



Steve Lucas, CEO

EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION

Summer is always a short season in this part of the country, but this year it seems to have flown by especially fast. Maybe that's because winter weather hung on so stubbornly late into the spring this year. Whatever the reason, here we are in September already, with school back in session.

Of course, learning never really stops, even during the summer. This holds true for cooperatives as well as schoolchildren. One of the seven co-op principles that all co-ops adhere to is Education, Training, and Information. This is the fifth Cooperative Principle and we take it very seriously, providing educational opportunities all year long.

On the following page, you can read about the Youth Leadership Congress, a longstanding, popular event sponsored by Wisconsin's electric cooperatives. Students who attend this conference learn a great deal about the cooperative way of life as well as engage in leadership development. All students who participate are sponsored by their respective electric co-ops, an investment that pays off. Many YLC alumni have gone on to serve proud co-op careers, either as employees or directors, and become leaders in their communities.

We also teach students and others in our communities about staying safe around electricity through our safety

demonstrations. You may recall reading about our participation in the annual Grant County Safety Day in these pages earlier this summer. We'll be offering hotline safety demonstrations again at next month's Member Appreciation Celebrations.

However, the fifth Cooperative Principle is not just about providing educational opportunities for others. Our own employees and directors are constantly keeping up with their own educations so they can perform their duties more efficiently and effectively.

Directors take courses throughout the year that help them develop their board leadership skills. They also attend statewide, regional, and national meetings that help them stay on top of legislative and regulatory issues affecting this very complex and ever-changing utility industry.

Employees regularly attend workshops and courses where they learn the latest developments within their specific lines of work and keep up-to-date on their skills. These programs also provide a great opportunity for employees to share ideas with professionals working for other co-ops. After all, we often learn our greatest lessons simply by working together.

All these efforts enable us to better perform our duties, better protect your investment in the cooperative, and better serve our communities.



MEMBER PHOTO OF THE MONTH

The winning picture for September in SREC's 2017 Member Photo Contest, "Autumn Road," was taken by Tamara Nelson, Stitzer, Rustic Road Photography. Keep snapping! The deadline for submitting pictures for the 2018 Member Photo Contest has passed, but you can still take pictures for the 2019 Member Photo Contest!



Mark Your Calendars!

Help us recognize
October Co-op Month at our
Member Appreciation Celebrations!

We hope you'll join us next month for a meal and a chance to visit with staff, directors, and fellow members. We'll host one celebration at each of our offices:

October 16: Lancaster
October 17: Gays Mills
October 18: Lafayette

Watch next month's magazine for more details!



SREC STUDENT STEPS UP AT YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONGRESS

Claira Droessler, a student at Southwestern High School, was among more than 100 students from across the state who participated in WECA's 55th annual Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) on the campus of UW-River Falls July 25-27. Students' attendance is sponsored by their respective electric cooperative; Droessler was sponsored by Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative.

During the three-day event, students developed their leadership skills and learned about the art of cooperation through lively team-building exercises and interactive presentations led by professional speakers. Hands-on sessions focused on the cooperative form of business as well as co-op careers.

Droessler said she liked the opportunity to meet new people and also the challenge of stepping out of her comfort zone.

"I learned how to take charge and become a better leader," Droessler said of her experience. "I also learned that I cannot dwell on the past and must move forward through life with an open mind and learn from mistakes."

Motivational speaker Craig Hillier

was again a favorite of the YLC attendees. In his dynamic session on "Breakthrough Leadership," Hillier had students on their feet as he challenged them to turn their setbacks into comebacks.

Also speaking this year was YLC alum Tessa Otto, who made the most of her opportunities at the 2013 event. Otto was elected to the Youth Board that year and went on to represent Wisconsin on the NRECA Youth Leadership Council and win NRECA's prestigious Glenn English scholarship.

All students attending YLC have the same opportunities. Students may run for one of six spots on the Youth Board, which helps plan and implement the following year's YLC. Youth Board members also have the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., in June as part of the national Electric Youth Tour.

Participating students can also enter a WECA essay contest for a chance to win a college scholarship.

Youth Leadership Congress is open to students entering their sophomore, junior, or senior year of high school whose parents or grandparents are members of Scenic Rivers Energy Coopera-



Claira Droessler, a student at Southwestern High School, represented Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative at this year's Youth Leadership Congress.

tive. Watch this magazine and SREC's website, www.sre.coop, next spring for information about next summer's YLC program.



Clara Droessler (pictured at center in both pictures) joins her fellow students in interactive team-building exercises, including a game of Co-op Bingo (left). All problem-solving activities required cooperation for a successful outcome.

NOT YOUR TYPICAL DAIRY HERD

Fennimore family finds satisfaction in goat farming



Goats greet a visitor at the Heberlein farm, JC Acres, in rural Fennimore.

