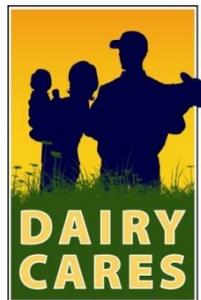


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Dairy Cares Newsletter

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The “way of life” lives on

The California dairy community recently lost a well-respected, passionate leader, Gregory O. “Butch” Dias Jr. While we are deeply saddened, we fondly remember the mark he left, personally and within the industry. His legacy serves as a reminder of the passion California dairy families have for the animals, the land, and the way of life.

A third-generation dairy farmer, Butch worked with sons Greg and Darren to carry on the family legacy with their own children now growing up on the dairy. He would say, “Dairy farming is not just a job, but a way of life.” Butch and his wife, Alice, would say the farm is in good hands.

Family values are embedded into the daily routine at the Dias operations—***Delta View Farms and Rachelle’s Jerseys***. Butch and Alice renamed the dairy in honor of their daughter, Rachelle, who lost her life in a tragic car accident at age 17. They fondly remembered her love for the Jersey cows. Keeping these memories and values held tight helped the Dias family move forward.

Butch was an actions-speak-louder-than-words dairyman. People and cows were important to Butch. He instilled the importance of analyzing resources to improve operations both for the family’s dairy cows and the employees. In 2009, the family replaced their old milking parlor with a state-of-the-art facility. Butch’s sons Greg and Darren worked with a local manufacturing company to do something that had never been done before, create the first rotary parlor that was completely “Made in America.” The new facility increased efficiency, allowing the dairy to produce more milk with the same number of cows.



***“My dad grew up on a dairy.
I grew up on a dairy, and my
kids grew up on this dairy. Dairy
farming is not just
a job, but a way of life.”
- Gregory O. “Butch” Dias, Jr.***

As his father before him, Butch served on numerous boards and committees throughout his career. Most recently, he served on the Farm Credit West Enterprise Risk Management Committee and was a National Association of Corporate Directors Governance Fellow. Butch was also a Director of the California Jersey Cattle Association (which promotes Jersey breed improvement) and Chairman of the Board at the California Dairy Research Foundation (CDRF). At CDRF he provided leadership that helped guide research and education programs, and worked in partnership with Dairy Cares to expand dairy environmental stewardship and sustainability efforts. He saw value in developing new knowledge, and exploring ground breaking ideas. He also understood that sometimes being innovative simply means doing more with less. Butch Dias lived as an example of sustainability.

“He put great importance in science, and believed that California’s dairy future depended on innovation and creative thinking. He always said that the farmers were the original environmentalists,” said Gonca Pasin, Ph.D., executive director at CDRF.

Butch attended many scientific conferences and symposia over the years. In particular, he attended every one of the International Milk Genomics Consortium’s Symposia on Milk and Human Health. 2018 marks the symposium’s 15th year. Butch was often asked to deliver the welcome address representing the perspective of the California dairy farmer in a scientific environment. He was just as comfortable discussing dairy’s effect on the gut microbiota with a researcher as he was talking about soil conditions with another farmer.

Unfortunately, the California dairy community must now do more with one less inspiring leader. Butch Dias will be greatly missed. As 2017 has come to an end, we reflect on the many challenges and opportunities it has brought. More changes and innovations are certainly on the horizon. California’s dairy families know the year is just one chapter in their own family legacies. With perseverance, they remember to stay true to their core values of honesty, integrity, hard work, community, and above all—family.

Our hearts and prayers are with the Dias family as well as the many other families who suffered loss this year.

California’s dairy farming families practice environmental stewardship and responsible animal care, while keeping core values at heart.

Dairy Cares is a statewide coalition supporting economic and environmental sustainability and responsible animal care. Our members include Bar 20 Dairy Farms, California Cattlemen’s Association, California Dairies Inc., California Dairy Campaign, California Dairy Research Foundation, California Farm Bureau Federation, Dairy Farmers of America-Western Area Council, Dairy Institute of California, F & R Ag Services, GHD, Inc., Hilmar Cheese Co., Joseph Gallo Farms, Land O’Lakes, Merck Animal Health, Milk Producers Council, Ruan Transport Corp., Western United Dairymen, Yosemite Farm Credit and others. For information, visit DairyCares.com or call 916-441-3318. To subscribe to the monthly e-newsletter, contact dairycares@gmail.com.