

## American Milking Devon Cattle Association

*Established in 1978 to promote the conservation of American Milking Devon cattle as a triple purpose breed by maintaining a breed registry, encouraging knowledgeable and responsible breeding, and educating the public about the historic role of American Milking Devon Cattle, as well as their place in a healthy sustainable agriculture.*

*Properly cared for Milking Devons will work for you, not you work for them.-- Diurna Kille*



**IT'S FEEDING TIME AT BUNTEN FARM!!**  
**American Milking Devons owned by Bruce and Christine Balch**  
**Orford, New Hampshire**  
**(Picture courtesy of Marilyn Covey and Christine Buntten)**

To stop receiving the newsletter or if you have suggestions, content or announcements to be included, please contact Tom Slater  
[patriotsretreatfarm@yahoo.com](mailto:patriotsretreatfarm@yahoo.com)

## **FEATURE ARTICLE: “Yes YOU Can”- Make Great Cheese With American Milking Devon Milk (Part 1 of 3 Parts)** (Article Prepared by Editor Thomas Slater; Pictures courtesy of Marilyn Covey and Christine Bunten)

### Cheese Maker Christine Bunten

“Yes YOU Can” is the advice from retired cheese maker, Christine Bunten, referring to making great cheese from the milk of American Milking Devon (Devons) cows. Although now retired from cheese making, it is obvious when you talk with her that her love and enthusiasm for the craft and Devons is still strong. Although she humbly insists that she had room for improvement as a cheese maker, she successfully marketed her cheese through her on-farm restaurant, through local farmers’ markets, and through local food fairs and is still a wealth of information.



**Christine in their restaurant kitchen with some of her cheese**

Through a series of events, Christine came back to live on the farm on which she grew up. The farm, located in Orford, New Hampshire, was built in 1835 and was named “The Bickford Homestead” by her father after the original owners. When Christine and Bruce came back to live on the farm, they renamed it “The Bunten Farm” in honor of Christine’s father and family. It was only natural to establish a restaurant on the farm, as that is what Christine and Bruce had done for much of their careers. After retiring from the restaurant and cheese-making business, Christine still lives in the beautiful brick farmhouse, although the property has changed hands.

### Choosing Devons

Christine credits Devon promoter Ray Clark for their interest in Devons. A friend of theirs, Allen Colby, was interested in a pair of bulls for oxen and Ray convinced him that Devons made exceptional oxen. Christine relates that Ray has had Devons in his family since 1627 and he is a wealth of information on anything to do with Devons. They consulted him regularly on health and behavioral issues of the cows and he was always willing to help. Christine says he even frequently puts Devon buyers in touch with Devon sellers. Allen took Ray’s advice and bought a young pair of bulls from the Farmer’s Museum in Cooperstown, New York, (Henry and Ed), and as it turned out, so did the Balches (Rex and Tuffy). They ended up with all four bulls on their farm for a couple years. Since they owned a dairy farm readily capable of becoming fully functional, it was only natural to add Devon heifers and cows. Christine says the “milk is the best, in color and taste.” It has three to four percent butterfat and is excellent for making cheese or any other dairy product.

Even though the Devons can look a little intimidating with their large horns, Christine recommends them, especially for a “backyard” cow or home dairy, as their milk is rich but not overwhelming in quantity. Her experience is that, depending on their stage of lactation, the Devon will produce one-half gallon to two or more gallons per milking. The bulls had good demeanors and the cows were easy to work with. Each cow had

its own personality and they adapted well to a once-a-day milking routine. Every night when the cows came into the barn, they went into the same spot without much fuss as the cows love routine. Amazingly, the Devons



**Bunten Farm Bull – Rex**

can manage their big horns regardless of the type of stanchion they are placed in. The horns presented little problem for the Balches as they were always aware of them and respected them.