Going to the barn to do the milking twice a day has been part of Wisconsin farm life for generations. But when the Heberlein family of rural Fennimore heads to the barn, it's goats instead of cows that file into their stanchions.

Jason and Clare Heberlein were early adapters of the new agricultural venture of goat farming.

Jason wanted to farm but the capital expenditure for a dairy cow herd was prohibitive. Clare had an early fondness for goats, buying her first goat in grade school.

Milk from their 250 goats goes to Saputo, formerly Montchevre, to be made into goat cheese. The Heberleins are one of more than 360 farms across five states that sell to the Belmont plant.

Just like dairy cows, goats are milked twice a day. It takes about an hour and 45 minutes per milking. Clare does the night milking and half of the morning. They grow all the hay and straw for their operation. And they do all the other chores that come with running a farm.

The children—Ella, Faith, and James—follow their parents during chores while Grace sleeps in a car seat atop the bulk tank. Their fifth child, Hope, joined the family May 31.

Goats are kid friendly and gentle with the children, Clare said. "It couldn't work out any better. The barn is heated, and they can go with me," she said.

In the afternoons, she works in the house while the children nap.

Clare works from home 30 hours a month coordinating Southwest Wisconsin Technical College's dairy goat herd management certification program. Eleven online classes cover introduction to the goat industry, nutrition, genetics, writing a business plan, promotion and marketing, and other topics. It also offers an on-farm



The Heberlein family gathers together after finishing chores. A descendant of Clare's first goat peeks over their shoulders.



mentorship program and a two-day dairy goat academy, this year Sept. 28 and 29.

The program aims to help people considering dairy goat production, beginning producers, and those more established in the industry. The website is www.swtc.edu/dairygoats.

Through her job, she hears from students from all over the country. Wisconsin leads the nation in fluid goat milk and number of dairy goats.

Jason began shipping milk in 2010. He and Clare married in 2012.

“When I left school, I wanted to come back to the farm,” he said. “My dad had a 50-cow dairy, but I didn’t have money enough for the inputs. I tried something new.”

Milking goats is a relatively new agricultural avenue, a path for people who want to have a family farm.

“You’re not going to make a million, but it’s one of the few areas in ag you can get into with less than a million,” Clare said.

Goat cheese makers have won awards and made goat cheese more mainstream.

Now more people are giving goat meat a try.

The Heberleins are marketing their JC Acres goat meat, which can be purchased at their farm, Sugar and Spice Country Store near Fennimore, the Corner Market in Hollandale, and Udder Brothers Creamery in Boscobel.

“There’s demand,” Clare Heberlein said. “It’s lower in fat and cholesterol.”

She’s experimented with ground goat meat in chili, and they also sell goat stew meat, goat jerky sticks, and goat liver. Not all cuts are available at each retail outlet.

“Goat meat has a slight gamey flavor, like deer,” Clare said. “The ground goat can be cooked and used in recipes the same as ground beef. For the different cuts of meat, it is typically cooked using traditional Indian or Hispanic recipes.”

Marketing meat is one way to make male kids more desir-

able and profitable to raise. About half of the herd’s offspring are males.

Their herd had 300 babies during kidding season, a nearly round-the-clock endeavor that lasts more than a month. Jason worked on a couple hours sleep and naps throughout the kidding season. Twins are common.

“Goats are very seasonal,” Clare said. “Baby goats are very hard to raise.”

That leads to burnout, and a high turnover among goat farmers.

“People think it’s easy,” Jason said. But their operation is more than a full-time job for the two of them. Milking and

feeding alone takes up about seven hours a day, seven days a week.

Clare met Jason at a Fennimore school fair, where she had been invited to be a judge. He spent time during the day asking her mother how to get in touch with Clare, who was focused on her judging duties.

He persisted. “He bought a goat from me,” Clare said. “I don’t know if he needed a goat.”

A Mineral Point native, Clare started to show goats at the age of 9. “They were fun.

It was something I could do myself. My mom made me sign a contract that I would take care of the goat.”

She started her own business, Lacey’s Lathers, making and selling goat soap, lotion, and lip balm. She just stopped making soap last year.

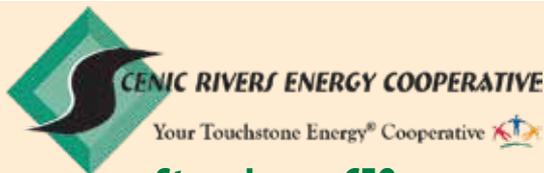
She never expected to be milking goats commercially, she said. She is interested in genetics and how that builds a goat herd.

She keeps her original herd, including a granddaughter of her first goat, Lacey, in a separate barn.

And the family tradition will continue when the Heberleins’ oldest daughter, Ella, shows goats for the first time this year.—*Mary Glindinning* 📷



Clare Heberlein and her daughters, Ella and Faith, take a moment out of doing chores to pet their dog, Sonny.



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