

# Darrel E. Knisely

**1930 - 2017 Obituary**

**Darrel E. Knisely, a dairy farmer who milked, bred, and sold registered Holsteins and was a Fulton County Agriculture Hall of Fame inductee, died Tuesday in ProMedica Ebeid Hospice Residence, Sylvania. He was 86.**

**He had a stroke over the weekend, his daughter DeeAnn said. He didn't go back to farm work after heart bypass surgery in 2011, and the animals of D-Maples Registered Holsteins were sold in 2015. He still lived on the family's Gorham Township farm. "He mowed the grass on Friday," his daughter said.**

**He was inducted into the agriculture hall of fame in August, 2002, ahead of the annual county fair. By then, he was credited with selling Holsteins to farms in almost every state and in several other countries.**

**"He said he always loved being around the cattle and raising the cattle," daughter DeeAnn said. "It was a goal to improve the quality of the animal."**

**In his era, artificial insemination took over from barnyard bulls. He studied pedigrees to find prospects that complemented his herd.**

**"Things one side was lacking, you paired up with a side that was better to get the best of all possible genetic qualities," his daughter Denise said. "He was almost a geneticist. He just had a high school education, you learned to do those things as part of your craft of being a farmer."**

**He judged dairy shows in Ohio and Michigan, and his Holsteins competed in national shows. He started the Dandy Dairymen 4-H Club and played host to dairy seminars and school tours.**

**"Any time he could be around people, he would be happy," daughter DeeAnn said. "That was his social life, going to the dairy banquets and dairy shows around northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan."**

**He belonged to the Ohio Holstein Association and the Holstein Association**

**USA. He was a member of the Gorham-Fayette Board of Education in the late 1960s and early 1970s and served as president and vice president.**

**"He had four kids going to school. It was community service," daughter Denise said.**

**Diversions were few. "Milking cows and making hay is a full-time job - and takes all your spare time, too," daughter DeeAnn said. "He was happy and content with his status in life."**

**He was born Aug. 27, 1930, to Myrtle and Charles Knisely, near Monroe. He was 7 when the family moved to a farm near Munson, Mich., in Lenawee County, where his father raised Jersey cattle.**

**He was a 1949 graduate of Fayette High School.**

**He and the former Martha Jane Leininger married June 14, 1952, and settled on her family's Gorham Township farm. He began his Holstein operation there in the late 1960s.**

**He was a member of Archbold Evangelical Mennonite Church.**

**His wife, who was known as Jane, died June 19, 2016.**

**Surviving are his daughters, Denise Knisely and DeeAnn Simmons; sons, Dennis and David; sister, Eva Clendenen; brothers, Dale and Duane; five grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.**

**A memorial service will be at 2 p.m. Sunday at the family farm, with an open house to follow. Arrangements are by the Eagle Funeral Home in Fayette.**

**The family suggests tributes to the Fulton County 4-H Endowment Fund.**