Selling young bulls for ox pairs was one way they could help the bottom line of their operation, and Christine preferred selling them as oxen rather than for meat. It not only promotes Devons, it becomes a family affair. Christine relates “that there are many young boys and girls that work with their families and 4H clubs to learn how to care for and train oxen to show at different exhibitions and fairs. Devons are often sought out and considered some of the best for this because they can be matched well as a pair, they're smart, they enjoy working and they're fast walkers. It's a wonderful thing to watch the dedication and interest these young people put into these activities.” The Balches appreciated the efforts parents put forth to help make this an inclusive family affair. She is still pleased by the fact that they sold a pair of young bulls to Dottie Bell from Maine, and they became five time champions at the state fair, and also won several other competitive events. Not only are Devons beautiful, with their deep rich ruby color, they are also extremely healthy cows and they calve easily, says Christine. Very rarely did they have to call a veterinarian, and when they did, there was often nothing wrong, it was just part of their own learning curve.



**Bunten Farm Bull- Tuffy**

If you plan on working closely with a particular animal, Christine says it is important that the calf imprint on you as soon as it's born. They accomplished this by breathing close to the nostrils of the new calves so they could get accustomed to the human scent and by touching them every day. Eventually the calves look forward to the interaction. Christine was able to walk up to any calf in the barnyard and interact with them without them running wildly away. She feels it is best, if possible, to handle a cow you expect to milk from the day it is born right through the first day of milking and every day thereafter. Trying to milk a fresh heifer that has never been handled can be disastrous, resulting in harm to both the animal and the human. The beautiful horns and the heritage aspect of Devons are big educational factors according to Christine. Many people are not familiar with the concept of rare breed animals and a lot of people think only bulls have horns. So these two aspects provide plenty of opportunity for engaging the public. (End of Part 1)

### 360 Degrees

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*"I know of no pursuit in which more real and important services can be rendered to any country than by improving its agriculture, its breed of useful animals, and other branches of a husbandman's cares."* **George Washington**

George Washington thought of himself first as a farmer. He was always seeking ways to improve the quality of his livestock, including his cattle. Mount Vernon was home to many different types of cattle and it is believed that Milking Devons were among them. The cattle sold after George Washington's death included nine red steers. Cattle played an important role at Mount Vernon, providing meat, milk, and milk related products such as cream, butter, and cheese. Cattle also provided draft work on the farm. They were used for plowing fields, pulling carts, clearing forests, and hauling stones. George Washington would work his oxen until the age of eight, at which point they would retire to pasture for a year before slaughter.



**Steve Kozak and Ben and Buck**

American Milking Devon Cattle (AMDC) made a return to George Washington's Mount Vernon in the early 1990s when the Livestock Department was formed. A breeding herd was established consisting of six cows and one bull. We also purchased our first team of Milking Devon oxen to work on the newly opened Pioneer Farm Site. Oxen have played a key role in Mount Vernon's historical interpretation program over the last 25 years. Our oxen are used to perform many of the same jobs as George Washington's. They can be seen by thousands of visitors hauling wheat straw and compost, moving fence rails from field to field, and hauling stones out of the crop fields. Since the development of the Livestock Department, we have trained three adult teams of oxen. Jed and Jake, our current team, were born on the Estate in 2007 and trained to work in yoke at a young age.



**Ben and Buck during their first yoking**

In 2013, Mount Vernon sold its herd of breeding AMDC to allow for pasture renovation. Our goal was to purchase young heifers in 2016 and begin breeding again. Jed and Jake would be turning ten years old and reaching retirement age. We needed to start a young team, but had no calves to train. Over the years we kept in touch with Richard Larson at OGF and it only made sense to purchase a team of bull calves from him. The timing could not have been more perfect. We purchased two bull calves born in March of 2016. Ben and Buck were brought to Mount Vernon in August and began their training as Mount Vernon's newest oxen team.



**Taking the two heifers OGF Carolina Bonnie and OGF Carolina Borgia and Ben and Buck for a walk around the Estate**

Richard also had two young heifers heading to the Virginia State Fair, where they would be touched by hundreds of fair goers. Exposure to people and crowds is important for the livestock that reside at Mount Vernon due to the high volume of visitation on the Estate. The two heifers were perfect for our program and arrived at Mount Vernon on October 5, 2016. With the help of OGF, the reintroduction of the two heifers allows Mount Vernon to once again begin actively breeding and participating in the conservation of the American Milking Devon.



