



## **#Fridaysonthefarm: Growing a Dairy One Scoop at a Time**

From the kitchen table to the boardroom table, the USDA brings people together across the nation for: healthier food, natural resources and people; a stronger agricultural industry; and economic growth, jobs and innovation.

Each Friday, meet those farmers, producers and landowners through our [#Fridaysonthefarm](#) stories. Visit local farms, ranches, forests and resource areas where USDA customers and partners do right and feed everyone.

This Friday, meet Jared and Treacy Weeks, who have used hard work and innovation to grow their Ringoes, New Jersey, dairy, which produces “Jersey Fresh” single-sourced milk. They sell milk as well as use it for locally-made ice cream.

### **Building a Business**

Jared Weeks grew up surrounded by dairy farms in rural New Jersey. After working on a neighbor’s dairy farm, he started [Hun-Val Dairy Farm](#) in 2005 with a [youth loan](#) from USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA). He progressed to [direct farm operating loans](#), which have been essential to the dairy’s growth over the years.

“For producers just getting started, direct farm operating loans provide an essential gateway into agricultural production by financing the cost of operating a farm,” said Kevin Murphy, farm loan program chief for FSA in New Jersey. “Jared is one of our successes. We really like to see these young farmers succeed.”

In 2006, his first operating loan enabled him to purchase his starting herd of registered Brown Swiss and Holstein cows. His second operating loan in 2007 helped him purchase more cows to expand his herd and equipment to operate efficiently.

After renting a barn for a few years, Weeks was able to build a barn of his own in 2008 with the help of another operating loan.

“FSA gave me the chance to make it work,” Jared said.

By providing access to credit, FSA’s farm loan programs offer opportunities to family-sized farmers and ranchers to start, improve, expand, transition, market and strengthen their operations.

“FSA has been involved in every step of the progress of our business,” he added. “FSA is sometimes the only foot in the door. It’s a valuable asset to new farmers.”



## Sweet Venture

Hun-Val Dairy is now home to a herd of 200 cows. In 2015, it became the first dairy farm in New Jersey to receive the Jersey Fresh label on its products.

“It’s a value-added program,” Jared said. “It puts emphasis on local products, so the public can see our products came from a farm in New Jersey. It’s been a great way to set our products apart on grocery shelves.”

While all Hun-Val’s products are single-sourced, the bottling process is outsourced. Their long-term goal is to bottle their own milk at the farm.

Most recently, in partnership with Double Brook Farm, a livestock operation, the Jared and Treacy created [Red Barn Milk Company](#), where people can enjoy locally-sourced ice cream, fresh bottled milk, hamburgers, hot dogs, bratwurst and more.

“One thing we have a lot of in New Jersey is people.” Jared said for why the dairy expanded into running a farm stand.

In addition to the daily farm duties, both Jared and Treacy are active in the local 4-H in Hunterdon County, educating students about dairy cows and the industry.

“They are very dedicated to what they do and want to see the New Jersey dairy industry succeed,” said Shannon Barton, FSA farm loan specialist.

## More Information

For more information about FSA loan programs contact your [local USDA service center](#).

USDA offers a variety of risk management, disaster, loan and conservation programs to help America’s dairy farmers weather ups and downs in the market and natural disasters as well as invest in improvements to their operations. [Learn about additional programs](#).

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