

# The "goat lady" of Ospringe runs unusual milk business

by Jennifer Barr

According to Karen Pollard, the "Goat Lady" of Ospringe, the first priority of getting into the goat dairy business is liking goats.

"They thrive on attention—add lots of tender loving care to their daily ration," she comments.

If this is the case, Ms. Pollard's dairy operation is well on its way to being extremely successful. For this enthusiastic young lady loves her goats like children and thoroughly enjoys what she is doing.

The goat dairy business is not one of your common every-day farm businesses. There are only four in Ontario. Despite increasing demand for the easily digested milk, few goat breeders bother with the milk producing end of it, preferring to breed pedigree stock for resale and shows.

Karen Pollard deprecates this practice although she has her share of ribbons and trophies won by her prize Toggenburgs. She feels there are too many goat fanciers rather than practical goat farmers.

"Fancy goats are about as useful on the farm as a Siamese cat."

Now out of showing, Ms. Pollard is concentrating on raising her own foundation stock of good dairy goats with a Toggenburg basis. Presently she has 20 goats and is expecting an additional 20 to come from the States within a month.

Menagerie to Ospringe  
Karen's interest in goats goes back five years to a day she was "just driving around" and saw some goats in a farmer's field. On impulse she drove in and bought one for \$25—wild and woolly Amanda who is still with Karen and formed the start of the herd.

At that time Karen was a veterinary assistant in Toronto and had decided to go back to University for the complete degree. She leased Keith Leitch's farm on the Fifth Line of Erin and gradually started to fill it with animals—the goats, a donkey, her horses, some chickens. She says she was not a very dedicated student and dropped out of her courses three times before giving in to the urge to farm full time.

The big step of buying her own farm was taken last fall when Karen found her present place on 17 Sideroad above Ospringe. Jezebel, the donkey, was no longer with Karen after succumbing to a round of ailments that would make any hypochondriac look the picture of health. She has been replaced by Georgina the pig, an enormous pink pregnant porker who rolls over for a belly scratch whenever she sees her friend, Karen.

Along with all the goats and Georgina, the Pollard farm houses two horses, some chickens, assorted dogs and cats in every nook and

cranny. "Oh, that's the bathroom cat," chuckles Karen as a striped feline oozes around the door.

Goats milk digestible  
There's a growing market for goats' milk, Karen states, adding that she hopes it comes out from under the label of "health food" soon.

Goats' milk is excellent for people who are allergic to cows milk because of the finer, more easily digested fat globules. Goats' milk is also slightly higher in butterfat and therefore richer than cows' milk in general.

Karen aims to get her dairy license and supply milk for cheese making of which there is far more demand than supply. She would also like to make the milk available to the public and stay within the guidelines of the Ministry of Agriculture. At present it is unlawful to sell milk unpasteurized for human consumption but many people prefer it unhomogenized because that process destroys some of the Vitamin C and amino acids, says Karen.

Dairy goats are more economical and efficient than cows, thinks our goat lady. Five goats can produce the same milk as one cow but on only 50 per cent of the feed, providing you have efficient "converters", explains Karen. Some goats take a large amount of feed to produce the same milk as others do on less, the same problem dairy farmers have with their cows. Karen aims to breed the best producing dairy goats around.

Love and good feed  
Ms. Pollard's goats shine with good health and care, eyes bright with affection. Although she says she has little trouble pasturing them (goats are notorious wanderers), she prefers to bring the food to her herd, "yard feeding" them. In this way she can insure the goats receive all required nutrients. They eat first quality second cut clover or alfalfa hay placed high in a rack because goats are naturally browsers rather than grazers. Their grain ration is high in molasses, a fact that sweetens the milk, and their water is always served warm.

However, most backyard goats get along happily on a variety of foods, Karen is quick to explain. They are healthy eaters, she maintains, and pick a balanced diet. If they happen to eat a toxic weed, perhaps for its high vitamin C content, they rapidly find a neutralizing food to counteract the noxious substance. Within the herd, there is always a flock queen appointed by the others on the basis of intelligence. It's she who leads the others to eat and tastes each substance before letting the others eat. Contrary to popular opinion, goats do not eat tin cans, but they do love thistles.

"Goats are the most fastidious creatures I know",

says Karen and goes on to recommend absolute cleanliness in goat care. Goats can tolerate extremes of heat and cold but do not like rain and are susceptible to pneumonia.

Karen brings up her kids on the bottle, as their mothers are part of the milking herd. She believes in putting in foundation work on her babies particularly as they will be her future milkers.

Goats milk expensive  
The youthful farmer cautions first time goat buyers to be very sure of what they are purchasing. A good milk goat may cost \$150 but will be worth it in the long run. Karen explains there are good dairy strains and poor ones. Question why the goat is being offered for sale she advises.