**Lisa with OGF Carolina Bonnie and OGF Carolina Borgia  
Mount Vernon is in background**

Breeding and actively conserving rare breeds for over 20 years at Old Gjerpen Farm (OGF), I've come to realize how critical networking and relationships are to the successful conservation of rare breeds. OGF purchased its first pair of AMDC heifers from Mount Vernon in 2006. Over the years we stayed in touch with Lisa, discussing bulls, bloodlines, sheep, etc. Needless to say, we were honored ten years later to have four OGF calves make the return trip for the reintroduction of AMDC to Mount Vernon. Moving forward together, we now have an excellent opportunity for developing a coordinated line-breeding program utilizing the resources of both farms to make a lasting contribution to the long-term genetic conservation of AMDC.

## **ASSOCIATION BUSINESS**

**ANNUAL MEETING** – The Annual Meeting of the American Milking Devon Cattle Association will be held on **Saturday May 13th, 2017 at 10:00 A.M.** at the Tunbridge Town Hall, in Tunbridge, Vermont. In addition to the regular annual business, there will be elections for Directors. All members are strongly encouraged to attend as many policy issues are discussed and decided at the Annual Meeting. Membership determines policy at the Annual Meeting that is subsequently implemented by the Board of Directors. (Please note the date change. The last newsletter edition had an incorrect date.)

**DIRECTOR ELECTIONS** – This year there are two Director positions up for election. The terms of Genetics Committee Chair and Association Contact, Ray Clark, and Secretary, Andrew Van Ord, are expiring. Both incumbents have expressed a desire to serve again. In addition Richard E. Larson has expressed a desire to serve in the position of Director. Brief biographies of the three candidates are presented below in alphabetical order. Prior to the Annual Meeting, those members who have paid their 2017 membership dues by April 1st will receive a ballot in the mail. The ballot must be returned as directed sufficiently prior to the Annual Meeting or it may be brought to the Annual Meeting and turned in at the beginning of the meeting. The Association Membership/Dues Policy will follow the biographies as a reminder.

### **Biographies**

**Ray Clark-** Ray is an incumbent Director of the AMDCA, residing in Lyndonville, Vermont and has owned and bred American Milking Devon Cattle for decades. Ray has owned cattle all of his life including a dairy herd and studied dairy sciences at the University of Connecticut. Ray spent the earlier years of his life living in Connecticut and interacting with many prominent Devon breeders.

Ray has a lifetime of experience and shares it freely with anyone interested in the breed. He has devoted and enjoys untold hours on the phone passionately promoting the breed to new and potential breeders. He also has traveled at his expense to promote the breed at nearly every Regional Gathering across the country.

He has spent many years on the Board of Directors serving the Association in several capacities, including Genetic Research and surveying bulls for the Association Semen Bank. Ray helps people with problems and helps to solve them. He helps to put people and animals together, whether they are looking to buy or sell.

Ray is the “Go-to-Person” for the American Milking Devon Cattle Association.

Ray continues to display Devon cattle at his local fair in Vermont. He fully supports the Mission of the AMDCA to preserve the triple purpose character of the Devons.

**Richard E. Larson-** Culpeper, VA – (nominee) My appreciation for a good dairy cow emanates from growing up on a Wisconsin dairy farm where I looked forward to showing at the county fair. More recently, Donna and I have been actively involved in raising and promoting heritage breeds conservation generally, for over 20 years, and Milking Devon specifically, for 11 years. I have previously served on The Breeds Conservancy (ALBC) board of directors. I have successfully advocated for and organized numerous local, state and national exhibitions, providing opportunities for breeders to exhibit their sheep and cattle and, in the process, educate the public about the importance of rare breeds’ conservation.

Being a member of several breed associations, I have come to appreciate that the success of member organizations lies in their ability to foster strong membership participation. Understanding the associations’ historical regional nucleus, one challenge is how to enable members living outside of the region to be actively involved and committed to the organization. Developing answers to these questions, when establishing policies and schedules, can be aided by insights from members who live outside of the regional nucleus. Let me offer a practical example.

**Biographies Continued**

**Richard E. Larson** (Continued) -I personally enjoyed attending one annual Fall meeting held at Colonial Williamsburg, a five hour round trip for us. The practicality of members living more than a day's drive from Tunbridge, VT regularly attending AMDCA annual meetings could be easily and significantly enhanced if the association offered a free telephone conference line for members to conference in to the meetings. With the availability of a free conference line there is virtually no excuse for any member to not regularly participate in AMDCA meetings.

