

BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

I grew up and returned to the family dairy farm that my parents started in 1951. My 3 non-family partners and I currently milk 1600 cows and crop 2200 acres of corn and haylage. Our farm, Walnut Ridge Dairy, is a member/owner of Cayuga Marketing/Cayuga Milk Ingredients.

LEADERSHIP/COMMUNITY

I am a proud graduate of LEAD NY (the New York State agriculture leadership development program), Class 1. I served as a Director of Dairylea Cooperative and then as a DFA (Dairy Farmers of America) Corporate Board member. Milk promotion has played an important role in developing my leadership skills over the years. In addition to serving many years on local milk promotion Boards, I have been, and am currently, the Board Secretary of DMI (Dairy Management Inc) as well as one of 8 US dairy farmers on the USDEC (US Dairy Export Council). I have had deep involvement with our local Methodist Church for my whole life. These many and varied leadership opportunities have all helped me become a more effective FCE (Farm Credit East) Director.

WHY FARM CREDIT EAST IS IMPORTANT TO MY BUSINESS

FCE has been an extremely important part of our farm and our families' success. FCE and its predecessors have been our lender for over 50 years. Their consultants helped us craft the intergenerational transfer plan that started over 30 years ago and is still being implemented today, bringing 3 non-family younger partners into the business. This plan has helped our farm to continue to thrive, to gradually transfer ownership to 3 terrific individuals, and has helped those families fulfill their dreams of owning a part of a large modern dairy farm. FCE has also fully supported the construction, operation, and continued success of the Cayuga Milk Ingredients dairy plant, a world class milk protein processing facility.

WHY AM I SEEKING ELECTION TO THE FCE BOARD

The last 4 years as your FCE director have greatly broadened my agricultural horizons. Whether it be fishing, forestry, sod, maple, poultry, eggs, greenhouse, cranberry, livestock, or any other sector, the knowledge and life experiences gained through the FCE Board have helped me to better understand and appreciate the economic issues of North East agriculture. The US dairy farming business has recently undergone its worst economic period since the 1980s. Our farm incurred large losses and huge stress like most other dairy farms. During this very difficult period of time, FCE remained a strong and consistent lender, willing to work with us to weather the storm. If I am reelected, I will continue to work with and support the FCE management team to help bring healing and prosperity to all sectors of NE agriculture.

Farm Credit East's strength is in our members, our staff, our diverse portfolio, and our cooperative structure. I am seeking re-election to the FCE Board to continue representing all members; small and large, new and seasoned. If reelected, I will work to strength all facets of our cooperative.

Thank You. David E. (Skip) Hardie