

Pillar in local dairy industry dies at 94

Patriarch of large family set loving example for kids

By Lori Consalvo
Staff Writer

UPLAND — John Alvin Musser knew how to take care of his family and how to take care of cows.

After 83 years in the dairy industry and 62 years devoted to his wife and children, the 94-year-old Upland man died in his sleep Nov. 14.

Musser made a career out of the dairy business to take care of his family, which began with wife Hope and grew to include 10 children, 26 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

"All of us felt like we were the only one he had," said Julie Palmisano-Brown, who calls herself grandchild No. 7. "He was just so loving."

Musser's memorial service will be at 10:30 a.m. today at the Upland Brethren in Christ Church, 845 W. Arrow Highway. Burial will be at the Bellevue Mau-



Musser

came to Upland with his family in 1924, when he was 11, on a train from Idaho. He helped found the Shady Grove Dairy in Ontario.

When he was 13, Musser adopted a businessman's attitude, delivering extra milk throughout Ontario and Upland from the dairy's one cow.

He went from door to door on his bike with a box in the back and a basket in front filled with milk, Palmisano-Brown said.

Musser became more involved with the dairy community as got older. He ran production and oversaw the herdsmen for Shady Grove.

Under his watch, the herd grew to hundreds of registered Hol-

stein cows that produced award-winning milk.

"They started with one dairy, and now have places in Chino, Pomona, and Ontario," Palmisano-Brown said.

Musser quickly went from being just a farmer to a leader.

In 1945, he was elected to the board of the Dairy Department of the Farm Bureau, where he served for 39 years. He also served for many years on San Bernardino County's Farm Bureau Board and was chairman of the State Dairy Herd Improvement Association. He was chairman of the county Farm Bureau Board.

He had more interests than just cows. Musser served for 14 years on the Flood Control Board for District I and was on the county Fish and Game Commission.

"But his number one priority was his family," Palmisano-Brown said. "As much as he accomplished, his family always came first. And you can tell by how close our family is."

Musser would make sure that all 10 of his children kneeled down at the table and prayed every morning, she said.

"They passed that down from generation to generation, and that made the family really strong," Palmisano-Brown said.

It was important to Musser that his family have a strong religious upbringing. To set an example, he served on the board of trustees for both the Upland Brethren in Christ Church and Western Christian Schools and gave his time, effort and extra livestock to the needy of the Brethren in Christ Navajo Mission in New Mexico.

Upland Councilman Ray Musser said he too witnessed his cousin's strength and faith. "(My wife) Fern and I came to California 50 years ago, and Alvin and his wife so graciously adopted us into (his) family," Musser said.

He described his cousin as "a church leader, a real man of God and a man that could be trusted."

"I had taken a lot of pointers from his lifestyle," Ray said. "He was a pillar of the church and of the community, and he will be missed."

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