This same free conference line could also be used for quarterly "ask the expert" scheduled calls with appropriate experts designated by the Board. Some examples: calls could be scheduled to discuss breeding, bloodlines, artificial insemination, marketing, managing grass-fed milk / beef, etc., the subject list is endless. A conference line is an efficient way to share information, while at the same time helping build a sense of community.

Drawing on my experience as CEO of a 50-person business, with employees working remotely in 14 different states, if elected, I offer the lessons learned for finding practical solutions to efficiently and effectively enhance participation for all members, regardless of where they live, to fully engage in and feel a valued member of AMDCA.

**Andrew Van Ord** – (Incumbent) I am a second-generation American Milking Devon breeder. My family and I graze our herd of Devons on the same land I was raised on in northwestern Pennsylvania. My daughter Lily has been instrumental in the training of our calves. Last year she earned her first heifer and became a junior member of the association. We need to seek out and foster the future stewards of the breed and perhaps she will choose to be among them.

I have served on the AMDCA Board of Directors for three years and served as the Secretary for two years. In that time I have participated in all but two monthly director's meetings. I have also participated in the past five annual meetings as well as the 2014 Fall Gathering. In the past I have served as a member of the board of directors for the Midwest Ox Drovers Association as well as the Vice President. I have also served on the 4-H Development Council of Warren County Pennsylvania.

I am passionate about promoting the American Milking Devon breed and I am a staunch believer in maintaining the traditional "triple purpose" qualities of the breed. To so call "improve" the breed would be to destroy it. It is my belief that the association should encourage, manage and focus the efforts of its members but it is ultimately up to us, the members, to put forth the effort.

Regardless of how you plan to vote please consider attending the annual meeting. It is by far the best way to communicate your opinions and ideas. It is also a good time to meet other breeders and the more participation the better. Thank you.

**Brochures Available-** The Association has recently had a new batch of American Milking Devon Cattle brochures produced and is offering them free of charge to AMDCA members. If you would like some, please contact Association Secretary Andrew Van Ord. His contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

**AMDCA Website-** AMDCA hosts a website under the direction of Webmaster Lawrence Gilley. The website contains Breeder Information, Breed History, a Calendar of Events, a For Sale Section, Association Information, Member Services, Semen Sales, Frequently Asked Questions and Relevant Links. In December the website had 1,105 visitors for a total of 1,475 visits. Seventy percent (70%) of these visitors were new. In January there were 1,349 visitors for a total of 1,800 visits. Seventy percent (70%) of these visitors were new. In February the website had 904 visitors for a total of 1,316 visits. Sixty-two percent (62%) of these visitors were new. The statistics indicate that the For Sale page(s) are among the most frequently viewed. We encourage you to use our website as it is kept current with Association-related business. Lawrence's contact information and the web address can be found on the contact page of this newsletter.

**Committee Appointments-** In accordance with the by-laws, Association President John L. Hall III has made the following committee appointments:

Nomination Committee: Thomas Slater, Bruce Farr and Dexter Randall

Registration Committee: Registrar Bonnie Hall and the full Board of Directors

**New Policies Affecting Registration of Cattle:** After discussion at the Annual Meeting, the Membership directed the Board of Directors to develop and implement two new policies regarding registration. The first directive was to develop a policy that created an upper age limit for the registration of cattle, and the second directive was to create a sliding fee scale for registration that increased with the age of the animal being registered. These policies were deemed necessary by the Membership, as many problems and issues arise and increase the longer registration of an animal is delayed. The Membership felt that these two policies would encourage more timely registration of animals, contribute to a more accurate Registry, and reduce some of the problems which the Association has no control over that are currently occurring between buyers and sellers. The Membership also directed the Board to provide a grace period before these new policies took effect, so those who currently own unregistered cattle may have ample time to get them registered. Based on the directives of the Membership, the Board adopted the following policies:

- **Effective midnight December 31, 2017** no animals exceeding five (5) years of age will be registered by the American Milking Devon Cattle Association.
- **Effective midnight December 31, 2017** a new cattle registration fee schedule will be implemented as follows:
  - Cattle less than one year old -\$5
  - Cattle one year old but less than two years old -\$10
  - Cattle two years old but less than three years old-\$25
  - Cattle three years old but less than five years old- \$50
    - The Registrar is to receive \$25 of the \$50 fee for three years and older registrations due to the volume of work involved
  - Cattle five years old or older cannot be registered
- Mistakes in registrations that are corrected by the Registrar will be published in an Appendix of a future edition of The Herd Book.

