

BANGOR DAILY NEWS Aroostook farm couple plan to fill void left by loss of Houlton dairy's milk

by [Melissa Lizotte](#) September 28, 2024



Adam Dube walks up to several of the dairy cows that he and longtime partner Melissa Jandreau raise on their organic farm in Perham. Dube and Jandreau are planning to start an organic creamery to produce homogenized and non-homogenized milk and distribute that milk and other products to stores and schools. Credit: Melissa Lizotte / Aroostook Republican

PERHAM, Maine — The owners of a small family farm want to fill a void created by the loss of Aroostook County's only white milk producer and meet what they say is a growing demand for non-traditional dairy products.

Starting this fall, longtime partners Adam Dube and Melissa Jandreau want to start constructing a new organic dairy creamery that will produce white and chocolate milks, ice cream and yogurt from their farm in Perham, and then ship those products to County stores and schools.

Earlier this month, the owners of 86-year-old Houlton Farms Dairy announced that it [will stop producing](#) its famous white milk, [leaving local stores reliant](#) on Portland-based producers like Hood and Oakhurst. Houlton Farms owners cited rising production costs, fewer local dairy farms and a drop in sales, partly due to the popularity of plant-based milks, have made it difficult to compete in today's market.

But even as Maine organic farms [become smaller and shift away from dairy production](#), Dube and Jandreau still see a chance to create a unique dairy niche in northern Maine.

Currently, the couple produces homogenized and pasteurized organic milk for the Wisconsin-based company Organic Valley. They have seen many local farms cease production when other companies decide that the long trip up north is too costly for their bottom line.

“The day will come when it won’t be as enticing for companies to come here, so we want to be ready,” Dube said. “There’s a huge demand for organic right now, so you have to try new things if you still want to sell white milk.”

Dube and Jandreau moved to Perham three years ago from Frenchville, where they [previously operated Hill Top Farm](#). After getting an offer for Hill Top, the couple sold that farm and then purchased the former Blackstone family homestead in Perham, where they live with their two sons and raise 130 dairy and beef cows, pigs and laying hens.

Their farm is certified by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, which means they do not feed their cows with antibiotics and they do not use pesticides or other chemicals to produce dairy, meat and poultry. Dube also just began a butcher business, which he also ran in Frenchville.

The couple hopes to begin work on their creamery building in November. They are still contemplating whether to build new or renovate an existing structure.

Once production begins, Dube and Jandreau want to produce both homogenized and non-homogenized milk.

Homogenization is a process during pasteurization that reduces the milk’s fat molecules using heat to prevent cream from rising to the surface. Non-homogenized milk preserves that top layer of cream, Jandreau said.

Dube and Jandreau are currently speaking with local grocery stores and schools in central and northern Aroostook to line up distribution of their white and chocolate milks. They are also planning to speak with area restaurants. If all goes well, they hope to one day branch out into the midcoast and Down East regions of Maine.