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Life in the Country

Cream of the Crop

For two enterprising sisters, a fourth-generation dairy farm provides all the ingredients for a new family business.



Sisters—and now business partners—Stephanie (left) and Hayley Painter pause in front of their family farm's free stall barn, where cattle can lazily wander in and out.

Painterland's 5,500 acres are home to hundreds of dairy cows, including Guernseys, Holstein-Friesians, Ayrshires, Milking Shorthorns, and Swiss linebacks.



Among Stephanie and Hayley Painter's fondest memories are the still summer afternoons on their family's Tioga County, Pennsylvania, dairy farm, Painterland. "Our grandpa would take all the kids on his four-wheeler up to the top of the hill," Hayley says. "Grandma would pack sandwiches, and we'd have a picnic overlooking the rolling green landscape. You could see cows grazing for miles around."

The sisters are the fourth generation to live on the farmland their great-grandfather first moved to in 1941. Once Hayley graduated from college in 2018 (Stephanie is two years older), the pair knew dairy would be the focus of their careers. "We wanted to create a company around the premium milk our family farm produces," Stephanie explains. "Yogurt was a perfect fit."

In 2021, they partnered with a tenth-generation Pennsylvania yogurt maker to create Painterland Sisters. The burgeoning brand produces Skyr, a nutrient-rich Icelandic style of yogurt, made from whole milk sourced directly from Painterland's dairy cattle. The sisters work hand in hand with the rest of their extended family, consulting one another over the daily hearty farm breakfast. "We all pitch in," says Hayley. "Farming is hard work, but there's also a lot of play. We're all so proud of this land, of what we make, and of our family."



ABOVE: The sisters' five yogurt flavors, including meadow berry and blueberry lemon, are available at painterlandsisters.com. RIGHT: The Painter family also keeps around 350 chickens, including Easter Eggers and Novogens, shown here.



YOGURT PHOTOGRAPH BY BECKY LUIGART-STAYNER; FOOD STYLING BY TORIE COX; PROP STYLING BY CHRISTINA BROCKMAN.



Come summer, farm chores focus on haying and baling grass for the animals to eat during the winter, but tending to the cattle is a year-round duty. "We've been feeding calves and milking cows since we could walk," says Stephanie.