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For Immediate Release

July 24, 2018

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IT'S LEGENDAIRY

Nebraska State Fair's Milking Parlor Promotes Happy Cows

Grand Island, NE – The Milking Parlor located in the Tom Dinsdale Automotive Cattle Barn at the Nebraska State Fair, presented by Midwest Dairy Association, has been a fan favorite for more than many years of State Fair history. Eight cows hang out on a regular milking rotation for fairgoers to see just exactly how their milk is produced.

Dairy cows, typically Holsteins with their black-and-white splotches or other breeds such as Guernsey or Brown Swiss, are showcased in five demonstrations per day and milked every eight to 12 hours. Every other day a truck arrives to pick up the milk and transport it to Omaha to be made into popular dairy products such as 2% milk, yogurt, ice cream or cottage cheese. Roger Henrichs, dairy superintendent, and other volunteers narrate the milking process while answering questions from spectators.

“People who do not have a farm background are pretty fascinated by the first sight of a cow providing milk,” said Henrichs. “During the demonstration we talk about milk nutrition, care of the animals, what they eat and more. But naturally it's seeing the milk generated, and how much milk, that is quite an education.”

Henrichs said his favorite part of the Milking Parlor is the arrival of Nebraska's Largest Classroom students. "They always have great questions," he said of the kids. "We seem to have a lot of dialogue about chocolate milk." Dairy operations throughout the state of Nebraska provide the cows. A cow must have calved at least six months prior to the Fair and at least one baby calf is on hand for kids to see while they are visiting.

Henrichs, who has had a passion for dairy farming all his life, has been involved in the operation of the Milking Parlor since 1989. When the State Fair moved to Grand Island, he was a crucial member of the team who helped design the facility.

The Milking Parlor opens for guests on August 27 and runs through the rest of the Fair. The 2018 Nebraska State Fair runs August 24 through September 3 in Grand Island. Ticket discounts are currently available at all Pump & Pantry locations or online **at StateFair.org**. Bundle prices, entertainment information and a schedule of events can be found online.

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