**Change in Membership Policy-** At previous Annual Meetings the membership directed the Board of Directors to develop policy in three areas. The first two policies are explained above. The third policy was to require members to pay all back dues before accepting registration of animals born in years where dues were not paid. All three policies were implemented and the first two policies received very little, if any, negative feedback from the membership. The third policy received some negative feedback, however most members paid their back dues. Earlier this year a member took exception to this policy stating that the adopted policy was in conflict with the Association Bylaws. After consultation with legal counsel and due deliberation, the Board determined that it would be in the best interest of the Association and the breed to withdraw the new membership policy and refund any back dues paid in accordance with this policy. If the membership wishes to reconsider this policy in the future, it would be best to do so as an amendment to the Bylaws insofar as it impacts the definition of a “member.” As a result of this decision, the Registrar/Membership Secretary reviewed her records and refunded all dues collected under this policy in early March. If you believe you paid back dues under this policy and did not receive a refund check, please contact Registrar/Membership Secretary Bonnie Hall as soon as you can. Her contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

**Semen Bank-** The Board of Directors has asked Ray Clark to explore possibilities of drawing additional bulls for the semen bank of the Association. His search is in the very beginning stages and no firm plans have been established. If you have a bull that you think would be valuable to draw, or you know of one, please contact Ray to discuss. He would like a picture of the bull, the bull’s pedigree and his registration number. Ray’s contact information is on the last page.



**DEVON HISTORICAL RECORDS AVAILABLE**

Webmaster Lawrence Gilley has made several historical documents/herd books available as follows:

American Devon Record Vol 10 <https://s3.amazonaws.com/herdbooks/ADR10.pdf>

American Devon Record Vol 9 Bulls <https://s3.amazonaws.com/herdbooks/ADR9/bulls002.pdf>

American Milking Devon Record 1996 <https://s3.amazonaws.com/herdbooks/amdr1996.pdf>

He has also added parts 3 and 4 to make a complete copy of The American Milking Devon Record published in 1996. The cows and bulls were included in the American Milking Devon Association Herd Book Vol. 3, 2005, so this document is primarily of historical significance. You can download a copy with the following link:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/herdbooks/amdr1996.pdf>

An earlier document, The American Milking Devon Association Herd Book published in 1986 is now available and can be downloaded with the following link:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/herdbooks/amdaherdbook1986.pdf>

The American Milking Devon Cattle Association Herd Book Volume IV is now available on the Association's website. (<http://www.milkingdevons.org>) It contains Bulls from number 10968 through number 11097 and Cows from number 2381 through 2734, up to the date December 31, 2016. If you find a copy of the American Devon Record Vol 8, please let Lawrence know as he has not yet succeeded in finding a copy. The Association thanks Lawrence for his work on these endeavors.

**Membership/Dues Policy-** Membership is open to any individual or organization interested in furthering the purposes of the Association. An organization shall designate an individual to represent it at business meetings of the Association.

There shall be three categories of membership;

1. Voting Members, consisting of all members owning registered Milking Devon cattle.
2. Associate Members, who wish to further the purposes of the Association.

The annual dues for these two categories as established by the Board (currently \$20) shall be due and payable on or before January 1 of each calendar year. Lapsed members shall be reinstated on payment of current year dues.

3. Junior Members, a category open to those under 18 years of age for a single dues payment (currently \$20), can access all membership services at the established fees.

Only Voting Members are entitled to vote at membership meetings. Except for voting rights, no distinction shall be made between the three membership categories as to the availability or cost of services provided.

