

Fred M. Snyder

It was in Milan, Italy that a Waterloo cattle breeder got a sense of how work on his Airvue farm was having an impact around the world.

Fred Snyder was in the European city during the spring of 1972, when he noticed a bull at a breeding unit with the name, *Airvue Sir Galahad*. Knowing the bull had been born on his Lexington Road farm, he made inquiries only to discover that *Airvue Sir Galahad* was one of the two best Holsteins in Italy.



During its heyday, prized cattle from Snyder's 170-acre farm were shipped not only to Europe but as far afield as Australia and South America. While Snyder was known around the world as a top breeder, he was also a beloved and respected member of the local community. In a tribute to him after his death, it was written:

“To those who knew Fred Snyder it was no surprise that he was a door-to-door distributor of bottled milk in the town of Waterloo, and that he enjoyed what he was doing. In this endeavor, Fred could do what he really liked best, and that was to meet and mingle and converse with people.”

Snyder, who was born in 1898, took over the family farm in 1939 after his father was killed in a tragic accident. Abram Snyder died during threshing operations by a bolt through a hydro short circuit.

Snyder's dedication to improving his stock was awarded many times during his long career. When he was just twenty years-old he was chosen to be a member of the Waterloo Livestock judging team. Two years later he won the opportunity to judge in Chicago, and in 1924 he received his Canadian National Exhibition diploma in the junior farmers judging competition.

He became a member of the Waterloo Holstein Breeders Association in 1939, eventually winning the highest honour - Master Breeder - bestowed by the association. His herd won countless awards at fairs such as the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto and the Canadian National Exhibition. One of his cows, known by the name of Posch Sally Ormsby, was known to have produced 127,080 pounds of milk and 4,213 pounds of fat.

As president of the breeders association, he became actively involved in bringing the science of artificial insemination into mainstream farming practices.

In 1942 he helped found the Waterloo County Artificial Insemination Unit and began supporting research along with the Ontario Veterinary College. It took more than ten years for the technique to be mastered, but by 1954 the artificial insemination of cows was being used extensively in Waterloo County and frozen semen was being sent across North America.

Under Snyder's leadership, Waterloo Township became a centre for Holstein breeders, having eventually more than twice that of any other Ontario township. He also took an active interest in young farmers and in educating local youth about cattle breeding.

Despite his many accomplishments, both here and abroad, Snyder will be remembered mostly for his legacy as a gentleman. A friend was quoted once as saying, "Fred is a good neighbor and a respected member of his community. He has made a great contribution to Ontario agriculture, and best of all, I'm proud to number him among my friends."

Photo courtesy of the Waterloo Historical Society.