

Calves Thrive With Auto-Feeding

Before remodeling the old dairy barn into a calf raising facility and installing auto feeders three years ago, the calf manager at Haubenschild Dairy east of Princeton had all she could do to hand-feed the dairy's calves.

"When I started 14 years ago, we were all feeders and it took 3-4 hours," said Juli Stewart. "Today, they call me calf manager and I work 8 hours, but we've tripled the number of calves we're caring for."

Today, Juli and three others on her staff hand-feed an average of 50 calves daily for 7-10 days in individual pens in this very clean, semi-heated section of the facility before moving them to group pens in an unheated section of the barn and introducing them to the auto feeders. At any one time, her crew feeds 112-120 calves on the auto feeders before weaning them at 8-10 weeks of age and shipping them to a nearby heifer raiser.

Besides overseeing the feeding process, Juli takes responsibility for vaccinating and treating the calves for illness. "I move them, I wean them, and I know each and every one of them personally," she states. "I have them from birth to eight weeks."

The Haubenschild family: Tom, his brother, Bryan, his father, Dennis, and his mother, Marsha, began talking in 2011 about remodeling an old dairy barn. They had built two new 400-stall barns, one in 1996 and one in 2000, to accommodate their growing dairy herd, which today numbers 1,200 head with the dry cows. They were contemplating turning the old barn into a nursery.

Munson Lakes calf and heifer specialist Maynard Moen helped the Haubenschild family and their calf manager to design the flow of the barn and the ventilation. "Then Melissa (Holtz—Land O'Lakes calf specialist) came in and worked with Juli on the function and the management of the auto feeders,"



Calf manager Juli Stewart with hand-fed calves at Haubenschild Dairy.



Calf in an auto feeder. Juli and her feeders work closely with calves over 10 days old to make the switch from hand feeding to the auto feeders. The auto feeders allow each calf a maximum of 9 liters of pasteurized milk (with 270 of Balancer) per day.

Continued on page 2

Calves Thrive With Auto-Feeding Continued from page 1

says Maynard. “It was a combined effort by Munson Lakes and Land O’Lakes coming out here to lend our expertise.”

Today, using Land O’Lakes Pasteurized Milk Balancer® to adjust the protein and fat content of its discarded pasteurized milk, the dairy’s calves are gaining an average 2.3 pounds per day. The dairy is part of a National Animal Health Monitoring System, and Katrina, a USDA employee administering the program, calls this exceptional. “She actually told me I should frame these results and hang them on the wall,” beams Juli.

On the other end of the calf-raising process, Tom Haubenschild could not be happier with what he’s seeing. “We’re calving heifers at 22 months now, versus 24 months before this facility was built,” he states.

Juli says the calves’ growth and health has improved since they began using the Land O’Lakes Pasteurized Milk Balancer and the auto feeders, in addition to using a scour treatment additive to the feed. “We’ve gone from 11-15% mortality when I started to less than 2% now,” she states.

“If they are healthier and are getting good nutrition, they can fight off a lot of disease,” agrees Maynard, who says Munson Lakes Nutrition is honored to play a role on this dairy farm.

“There has been a lot of trial and error, but the calves are definitely thriving now,” continues Juli, almost three years after the auto feeders were installed.

Although he agrees it plays a big part, Tom says he can’t give all the credit to the auto-feeders. Other factors have contributed to the health and vitality of the calves.

“We remodeled where the calves get dropped off. We have them in individual pens at the beginning, rather than group pens, and the air quality has improved,” he states.



Tom Haubenschild (left) and MLN calf specialist Maynard Moen (right) with Land O’Lakes Pasteurized Milk Balancer

Juli agrees. “Another thing that helps is that we’ve had the same crew of feeders working here for over a decade,” she states. “They know what they are doing.”

Juli quickly explains that she was not always a fan of the dairy’s move from individual feeding to automation. “I really did not like it at first,” she admits, “but now I do.” Not having to feed all the calves by hand has given her the opportunity to focus on the newborns. ●

A Respected Local Employee

Tim Fiecke grew up on his family’s farm southeast of Howard Lake. “We milked 32 cows, raised hogs, and butchered chickens,” he states. “It was a typical farm 30-40 years ago.”

