



**NEW HAMPSHIRE: Town of New Hampton, Year 2023, Huckins Farm, L to R Matty Huckins, Catherine Ells, Melissa Ells, Kylie Ells and Bruce Ells**

## Huckins Farm wins New England Green Pastures Award for New Hampshire

Huckins Farm has been milking cows in New Hampton, NH, since 1906. Matty Huckins runs the small, pasture-based dairy, and sells their dairy products at their farm store, online, and across many New Hampshire stores and food cooperatives. The farm milks 18 Guernsey and Jersey milking cows and is raising 13 replacement heifers. The cows are rotationally grazed on 42 acres of grass and alfalfa mixed pasture. Matty's late husband, Gordon, milked cows from the age of five and passed this on to his daughter, Catherine, who has milked cows her entire life.

Gordon Huckins was recognized as an outstanding Guernsey breeder and was active in the New Hampshire dairy community, participating in 4-H as a youth and volunteering as a dairy judge and chaperone. Matty Huckins has been an advocate for New Hampshire agriculture and New Hampshire dairy throughout her life. Matty has actively participated in the Belknap County Farm Bureau, serving as the secretary for 10 years. Matty also served on the board for NH Ag in the Classroom, leading that organization as its president from 2004-2010. Matty also worked for and led Granite State Dairy Promotion from 1994-1999. Matty is involved and engaged with her community, and works hard to provide quality, healthy, dairy products across New Hampshire.

Catherine has served as a 4-H leader, a chaperone to Madison and Louisville as a quiz bowl coach, and is widely recognized as one of the top Guernsey breeders in the country. This past July, Huckins Farm hosted the New Hampshire and Vermont farm tour for the National Guernsey Convention. Matty's son, Jeremy, has embraced the farm from the time he became one of four blended children when Matty and Gordon married in 1989. He was one of the first to milk cows at the UNH Organic Dairy. He has worked as project manager for NRCS and is now senior project manager for Southeast Land Trust. Over the last two years he has helped craft the agricultural easement for the farm, which is near completion.

Granddaughters Melissa and Kylie have grown up raising and showing the Guernsey cows well before they could even show in 4-H. Over the last few years Melissa has developed a farm Facebook page to a combined following of over 3,000 individuals. Although the Facebook page allows for product promotion, it also enables the farm to reach out to the community with truths behind Huckins Farm and the dairy industry. Melissa wrote a research-based blog about raising calves to answer questions and explain the reasons behind the way they raise their calves. While the farm has always welcomed visitors, especially families and school groups, Melissa and Kylie started regular farm tours scheduled through the farm website that help the public to better understand and appreciate the livestock and their role as dairy farmers.

Huckins Farm is a licensed raw milk dealer and works closely with the New Hampshire Dairy Sanitation Department to ensure the quality of their milk. The farm sells raw milk and maple milk and cream. It produces kefir, raw yogurt, feta, ricotta, cheddar cheese curds and probiotic yo cheese spreads in small batches in the farm kitchen attached to the milkhous. Their products are sold both whole-sale and retail, and attract a diverse customer base. Their products are sold to many families, CSAs, and health-conscious individuals. Their farm store also sells other local products and is officially overseen by Health and Human Services. They are currently looking to expand both their processing and the storefront to offer more local products and a place for families to visit, shop, and see the cows.

Matty works closely with many organizations to promote land stewardship and sustainability, including FSA, NRCS, and UNH Cooperative Extension. The farm recently worked with NRCS to improve their

rotational grazing by removing invasive species in the fields and funnel standing groundwater back into the pasture. The farm intends to implement its comprehensive nutrient management plan to better recycle and reuse wastewater. The farm is also working with NRCS and the NH Preservation Alliance to finalize their easement on their land.

When not grazing, the cows are housed in a free-stall barn with two feed bunks. The barn also has two comfort stalls, one used as a calving pen while the other reserved for their 15-year-old Guernsey, Trillium, who was recently named cow of the month in their June Moosletter. The barn roof was replaced in 2015 to remove the flat roof and replace it with skylights. Since air quality is a priority for this barn, the barn siding and windows on the west side were redone and with the other side of the barn open, there is plenty of air flow. Plexiglass is added in the winter to keep the cows warm.

Cows at Huckins Farm are fed either high quality dry hay or pasture grazed and are supplemented with grain whose formula is based on available forage and the desired milk production. During the winter when the cows are not grazing, they are still offered exercise in the barnyard to get plenty of sunshine and exercise.

Matty Huckins has played a pivotal role in New Hampshire Agriculture for years, and she and her team have focused on producing high quality dairy products from their healthy Guernsey and Jersey herd. The farm is always looking for ways to improve cow health, cow comfort, and their farm sustainability.

The farm will be officially recognized at the Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, MA on September 15, 2023