**Buying Registered Cattle-** It has come to the attention of the Association that some AMD buyers are not receiving their transfer registration papers in a timely fashion as the result of sellers not submitting the appropriate paperwork to the Registrar. Some of these buyers reach out to the Association to seek assistance in rectifying the situation. The Association, however, has no authority to intervene in this type of situation. The buyer and seller should discuss the transfer paperwork **prior to the sale being completed**, and if at all possible, the buyer should receive a copy of the paperwork the seller is forwarding to the Registrar at the time the cattle are physically transferred. A potential buyer could contact the Registrar prior to a purchase to ascertain whether a seller actively registers cattle. No personal information beyond "YES THEY ACTIVELY REGISTER CATTLE" or "NO THEY HAVEN'T ACTIVELY REGISTERED CATTLE" regarding a seller will be given out by the Registrar.

### **Ray's Corner- On Moving Cattle & Cows and Calves**

Quotes and advice from Director Ray Clark

Moving cattle provides an opportunity for the health of the cattle to be compromised. Trucked cattle can get 'shipping fever' which is very contagious. It can go through your herd and actually kill other cattle. While one symptom is a snotty nose, Ray recommends that if you are receiving trucked cattle, you should call your veterinarian and ask them for a full list of symptoms. If you see symptoms you should call your vet immediately. As a safety precaution it is best to quarantine any cattle you receive for at least two weeks and maybe even a month if some symptoms are present. If you are shipping cattle out-of- state, both federal and state laws require that you obtain health certificates for each animal. This may require specific tests for specific states. Normally the vet will make that determination. These health certificates must be obtained within a very specific time window relative to the shipping date. In addition to the specific tests, the certificate usually requires identification in the form of a tattoo or ear tag, and a specific destination address. Some farmers ignore these regulations and ship without health papers. This is not good for the animals and can result in significant civil penalties for the shipping farmer. In Vermont the state fines for shipping interstate without proper papers can range from \$1,000-\$25,000 per animal. Federal fines would be additional. In the case where an animal shipped without health papers caused damage to other animals or humans that is somehow related to the testing required, the shipping farmer could be subject to a lawsuit. It's best all the way around to follow the laws.

Its springtime and cows are calving. Sometimes a cow will not accept her calf. If that happens you can get some milk from the cow and place it all the way down the back of the calf. The cow will recognize the scent. This doesn't always work. At a minimum you need to milk the cow to get the colostrum from the cow's first milk and bottle feed it to the calf. As long as the cow is not aggressive toward the calf, you can confine them in close quarters and the cow may accept the calf within a couple days. You need to ensure the calf is eating, by bottle if necessary.

#### **EVENTS YOU JUST SHOULDN'T MISS**

- American Milking Devon Cattle Association Annual Meeting, Tunbridge, Vermont, **Saturday May 13, 2017, 10 a.m. to noon**
- Mother Earth News Fair, Burlington, Vermont, **June 10-11, 2017**
- Virginia State Fair, **September 29-30, 2017**

#### **OVER THE BARNYARD FENCE – No responses this quarter**

This section is for reader opinions and experiences with FEATURE ARTICLE topics from prior editions. The Association does not endorse or recommend policies and practices expressed in this newsletter. It is left to the reader to decide for themselves the policies and practices they wish to employ. However, we sincerely thank the author(s) of this section for their willingness to take the time to express their opinions and share their experiences. You can submit your articles to the Editor through e-mail at [patriotsretreatfarm@yahoo.com](mailto:patriotsretreatfarm@yahoo.com). If you don't have e-mail, send a hard copy to Thomas H. Slater, 303 Cripplebush Rd., Central Bridge, NY 12035.



Picture: Nelly Bly and Aurelia  
Courtesy of Lawrence Gilley

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES FOR JUNE NEWSLETTER IS JUNE 15, 2017.**

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FEEDBACK- Your comments, ideas and "constructive" criticism are always welcome. I would like to know what topics interest you that could become feature articles. The best way to reach me is through e-mail [patriotsretreatfarm@yahoo.com](mailto:patriotsretreatfarm@yahoo.com) . If you don't have e-mail call me at (518) 868-9328 or mail me at Thomas H. Slater, 303 Cripplebush Rd., Central Bridge, NY 12035. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this newsletter.