Tim attended school at Howard Lake before farming almost 19 years with his dad. He interrupted this farming career to try a stint as an over-the-road trucker. That lasted

two years before Tim returned to the farm. He then moved to South Dakota, where he worked for a 2,800-head dairy at Milbank for seven years. “I fed cattle all night for Schneck Dairy,” he explains.

Returning to Minnesota, Tim worked seven years for Waste Management. For the next three years, he baled hay, painted tractors, and worked on machinery for the Hay Guys just outside Howard Lake. “I also drove semi and tractors for Brose Farms,” he adds.

About a year ago, Tim accepted a job on the night crew at Munson Lakes Nutrition. “I had always heard good things about the employees and the working conditions here,” he says, “and the work is related to what I’ve been doing on the farm.” Tim continues to farm his family’s land near Lake Mary.

At Munson Lakes Nutrition, Tim mixes feed from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m., so it will be ready right away in the morning for our trucks to load and deliver.

Have a conversation with this soft-spoken man and you’ll learn that Tim is the father of four boys, one of whom has passed away. “My youngest son is studying nondestructive testing at Ridgewater College in Hutchinson,” says Tim. “He still lives with me.” Tim himself earned his GED just two years ago.

Tim’s oldest son and his second-oldest both work at Turck, Inc., in Plymouth. Tim has three grandchildren, ages 7 years, 3 years, and 7 months. ●



Tim Fiecke stacks ingredients for night mixing.

AMP Max Tops Local Calf Trial

Joe Gallus, Jr., Howard Lake, wanted to know the most cost-effective calf milk replacer. He had been using a lower cost replacer when Doug Sawatzke of Munson Lakes Nutrition approached him about Land O'Lakes Amplifier® Max.

"It sounded good, but I like to see the numbers to confirm the sales pitch," says Joe. So he agreed to a trial that would pit Amp Max against the milk replacer he had been using and against the milk replacer of another company whose sales representative had been knocking at Joe's door.

Joe agreed to a winter trial. "I wanted to try them in the harshest conditions," he said. "It just so happened that I got a bunch of calves in mid-December that we could do the trial with."

The calves were separated into three groups. One pen was fed Land O'Lakes Amp Max as a milk replacer. The others were fed Competitors No.1 and No. 2. All three milk replacers were rated 22:20.

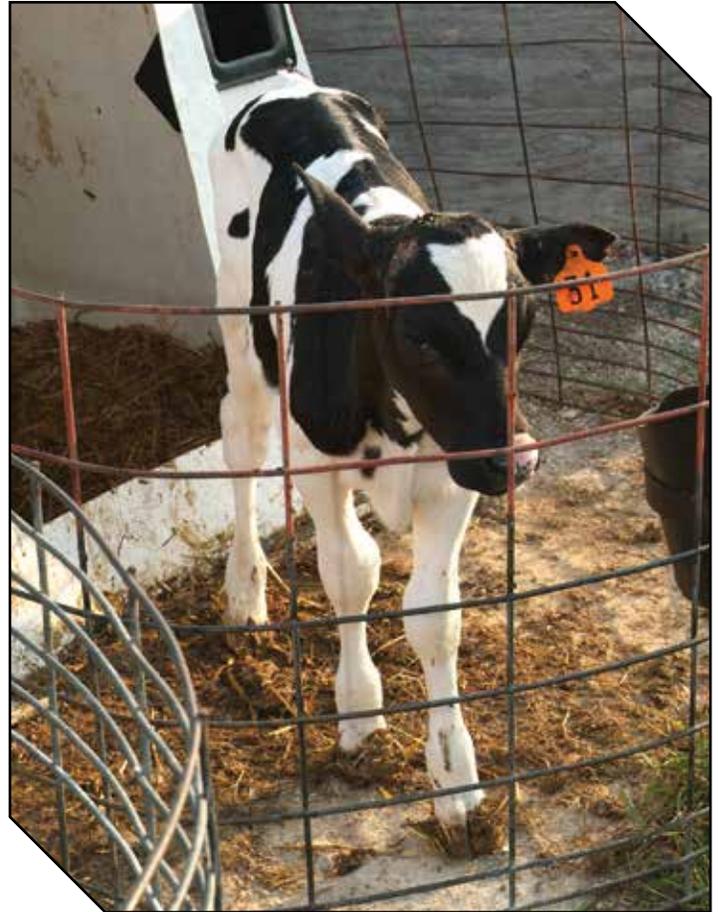
The trial began Dec. 22, 2013, and ended Feb. 4, 2014, a total of 45 days. When the trial was over, MLN's Doug Sawatzke and John Zander helped Joe weigh the calves but never learned which ones had been fed the Amp Max until Joe assembled the figures.

