be... And you do it 365 days a year, the cows never leave. But you develop a pattern and you really enjoy that, because even yet today that we've sold the dairy, I still get up at 4:30, five o'clock, and that should not happen. But it does, and that is... And we kid and joke about it a lot of times, that that's the interesting thing, but we can joke and kid about it, but that has always been something that's difficult. But it just is something you learn and it's a commitment, 365 days a year.

Bill Lanschow: [2:20] It's interesting we've, I don't think at this particular time we've felt a lot of change, but there's always consumers who would like to buy something different. We in the dairy industry are very disappointed because there's a very definite definition of what milk is. And that has been under the federal orders since way back in the early '30s; the Federal Order System that tells and defines what milk is.

Bill Deutsch: [2:54] I think the big challenge that we have in the dairy industry, and consumers as well, is to make sure that they realize they're comparin' the same thing. Because as those other alternative beverages, whether it be soy or almond, they don't have the same nutrient profile that milk has, and the natural vitamins and calcium that's delivered to the person can be slightly different. I mean almond is definitely lower, soy is comparable in protein, but maybe not so much on some of the others. So I think... But the consumer's telling us that they want some changes.

Bill Deutsch: [3:36] Fairlife is an example of a change that's come out in the milk industry that is milk, that's higher in protein, and is lactose-free. And because of that, that product is actually doing very, very well in the marketplace, and I think we need more of those type of innovations to change the industry.

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Bill Deutsch: [4:03] The future in Dekalb County does not look real good, simply because we're havin' a huge increase in urbanization. There's very few dairies left and I would say that down the road eventually you're gonna see those displaced or moved to another location that's more conducive to rural agriculture and animal production in general.

Bill Deutsch: [4:32] We had near 100 and some a number of years ago. We have four left. And at this particular time, the price structure for milk, a small dairy or a dairy farmer, is really at a loss of what he's... The milk price does not cover his cost of taxes, feed, labor and so on. So I think it's very limited here, especially because of our metropolitan area moving this direction. [5:14] The farm that I mentioned on Plank Road at the curve where the North School is, has way in excess of 200 new homes and a beautiful school, and that used to be a dairy farm. And that is going to continue, people have to move out into... Especially into our Sycamore area because Sycamore just is quite a unique city.