

DAVE and KATHY SKIBA



Dave and Kathy began Diamond S Farm in June 1968 with a herd of registered Angus cattle near Stark, MN. In July 1973, they purchased their current farm in North Branch, MN complete with 40 Jerseys and one Guernsey. A few Holsteins were added, but as they began purchasing registered Jerseys and utilizing DHIA services, the Holsteins were sold. Currently, the Skibas milk 140 registered Jersey cows in a double-five herringbone parlor and raise all their young stock. Cows are housed in both a free stall barn and a composted bedding pack barn, while calves are raised in hutches and then moved to small group housing with headlocks. The Skibas are aggressive about breeding and marketing high valued registered Jersey cattle and have consigned many animals to sales over the years. The herd's breeding program focuses on selecting top genetics with a combination of high production and good overall type.

Dave and Kathy along with their four children, Michael, Christopher, Kari and Patrick, continue to exhibit cattle at local, county, regional, state and national shows and have done so since the early 1980's in both open and junior shows. During this time, the farm's animals have received numerous awards on the tanbark. In the junior and open shows, Diamond S Farm animals have taken home Grand and Reserve Champion honors at local, county, regional and state levels. At the Minnesota State Fair Open show they have exhibited Champion Bull and Junior Champions, and within the same show they have received All-Minnesota Bred and Owned awards of Champions, Reserve Champions and Junior Champion. But the pinnacle of their showing career thus far came at the 2007 World Dairy Expo where they exhibited the 1st place Fall Yearling Jersey - Golden Hill Kaptain Fortuna - who is bred and owned together with their daughter and son-in-law, Joe and Kari Stanek. Fortuna was also named All American Fall Yearling, People's Choice All American Heifer and was featured on the cover of All Breed Access in March 2008.

In addition to winning awards on the tanbark, Skiba's Jerseys have taken home numerous production and milk quality awards. Some of the awards Dave and Kathy are most proud of were presented to their children's animals. Diamond S General Josie was the 1987 Champion of the National Jersey Youth Production contest and Diamond S Duncan Hazelwood was 4th place in the National Jersey Youth Production contest in 1996.

Dave and Kathy have been active in the dairy industry both together and as individuals. Together they are members of the American Jersey (AJCA) and Minnesota Jersey Cattle Associations (MJCA) and were on the planning committee for the 1999 National AJCA convention and were a farm tour host. They are long time supporters of National All-Jersey and were active in AJCA's attempts to improve component pricing for all farmers. The Skibas are members of Minnesota Milk Producers Association (MMPA) and Isanti County DHIA - both having held officer positions in the organization. They are board members of their local dairy association and have been trained in Midwest Dairy Association's 'Speak Out' program - between the two they have spoken to over 10 community groups in the North Metro area within the past year. Dave and Kathy are strong supporters of youth programs, especially 4-H and FFA. They have been 4-H volunteer leaders on the local and state levels and continue to work at the State 4-H Dairy Show each year. In addition, the Skibas volunteer annually at the Minnesota State Fair Moo Booth, in 2007 they worked in the Milk Stand and in 1987 and 1991 their farm was the display herd for the Minnesota State Fair Milking Parlor.

Dave currently is the president of the Minnesota Livestock Breeders Association, serves on the finance committee for Christ the King Catholic Church, is the vice president of First District Association's Unit F, is a member of the Isanti County Agricultural Society and is a past board member of Chisago County Farm Bureau.

Kathy is the current treasurer and past president of the Minnesota Purebred Dairy Cattle Association (PDCA), is a board member for First District Association, is a board member on the Midwest Dairy Association Corporate Board, is the vice president of the Minnesota Dairy Promotion Council, is the vice president of the ADA of the Midwest and is the past chairwoman of the Princess Kay of the Milky Way committee.

Jointly, Dave and Kathy have been recognized for their dedicated service in the dairy industry receiving the PDCA Distinguished Breeder Award in 2000, the MJCA Distinguished Service Award in 2005, and the MMPA Milk Producer of the Year Award in 2006.

Furthermore, the Skibas have hosted numerous guests, consumers and media, on their farm as they feel it is part of their responsibility to inform and educate people first-hand about how food is produced. Dave and Kathy are avid supporters of the dairy industry, the registered Jersey cattle breed and agriculture overall.