

# Malcolm Named 1990 Vt. Dairyman

By KRIS SURETTE  
Journal Reporter

When John Malcolm started operating the Morning Moon farm 15 years ago, it consisted of a small barn, a single silo and a drafty old farmhouse.

Now if you were to wend your way up Rupert Hill Road far above Pawlet Village and see Malcolm's farm, you might not recognize it. There have been a number of changes over the years. The red barn has grown with two additions, a maintenance shop was constructed, two tall silos were added and the house is now being completely renovated.

While dairy farming brings constant challenges and changes, Malcolm has successfully made it his life's work. And for the effort he's

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put into his quality operation, he was named the 1990 Vermont Dairyman of the Year.

The award is presented annually by the University of Vermont (UVM) Extension Service and Vermont Dairymen and Industry Association to recognize Vermont's outstanding dairy farmers.

"It's an honor. It's like the Hall of Fame — you can't go any higher than that," said the 39-year-old



**John Malcolm** KRIS SURETTE

Pawlet resident during an interview last week.

Selection is based on a number of criteria, including herd records, land conservation practices, farm appearance, agricultural and community leadership, as well as pasture, crop and herd management programs, according to Lisa Halvorsen of the UVM Extension Service.

Malcolm runs a 42-cow herd of registered Holsteins, with an enviable yearly herd average of 21,010 pounds of milk per cow, which is about 8,500 pounds above breed average, with a 3.5 percent butterfat content. "With a small herd, I'm able to take care of details a little better than others, I think," he said. Malcolm rents the farm from his father.

The town soil conservation committee has told Malcolm that he has the poorest soil of any farm in Pawlet, but he is making do. He feels good about his occupation, he

said, because he is producing a wholesome food and contributing to society in that way. "I love farming. I'm thrilled to have an occupation that suits me so well," he said.

New machinery makes dairy farming easier in the physical sense, he commented, but because of this, farmers must milk more cows. "I think the level of stress is higher than before," he said. Farmers must now manage their crops and animals more intensely and carefully for optimum output.

Three years ago, Malcolm was nominated as a finalist for this same honor, but did not capture the award until this year — 18 years after he first started in the commercial dairy farming business.

When asked to what he attributes his success, Malcolm said he and his staff have put a lot of care into the

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operation. "I've had some hard-working employees — when I've been able to afford them — who have cared about the cows and the farm like I do," he said. Contest representatives and farmers obviously saw all the hard work that takes place at the Morning Moon farm, and after visiting all the farms of those who were nominated as finalists, they chose Malcolm as the winner.

Malcolm is an Agrimark representative and a member of the Rutland County Milk Marketing Group and the Governor's Agricultural Advisory Board. He will receive his award at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Mass. next month. Other finalists for this year's award were George Bullock and Sons of Lower Waterford, Keith Brothers Farm in Morrisville and Roger and Claire Rainville of Alburg.

The Vermont Dairyman award is an outgrowth of the Green Pastures Program, which began in 1947 by then New Hampshire Governor Charles Dale. He challenged the other New England governors to prove that their state's pastures were greener than those of his own state. In 1961, selection of a regional winner was eliminated and, instead, each state named an outstanding dairyman.