

Farm team takes on milk marketing

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The Mauthe family has been Gulf Coast dairy farmers for five generations, but in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, their dairy was forced to suspend operations. Now, with the help of celebrity chef John Besh and a team of Tulane students, the Mauthes hope to bring their fresh products ? glass-bottled milk, Creole cream cheese and homemade cheesecakes ? to a new generation of customers.



Jamie Mauthe, left, co-owner of Mauthe's Progress Milk Barn, shows off the family dairy farm to a team of MBAs from the Freeman School. (Photos by Paul Morse/paulmorsephotographs.com)



The Mauthes sell their fresh milk in returnable glass bottles.

Last fall, Mauthe's Progress Milk Barn became the first recipient of funds from the John Besh Foundation's microloan program, which provides low-interest loans to help local farmers increase production and bring products to market.

The Mauthes, who resumed dairy operations in 2010, plan to use the \$20,000 loan to purchase cows and upgrade equipment at the dairy, located just across the Louisiana state line in tiny Progress, Miss.

In addition to the loan, the Mauthes received another valuable commodity through the program: consulting services from MBA students at the [A. B. Freeman School of Business](#). The Besh Foundation has partnered with the Freeman School to provide loan recipients with support from students in the areas of marketing, finance and strategy.

"The Mauthes are amazing," says Simone Reggie, who is scheduled to receive her MBA in May. "We'd like to help them figure out how to market some of their products a little better." Her team includes MBA students William Cazun, Larry Hall and Sara Steele.

Reggie helped organize the microloan program during her internship with the Besh Foundation.

The Mauthes currently sell their milk, cheeses and cheesecakes at farmers markets, a few grocery stores and to several restaurants (including Besh's), and their mission will remain the same.

“We want it to stay fresh and stay local,” says Katie Mauthe Cutrer, who runs the dairy along with her parents, Kenny and Jamie Mauthe, her brothers, Daniel and Travis Mauthe, and her sister, Sarah Mauthe Tullos.