Here are the results. The calves fed Amp Max had gained 79.3 lbs at a cost of \$1.42/lb, the calves fed Competitor No. 1 had gained 68.4 lbs at a cost of 1.60/lb, and the calves fed Competitor No. 2 had gained 62 lbs at a cost of 1.71/lb.

"The overall health of the calves on Amp Max was better, and the growth was over the top," says Joe. "You could notice the thickness on their backs."

"Even when it got cold, it didn't seem to matter as much to the calves on Amp Max as it did to the calves on the other milk replacers," adds Joe. "They had more energy than the others."

Amp Max costs \$6-8 more per bag than the milk replacer Joe had been using, but he figures the overall health and added weight gain of the calves on Amp Max more than makes up for the difference in price. "Amp Max helps them get out of the barn faster and eliminates the cost of the meds," says Joe.



Joe adds that he found the calf trial very helpful, in that he could both visually see size differences in the calves AND get weight comparisons after the trial was over.

"This has driven my choice in milk replacer over the past year," he concludes. ●

Beef Cow-Calf and Feeder Meeting

**Tuesday,
March 31, 2015
B's on the River
Watertown, MN**

**6:30 p.m. Dinner
7:30 p.m. Meeting**

Proper cow-calf and feeder management can significantly increase your bottom line.

This event will focus on:

- Creep Feeding Advantages
- The Value of Mineral Management
- Basic Cow-Calf and Deworming Benefits

**Grand
Door
Prize!**



You must RSVP with your MLN Feed consultant or the Howard Lake Country Store at 320-543-3417. Seating will be limited!

A Smidley® Super 6- Stall Calf Creep.



Munson Lakes No. 2 Nationwide

By John Zander, General Manager

Land O' Lakes recently named Munson Lakes Nutrition No. 2 in nationwide growth among 2,100 cooperatives that market Purina® Nutrition products and use them in their manufactured feed rations. The award for the 18-month period ending Dec. 31, 2014 recognizes our sales team and our mill employees as leaders in advancing this well-known brand.

This should tell you, as a customer of Munson Lakes Nutrition, that the men and women working here are not satisfied with their past achievements. We continue to look for ways to use products like Propel® Energy Plus, RALLY® Dairy Feed, and Land O'Lakes® Animal Milk products to bring value to your farm.

Honors, like the one bestowed on us by Land O'Lakes, do make us feel good. More importantly, they tell us we have achieved some success toward our goal of helping our producer-customers improve their bottom lines.

Improving efficiency

We continue to use what we've learned in the HACCP certification process to improve our efficiency. You may have noticed a change in your invoices. That is because we're using new management software that ties our office and feed mill into a single computer system.

Orders for feed placed at the office will be automatically scheduled for manufacturing at our mill without needing to be re-entered in a separate computer system. This should greatly improve our inventory control.

Another key piece will be the ability to automatically lot track our ingredients. The new FSMA rules, which will be released soon, will require

all manufacturers to be able to provide lot traceability for all products manufactured.



A safer process

As warm weather returns, we plan to complete the concrete and blacktopping project we began last year. We have just a few areas left, and the positive results of last year's work leave no doubt in our minds that we must resurface everything surrounding the mill.

As spring comes, we will add a tractor to our delivery fleet and be looking at possible next steps for improvements in the mill. We appreciate you allowing MLN to partner with you to grow your business. ●

OUR MISSION

Some things never change – even after 79 years.

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.



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