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**Glenn Johnson**  
Dairy Farmer



STAFF PHOTOS BY RICK BUSSLER

Brian Seykora holds a cow in place as Glenn Johnson prepares to hook up the milkers Saturday night at the Oak Glen Dairy Farm near Claremont. Oak Glen reached out to Seykora on the night of the fire to let him know it could take in his dairy herd temporarily while Seykora decides what to do with his dairy operation.

## Tragedy strikes, Clover Glen helps out

**BY RICK BUSSLER**  
PUBLISHER

When tragedy struck the Brian Seykora dairy farm in southern Steele County, another dairy farmer nearly 25 miles away quickly rose to action to help out.

Glenn Johnson and his wife Deb McDermott-Johnson, owners of Clover Glen Dairy Farm, offered their dairy operation to milk 35 cows rescued from a fire Thursday night. The next morning, four trailers rolled into Clover Glen, located in the eastern corner of Steele County near Claremont with Seykora's cows.

"As soon as we found out there was a fire, we reached out to let them know we had a place (for the cows)," said Glenn Johnson. "I feel this is something neighbors should do to help neighbors."

Clover Glen's milking parlor can handle 90 cows, but currently is only milking about 50 cows. With Seykora's cows coming in, Clover Glen will be at near capacity, at least temporarily until another solution can be found. The milk truck will now be rolling in daily instead of every other day.

"This is not a challenge for us," said Deb. "We have the ability to do it."

On Saturday evening, the Johnsons handled the milking duties while about 10 members of the Seykora family and friends helped shuttle the cows from one

area of the barn into the parlor. "If we had this much help with milking, life would be easy," Deb said with a smile.

After finishing with the milking, which came with some cows struggling, Deb took a breath and said, "This was a battle tonight. The worst so far."

The additional cows are expected to add at least a half-hour in the morning and again in the evening to Clover Glen's milking schedule. They begin milking daily at 4:30 a.m. and again at 4:30 p.m.

Taking on a new herd of cows can be challenging at best, according to the

Johnsons. One of the biggest adjustments for the Seykora herd was to get used to a tie-stall barn. The Seykoras had a free-stall barn, which allowed the cows to move around freely.

Seykora said the new surroundings are tough for the cows to walk around. "It's a new place," he said. "Cows don't want to move."

Added Glen, "It's pretty traumatic what they went through. They are nervous and not sure what is going on."

Seykora is bracing himself for more losses as many of the cows sustained injuries in the fire. While several have obvious

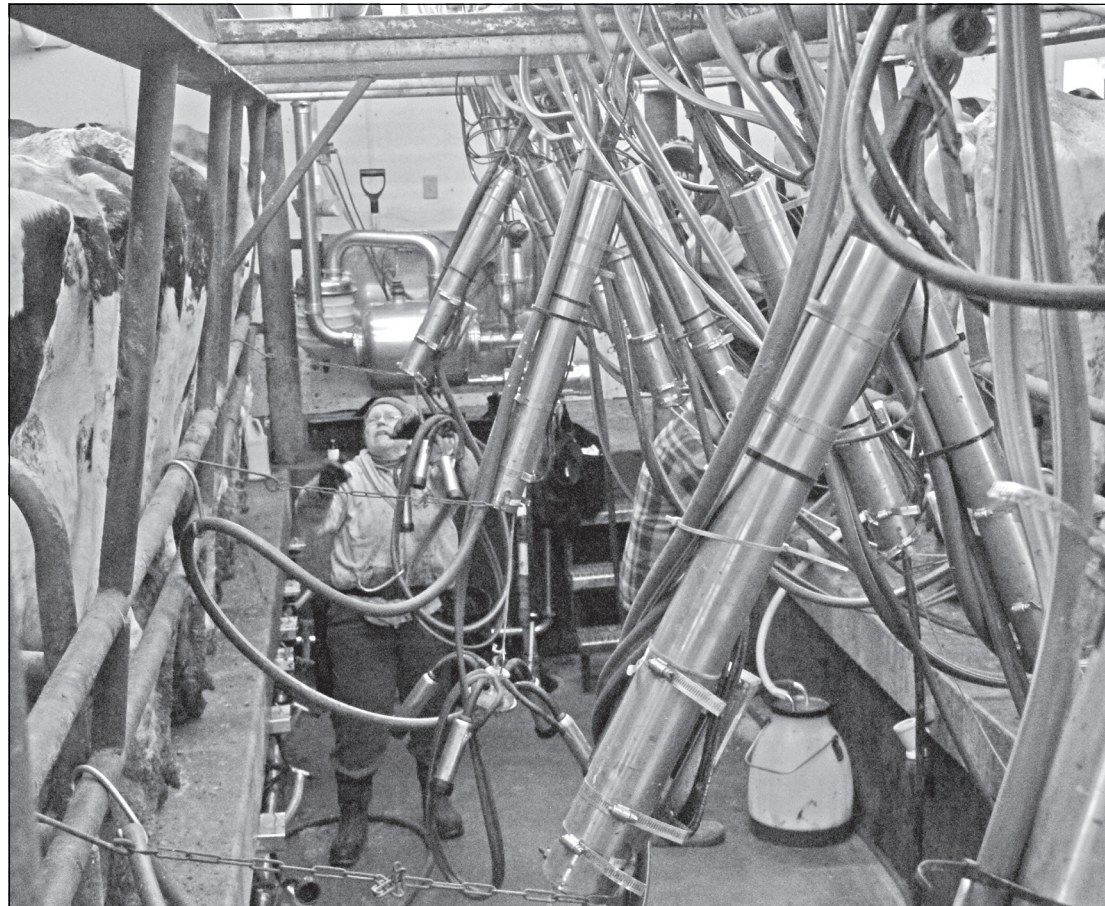
signs of burn injuries as well as head injuries, many others have internal lung problems from smoke inhalation. "We will likely lose half of our herd from the stress of the fire and moving around," he said, adding some will have aborted pregnancies as a result of the fire.

"Smoke inhalation is really hard on cows," said Glen.

Helping others in a time of crisis is nothing new for the Johnsons. They have done it at least six other times over the past 28 years. However, this is the first time they have taken a herd involved in a fire. Other times they have helped fellow



Glenn Johnson hooks up milkers to Brian Seykora's dairy cows. Johnson is helping Seykora with milking after his cows were displaced by a barn fire Thursday night.



Deb McDermott-Johnson helps her husband, Glenn Johnson, with the milking Saturday. Deb reached out shortly after fire engulfed Brian Seykora's dairy barn to let them know they could help out milking the cows.

dairymen have been for a death in the family and different family crises.

"The first time we helped out someone, we had never met them before," said Glen. "It's something you do for a friend. We're glad we are able to help."

Added Deb, "We've had our share of trials... you're pretty helpless. Why wouldn't you offer to help?"

The Johnsons are proud that they can help someone in a time of need. "I just don't want people to make life-altering decisions when they are least equipped to make them," Deb said.

Deb says it's "pretty humbling" to be able to help out the Seykoras. "It gives us the opportunity to work with a good herd," she said. "You know you're making a difference in somebody's life. He will come out on top."