

Clyde Rutherford's \$750,000 Luxury Mansion in New JERSEY

by Pete Hardin

Dairylea Cooperative president Clyde Rutherford is widely regarded as the most powerful leader in the New York State dairy industry. Not bad for that bewigged, old phony who now resides in fancy, \$750,000 house in central New Jersey's horse country.

According to the deed, on October 18, 2008, Clyde E. and Janette E. Rutherford purchased the residence at 13 Crest Circle Drive in Clarksburg, New Jersey from Mark and Jerilynn Sefcheck. Price tag: \$750,000. See the realtor's description of this house under the accompanying picture.

No Holstein heifers there ... such smelly critters would not be allowed in such an exclusive community – located near Freehold in Monmouth County.

How can a Dairylea director, who alleges to represent that co-op's District 1 (east-central New York), live in New Jersey and still represent Dairylea producers in New York State? No problem, Clyde "fixed" that technicality. At the Dairylea Co-op annual meeting in fall 2008, delegates were abruptly summoned early one morning to approve a single by-law change. That change: altering co-op by-laws so directors no longer had to reside within the geographic confines of the district they represented! Obviously, with the looming October 18, 2008 closing on that fancy \$750,000 mansion at 13 Crescent Circle Drive in Millstone Township (New JERSEY!), ol' Clyde had to scramble to legally continue as Dairylea's "President for Life." (Salary: roughly \$500,000 per year.)

Once upon a time, perhaps Rutherford's dairy leadership may have been motivated by serving the best interests of New York and Northeast dairy farmers. But those times are long since past. Rutherford has served as Dairylea's president for more than two decades. Sources close to Dairylea plug ol' Clyde's annual compensation in the \$500,000 range – certainly enough to afford that \$750,000 New Jersey mansion.

With all those dairy meetings Clyde has attended over the decades, it's been a while since Rutherford exchanged his fancy suit for coveralls and milked cows instead of dairy farmers. To qualify as a dairy producer, Rutherford had an arrangement with his long-time hired man, Elmer



Zillow.com, an online real estate site, describes the Rutherford's deluxe digs as follows: "Spectacular 5 bedroom brick front colonial located on a premier lot in a gorgeous neighborhood. Grand entrance w 2 curved staircases, beautiful picture windows throughout, 1st floor In-Law suite, large kitchen w cherry cabinets & center island, back staircase, decorative molding, library, all bedrooms have bath & WIC, 13-course basement & 3-car oversized garage. Outside enjoy the 40x24 Gunite pool, gorgeous landscaping & private back yard on over 3.5 acres. This home has it all!"

Johnson for many years. The Rutherfords owned the farm, cows and machinery, and had their names was on the milk check. Elmer Johnson did most of the actual farming work, milking Rutherford's Holsteins at Clyde's former farm located on Route 7 near Otego, New York. Johnson received a portion of the gross milk check for his labor and management, local sources have told *The Milkweed*. But in 2007, the deal between the Rutherfords and Johnson changed. Dairylea's by-laws reportedly allow a director to continue serving on the board for up to one year after that director has ceased being an active dairy producer. Clyde cooked up a scheme to set up Johnson farming on his own, with help, of course, from Clyde.

In early 2007, Rutherford contracted to buy another farm – at 2722 State Highway 205 near Mount Vision, New York – a one-time showcase. Elmer moved "his" cows to that site in late March 2007. But Clyde failed to show up for the real estate closing. The Woods brought legal action against Rutherford. In December 2007, Elmer and Anne Johnson bought that farm from the Woods for

\$445,000. Unfortunately, without Clyde ... or more accurately, Jeanette Rutherford ... to look after his farming techniques, Elmer Johnson proved to be a financial and milk quality disaster when he started farming on his own.

Just how Clyde Rutherford has attached his name to a Dairylea member's milk check – so he could call himself a "producer" and continue as a director – is not known openly. For good reason, Rutherford has disassociated himself from Johnson. For more details on Elmer Johnson's lack of dairy farming success, see article in *The Milkweed* next month.

Next month, *The Milkweed* will reveal the farm inspection sheets and milk quality records at the Elmer Johnson farm at Mt. Vision, New York. That's the farm where Clyde Rutherford kept his status as a "producer."

That farm featured dozens of dead cows all over the place and milk quality fit only for hogs.

Why did Dairylea Co-op keep picking up the milk from that slop-hole?