



Brad Keating
Senior Vice President, DFA Eastern Fluid Group
 1035 Medina Road | Suite 300 | Medina, OH 44256
 1-800-837-6776 | www.dfamilk.com

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Mideast Area 2012 Members of Distinction Honored at DFA Annual Meeting

Congratulations to this year's Mideast Area Members of Distinction, Dean and Debbie Colson, their sons, Matthew and Daniel, their daughter, Melissa Lipps, and Matthew's wife, Shelley, of Alpine Hills Dairy Farm in Dry Ridge, Ky. The Colsons were recently honored at the 2012 DFA Annual Meeting.

DFA's Members of Distinction program recognizes members who excel in their operations, in their communities and in the industry. Honorees inspire others through their actions, leadership and involvement, and represent the best of the dairy industry. Each year, one notable member farm from each of DFA's seven Areas is selected to receive this honor and Alpine Hills Dairy Farm is the 2012 honoree from the Mideast Area.

The Colsons are paving the way for educational dairy tours and utilizing social media. They are using modern technology to share their farm with people on the Internet and in person. The family farm is owned by Dean and Debbie Colson, who have three grown children that all share a part in the farm. Melissa is the oldest and works as a veterinarian. Their son Matthew works full-time on the farm, along with his wife, Shelley, who manages the marketing and website for the farm. Daniel, their youngest son, also works full-time on the farm. Together the Colsons milk an average of 55 Brown Swiss cows, with a few Holsteins, and farm 200 acres of corn and hay.

Since 2009 the Colsons began offering dairy farm tours to the public. "We wanted to branch out and do some other things.



(l-r) Debbie Colson, Dean Colson, Caleb Lipps, Matthew Colson, Melissa Lipps, Shelley Colson, Daniel Colson

It's just something we want to share with kids, in addition to having another source of revenue," Shelley says. In 2011, the Colsons welcomed over 2,000 guests to their farm with the largest group being over 250 people. Their farm has been recognized by local media outlet KET. "Kentucky Life came out to the farm at the end of April and filmed a segment that features the farm," Shelley said. In addition to dairy farm tours, Alpine Hills Dairy Farm also has a pumpkin patch that is open each fall called Country Pumpkins.

In order to get the word out about their farm and the various tours they offer, Shelley has taken the reins on their social media pages. "I am really into Facebook. I can't imagine not advertising on Facebook," Shelley says. The response to their website (www.alpinehillsdairy.com), their Facebook page (www.facebook.com/alpinedairy) and their Twitter account (www.twitter.com/alpinedairy) has been encouraging. "We haven't had a single negative comment on our page," Shelley says.

Nearly 1,300 DFA members, staff and industry leaders gathered together at the 2012 DFA Annual Meeting March 19-21 at the Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center in Kansas City, Mo. The theme of annual meeting was More Cooperative, which reflects DFA's focus to deliver more – more resources for our members, more quality for our customers and more leadership in our industry. Matthew and Shelley accepted the award at Annual Meeting on behalf of the Colson family.

Direct Deposit Schedule

Milk Month	Check Date	Direct Deposit	Milk Month	Check Date	Direct Deposit
Mar Adv	Mar 24	Mar 26	Apr Adv	Apr 24	Apr 25
Mar Fin	Apr 14	Apr 16	Apr Fin	May 14	May 15

Sign up for direct deposit at www.dfamilk.com and click "Login to myDFA." After you log in, click on the "Area News" tab. Scroll down to "Calendars" and print a direct deposit authorization form. Mail the form and "void" check to DFA Mideast, Attn: Clara, 1035 Medina Rd., Suite 300, Medina, OH 44256.