CREAM Silver Sledge Hammer Ceremony

By Carolyne Ricardo, Class of 2017, Animal Science Major, CREAM Class of 2014, Spring Semester Advisor for CREAM 2015

When I arrive here at 3:30 I go to turn on the lights in the barn and say good morning to the cows. Of course they simply continue munching on their feed, and a few of them will look towards the door to see what is going on. A bit over an hour later I am following the cows as they walk outside where the sun is just beginning to rise. Another hour later the calves are all fed, the barn is clean, there is fresh feed for the cows, and we begin to let them back inside. After all is done, boots and overalls back in the closet, it is bittersweet going back to campus. The staff here, my fellow CREAMers, and the wonderful cows all make this place special; after all, the barn has become a second home.

CREAM is a program where students build working relationships with their classmates, on-farm staff and the cows. Over the course of one year, or a summer, students become incredibly knowledgeable and intimate with one topic, and learning is driven by pure joy. This has been the case for the past 27 years, and it will continue to be; but CREAM is ready to move into a new home.

The construction of a new barn will propel the CREAM program forward in the rapidly advancing dairy industry. The new barn will be influential to all aspects of the farm and the program. The magnitude of every management decision made by students will grow and the shear amount of milk leaving this farm daily will be amazing. CREAMers learn an unimaginable amount about the dairy industry, veterinary medicine and business management; but the most wonderful part of this program is being able to witness and be a part of keeping such wonderful animals happy and healthy from the day they are born.

There is so much thought put into every decision made here, and with a larger herd to fit the new barn, students will have the opportunity to see their decisions take effect. Two years down the road the breeding decisions made by my classmates and I will be a part of the herd of 46 cows milking in a new parlor. We’ll come back to see the granddaughters of our calves growing up in the arena. That is part of the beauty of this program, everything always comes around full circle, and even after our year or summer in the program is complete, we can still see how our time here has had its influence.

The University of Vermont is a research university with high tech labs and facilities all over campus, and more of those are to come. Today we are here to celebrate the beginning of another advanced facility that will provide students with incredible learning opportunities and shear happiness. I would personally like to thank every single person who has been involved in creating and maintaining this program for the past 27 years, including every CREAMer who has put in so much to this farm. Thank you for being a part of this milestone in CREAM’s history, I’m sure there will be many more to come. CREAM is and will continue to be a huge part in my life; I know I will look back on my time here with nothing but fondness. And I know that the construction of a new barn will be just as influential in the lives of present and future CREAMers.