

Temple Grandin feels

## Family dairy revival

In the next 40 years, I see the robotic milkers reviving the family dairy and benefiting the cow. I'm a cow person, so I love seeing a cow grazing on beautiful, open, green pastures. We will have to find a balance between optimising the farm and optimising the cow.

Today, we've pushed the dairy cow's biology for milk production to the point where she is falling apart. If you select an animal for more productivity, other parts of the animal suffer. Farmers should adopt a more balanced approach to breeding and the cow would have a longer, productive life. I'm inspired that consumers are showing more interest in animal welfare. If the tide continues, consumers will insist that animals are treated right, worldwide.

For me, the ideal family dairy farm would be smaller and local with 75-200 of free grazing cattle and enough clean,

well maintained robotic milkers. Farmers wouldn't have to be around 6am and 6pm every day for the drudgery of milking. But, neither will the cow. She will be free to graze and come in to milk when she wants to or needs to.

The robotic milker could also free the family farmer so he can work in town. Or a person with a job in town could become a dairy farmer. What about the high end consumers who will pay more for organic food and local milk from a free grazing cow? Those who are demanding better standards and localised production could start their own dairy, too.

The robotic milker is making it more attractive and possible to maintain a dairy farm. In the near future, these milkers will help family farms stay in or even start new in the dairy business.



(Foto: Angus Bremner/Bremner Photo)

Temple Grandin, Canada; the world's most accomplished and well-known autistic adult and known worldwide for her work on the design of livestock handling facilities.



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