

## Finding His Niche:

### New Market Revitalizes Hog Operations

If you attended the Munson Lakes customer appreciation event a couple of weeks ago, you know all about one part of Doug and Debbie Manthei's farming operation—pork chops. When that silver trailer with the pink pig rolls up, it's a sure bet that good food won't be long in coming.

"That part of the business got started when I was cooking with the Pork Producers," Doug relates. "Some people started asking if I could cook pork chops at their place. Then they wondered about weddings and company picnics and we started hitting the fairs. It just grew to the point that Debbie was able to make the catering business her full-time job."

Hogs have been a mainstay of the Manthei family since Doug, his father, Elwyn, uncle Donald, and brother Randy started selling breeding stock 31 years ago. Eventually, Doug became the sole operator, building a farrow-to-finish operation that peaked at 500 sows. Over three decades, he's faced challenges ranging from changing market economies to

urban sprawl. Located just north of Elk River, his is the last livestock operation in the township.

After exiting the pork business for a time in 1998, Doug figured he would be done with farrowing for good. But in 2004, sows found a way back into his barn.

"I was looking for a way to stay in the business, and I discovered the medical research market," he explains. "I supply pigs to universities, clinics, hospitals, and labs in the area. I fixed up my farrowing building, and now I'm up to 150 sows."

#### Service matters

Because his customers may require pigs that meet very specific requirements with little lead time, good service is crucial to the success of Doug's business. "They have to be healthy SPF pigs, usually on 48-hour notice," he comments. "They're looking for pigs of a certain sex, color, and weight range. So I have to have pigs being born all the time to ensure a continuous flow."

Service is equally important to Doug, which is the reason Munson Lakes Nutrition has been his feed supplier—with very few interruptions—for all his 31 years in the business.

"I've worked with Ray Munson the entire time," Doug says. "He gives me the opportunity to customize my ration. If I need equipment, he'll help me out and head me in the right direction. And I've gotten good advice in contracting the feed ahead of time."

One product that has been a hit with Doug—and others—has been Ultra Care starter. "I use it here, and I also started sending it with the younger pigs to the labs," he states. "The labs like the product so much that they've started using it. It's good nutrition for the very young pigs, and that's really important for my business."

Succeeding in the hog business is a challenge, and having a relationship with a partner you can count on for 30 years is important to Doug. "The feed quality is excellent. In all that time, I've never had to send a load back," he summarizes. "They take care of their customers. Anything that can benefit my operation, they will do." ●



Debbie and Doug Manthei with granddaughter Danielle.

# That's What Neighbors Do

By John Zander, General Manager



When you live in a community all your life, you get to know your neighbors well. We've made our home in Howard Lake for a long time now, and it's important to us to be a good neighbor.

So we've done some beautification at Munson Lakes Nutrition, and I hope the improvements are noticeable.

First, we took down an old elevator down the street from our mill that we haven't used in seven years. We also targeted our mill, where we had an assortment of paint schemes on our bins and structures. They are now all a nice, neutral dark gray. Finally, our Munson Lakes logo was looking the worse for wear. Now you can tell who we are.

Small changes, yes. But we think it's the neighborly thing to do.

## Thanks for your business

More than ever, we appreciate your continued support of our business during the first eight months of our year. We've maintained our tonnage and stayed extremely busy. That's due to all of you, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to work with and for you. We remain committed to:

- Manufacturing a great product at a fair price
- Giving great customer service
- Basing every decision on fairness and decency.

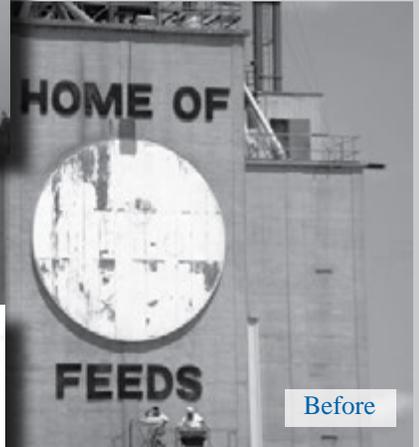
We hope you had the chance to attend our Customer Appreciation Day on August 19. We served more than 1,000 pork chops—just one way we try to say thanks for choosing Munson Lakes Nutrition.

As to the markets, volatility still rules. Just as soon as the acreage reports come out, all sorts of experts start refuting them. The best thing we can recommend is to watch our Web site to stay on top of the market. We're doing the same.

Here's hoping for a long, warm fall and a safe harvest for all of you. ●



Replacement of our logo.



Before



Removal of the old elevator across the street from our mill.



The bins and structures at our mill received a new paint job.

## Keeping It All Going

Behind (or underneath, wedged between, and leaning over) every efficient production facility is the person who fixes what's broken and services what isn't. For 33 years, that person at Munson Lakes Nutrition has been Gary Foede. Now with Gary's coming retirement, the torch is being passed to Trevor Gottschalk.

"I don't make the feed or deliver it, but my job is to make sure that everything that makes the feed and delivers it keeps working," Trevor states. "I do whatever I can to keep the production process smooth and efficient."

It's the kind of work that's a great fit for Trevor, who's been tinkering with all things mechanical since he was a kid. That also explains the welding degree he earned from Ridgewater College, which comes in handy in his new job.