A hundred and fifty dollars

may seem like a lot of money for a goat but with milk prices rising at every turn, milking your own animal becomes more attractive. Goats' milk is double the price of cows' milk in retail stores, at about a dollar twenty a quart. Raw milk from farm sources, Karen's in particular, can be had for 75 cents a quart but it must be sold for pet consumption rather than human consumption, by law, although most pets never see the tasty rich milk.

Karen Pollard, goat lady of Ospringe, is free with her advice and will help anyone with questions about goats. "I don't want them to make the same mistakes I did."

Mistakes or not, it's clear Karen is a determined young woman with goats on her mind and a successful dairy just around the corner.

LUNCH BAR open. A brace of Toggenburgs receive lunch from "mama" Karen Pollard. Karen is raising the kids for her dairy business.



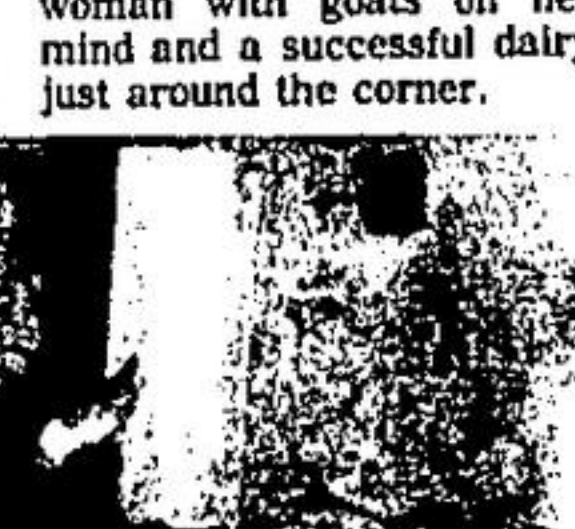
ALL PART of the job on a goat dairy farm. Karen Pollard milks one of her fine does.

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## Today's recipes

How about soup? Try these recipes from the synchro swim team cookbook.

**MUSHROOM CHOWDER**  
3 tbsp. butter or bacon fat  
3 tbsp. chopped onion  
1 c. water  
2 c. sliced celery  
2 c. diced potatoes  
1/2 lb. mushrooms - quartered  
2-3 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. pepper  
Dash of caraway seed or paprika  
4 c. milk  
Snipped parsley

Melt butter in saucepan. Cook onions until slightly brown, add water, celery, potatoes, mushrooms, salt and pepper. Cover and cook until vegetables are tender (about 15 min.). Add milk. Heat, but do not boil. Serve immediately with fresh parsley sprinkled over the top and accompanied by crackers or toast. 6 servings.

**McNair Mushroom**  
CABBAGE SOUP  
3 tbsp. butter or fat  
2 med. carrots, grated  
3 onions, sliced thin  
4-6 c. cabbage, chopped  
A few celery leaves, minced

Melt butter in saucepan. Cook onions until slightly brown, add water, celery, potatoes, mushrooms, salt and pepper. Cover and cook until vegetables are tender (about 15 min.). Add milk. Heat, but do not boil. Serve immediately with fresh parsley sprinkled over the top and accompanied by crackers or toast. 6 servings.

**Ann Pickering**  
TOMATO AND PEANUT BUTTER SOUP  
1 c. ripe tomatoes  
1 small diced carrot  
1 small diced onion  
1/2 c. stock  
1 tsp. butter  
1 tsp. flour  
Salt, to taste  
1/4 cu. peanut butter (preferably unpasteurized)  
Place all ingredients except

peanut butter, flour and butter into a pan and bring to a boil. Simmer for 20 min. Press through sieve or blend in blender. Return soup to pan. Blend together the flour and butter in a small pan and add to soup. Stir until soup thickens. Just before serving add peanut butter and mix well. The flavour will depend on quality of peanut butter used.



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## New commander for regiment

Lieutenant-Colonel Bill Wilson assumed command of the Queen's Own Rifles regiment in a military ceremony Sunday afternoon at Moss Park Armouries in downtown Toronto.

Col. Wilson, Pat Wilson and their daughters Elizabeth, Susan and Catriona lived near Acton until recently, when they moved to Toronto.

Since retiring from the armed forces, Col. Wilson has been employed in the Speaker's office in the parliament buildings. Mrs. Wilson worked at the Free Press while at Acton.

On Sunday, Col. Wilson took over command of the regiment from Lieutenant-Colonel J.J.J. Power with Colonel J.E.L. Murphy, commander of the Toronto Militia district, in charge. Present were Honourary Colonel H.E. Dalton D.S.O. and Honourary Lieutenant Colonel B.J. Danson, Minister

## Demolition

Demolition of part of the old Free Press building is underway. Five stores and two offices will locate in the new building, which will be ready in the fall.

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WHERE'S MY DINNER? inquires this little Toggenburg kid on the farm of Karen Pollard, an Ospringe goat dairy farmer.

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