

Extension history

George Miller, Early Leader in Progressive Dairying and Organizer of Youth Programs

George Miller, my grandfather and namesake, was an early organizer and instructor of boys' clubs (forerunner of 4-H) in Minnesota. He was a dairy industry pioneer who realized the vast possibilities of dairying in Minnesota and the Northwest. He attended the Dairy School of the University of Minnesota and later assisted in teaching short courses there relating to creamery and dairy work to young people in the early 1900's.

During his first experience as a butter maker in charge of the creamery in Rassett, Minn., he made a survey of the prevailing methods of dairying in the community and concluded that proper training of the youth of that community would be the most definite and rapid method of bringing dairying up to a sanitary and profitable basis. He invited patrons of his creamery who had boys between 14 and 20 years old to meet and discuss his plan. It was explained to them that by better housing, better feeding methods and selective breeding, cows could be made to produce more for less cost. He asked the families to allow their son to have one cow from their herd to be treated according to his directions in feeding a proper ration of feed, sampling and testing its milk, and then recording this production of milk, while the rest of the herd was fed as usual. They soon noticed the improvement, used these methods for their entire herds and brought general improvement to dairying in the entire community.

This very constructive work with these boys played an important part in expanding progressive dairying in Minnesota. By his involving and instructing the youth, he helped lay groundwork for what developed into the successful 4-H Club program.

Compiled by George P. Miller

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