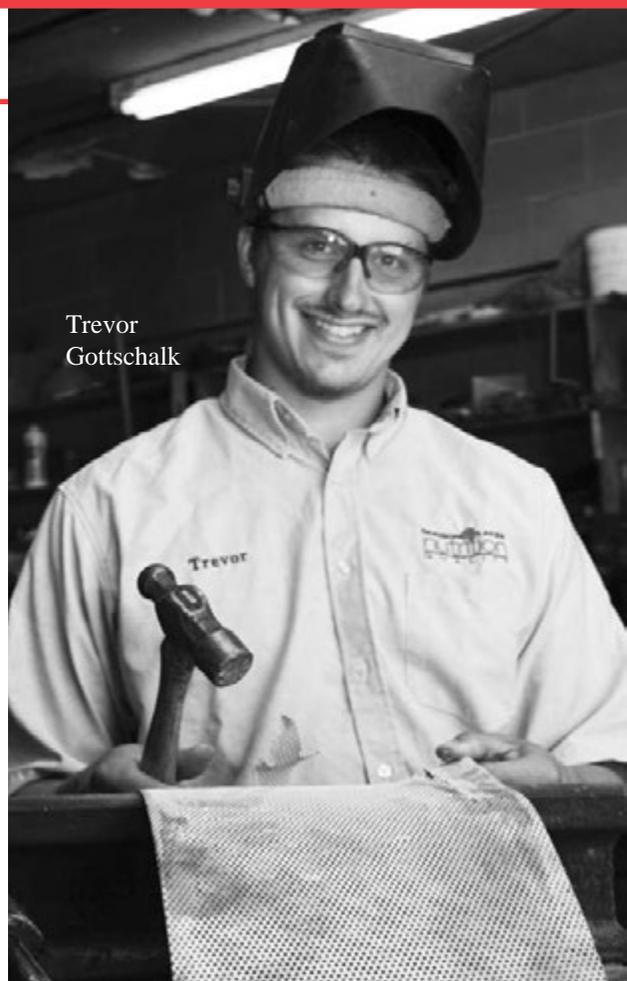
Trevor says there aren't really "normal" days with this job. When you're

doing everything from operating the boiler and welding to maintaining the grounds and loading trucks, there's always something different. "On slow days, you're pushing a broom around," he states, "and the next day you can be here until 10 at night trying to get something working."

And there's always more to learn. "Things always seem to happen for the first time when Gary's on vacation," Trevor laments. "Gary is a very good teacher, and I think I'm a pretty good learner, so I'm getting there."

"I think I've finally found a career I can stay with," he concludes. "I'm in the right place now. This is a good place to work with a real friendly environment, and I plan to stay here."

**Editor's note:** Trevor and his wife, Theresa, live near Kingston. Naturally, he fixes things for relaxation, and has a particular passion for restoring two-cylinder John Deere tractors. ●



Trevor  
Gottschalk

## Help Calves Fight the Weaning Battle

By Maynard Moen, Calf and Heifer Consultant



The period from weaning (6-8 weeks) into the transition phase (weaning to 16 weeks) presents a stiff challenge for calf health. They have reason to be stressed, as they're weaned

from milk or milk replacer. They've also been moved out of the nursery barn, where they often have their own pen, to new quarters in the transition barn where they're

grouped with strangers and adjusting to new feed.

In their new surroundings, they're farther from feed and water, which could cause a drop in feed intake. And ventilation can be a concern. A bedding pack that isn't kept dry is one big contributor to ventilation problems. When you take all of this into account, it's easy to see why calves are stressed.

That's the reason feeding AS700 is a good move during this time period. Start one week prior to weaning and continue for three weeks post weaning—a total of 28 days. Feeding AS700 will reduce chronics by 60%, improve ADG by .48 pounds during this period, and improve feed conversion by 1.56 pounds.

The bottom line on AS700: Health is improved, intakes remain constant or improve, with lower death and cull rates, earlier breeding, and earlier calving. This is a very good management practice to incorporate into your heifer-raising program. ●



## Can't Beat Free

If you haven't taken advantage of the free on-line advertising service we've set up, there's no time like the present. Customers of Munson Lakes Nutrition and The Country Store at Howard Lake can place your ads on the On-Line Classifieds page at [www.munsonlakes.com](http://www.munsonlakes.com).

All you need to do to place an ad is request a user name and password from us. Once you've been approved, you can create and post up to five ads. Your ads will remain in the Classifieds for a maximum of two weeks, and you can remove items as they sell.

Anyone can view the ads. So tell your friends and go see the newest items for sale at [www.munsonlakes.com](http://www.munsonlakes.com). ●

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QUALITY

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## Feed Formulas Aren't Forever

By Breck Kruger, Lifestyle Feed Specialist

If it's been awhile since you evaluated your feed program, now is a great time to take a fresh look. Variations in feed quality, the changing needs of your horse, and economic conditions can require ration adjustments.

Here are a few things to consider when evaluating your feeding program:

- The age of the animal you're feeding
- Their activity level
- The quality of available hay
- The amount of hay and/or grain you're feeding
- The calories available per pound of feed



Though we're experiencing some tight economic times, remember that the least expensive choice isn't always the most cost-effective long term. Nutritional value—not cost—is the key factor when judging feed quality. If you're ready to take a look at your feeding program, call or stop in at our Country Store. We have a specialist available for feed consultations.

We now have Purina Strategy,<sup>®</sup> Horseman's Edge,<sup>®</sup> and Country Acres feeds in bulk. If you have 5-10 horses and are interested in moving to a bulk feeding program, contact us for more information on our Purina feeding trial. Trial participants have the opportunity to receive \$30 back on each horse at the end of the 90-day trial period.

The Country Store would like to announce that they are the proud sponsor of Vicky Simenson for the 2010 Barrel Racing Season. Please watch for our next newsletter to read more about Vicky and her horse Dodger. ●



### OUR MISSION

#### Some things never change.

The values that shaped our heritage will remain. Munson Lakes Nutrition will continue to:

Manufacture a great product at a fair price.

Give great customer service.

Base every decision on fairness and decency.