

Automatic Calf Feeder Means More Time for Family

David and Julie Marquardt place a high value on family time, supporting causes they believe in and working smart. For this reason, Marquardt Family Farms has installed automatic calf feeders, championed a youth organization they never belonged to, and participated in programs that trim their costs.

The Howard Lake family raises about four hundred bull calves from one week old to 1500 lbs., while cultivating corn, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa and grasses on 1000 acres.



Bull calf entering automatic feeder.



Dave and Julie Marquardt and their sons (left to right) Adam, Isaac, Mark and Brant of Howard Lake, Minnesota.

The Marquardts installed two Lely automatic calf feeders about five years ago, when David's father was diagnosed with farmer's lung.

"Rod wanted to farm as long as he could," says David. "Technology helped him do that." Rod passed away on March 27 of this year.

"Family is important to us," says David of what the automated feeding system has done for them. "If we still had to farm with buckets, we'd be out in the barn two more times a day

and we couldn't be raising nearly as many calves."

Dave says the automated calf feeders have put a lot less strain on his family, which includes his wife Julie and his four small sons. "It allows the calves to go to the feeder more times a day, stay healthier and grow bigger," he states. "That is our goal."

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What's All the Hype about HACCP?

By Brian Yager, Feed Safety Coordinator

Munson Lakes Nutrition (MLN) just passed its fourth consecutive annual HACCP audit with the highest score ever.

You may well ask, "Why is this a big deal?"

It is a BIG DEAL because HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) is not just some plaque we put on the wall if we pass. It shows our compliance with a huge body of regulations that keeps on growing out of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), signed into law by President Obama in 2011.

I'm proud of our employees, customers, suppliers and community for doing what we need to stay at the top of our industry in this difficult regulatory climate.

For our employees, there are many things involved in compliance that allow us to pass a HACCP audit. It's not just keeping the mill and trucks clean.

It begins in the office with taking the order and making sure the formula and tags are correct. If a Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) is required, it is making sure that it has not expired and that it is followed correctly.

It involves our sales nutritionists providing information gathered from the farm to make the formula, along with close communication with the farmer on VFDs and FDA regulations.

It continues with mill workers and drivers making sure the mix is made in accordance with the approved formula, flushing mill equipment if it follows the manufacture of a medicated feed, making it quality acceptable to the end user, and bagging it with the right tag and texture.

Cleanliness is an important part of compliance. Employees must maintain good hygiene and keep the mill and equipment clean. With the mill running 24-hours-a-day, cleaning and maintenance must be scheduled and done daily.

Animal feed products must be delivered without contamination and with the appropriate tags according to Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rulings. *NOTE: To stay ahead of the new rules on transporting animal food free of contamination and to prevent the spread of diseases, MLN has plans to build their own truck wash.*

Our customers also play an important part. The FDA has conducted VFD audits on the farms of three of our customers. We worked with our customers to help them through these audits. On the farm, paperwork must be kept for a minimum of two years. Pens and bins must be labeled and animals fed medicated feeds must be easily identified.

Communication is key to providing farmers with quality feed and complying with the new VFD regulations. Veterinarians, feed manufacturers and farmers must work together to make sure the feed mix, days fed and withdrawal periods are all clearly understood.

We must also educate our suppliers on biosecurity laws and making sure that what they haul prior to bringing us ingredients does not contaminate the feeds we manufacture.

Finally, we live in a community that is curious about all the improvements we are making at our mill location. They see cranes and contractors working diligently throughout the summer months. As a responsible business and major employer, it is our job to educate members of our community about the safe food we make for livestock so the farmers can provide consumers with safe food

That's what HACCP certification and passing a yearly audit is all about. Come to think of it, IT IS A BIG DEAL. ●



Automatic Calf Feeder

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David credits Munson Lakes Nutrition (MLN) specialists Ted Radintz and Mike Foust for taking him around to see other operations and encouraging him to use the technology. "We're basically MLN customers because of the amazing support they provide!"

According to Julie, these specialists weigh the Marquardts' calves monthly and sit down with their veterinarian to see what can be improved. The couple also participates in adult farm management courses at Ridgewater College, David's alma mater. "We work with Shawn Meyer at Wilmar to keep



Calf sucking on the nipple of the automatic feeder.

watch on our bottom line and how we can be more efficient," says Julie.

Finally, the Marquardts chair the local alumni auction, despite the fact that they were never Future Farmers of America members. They raise funds for FFA programs and volunteer as judges in local FFA competitions. Why? Because they see the value of FFA in the lives of farm children. Says Julie, "We want to be the change we want to see in the world." The Marquardts' oldest son, Adam, is looking forward to joining FFA in the future.

The Marquardt Family Farms includes two farmsteads located south of Howard Lake. David, Julie and their sons live on the one with the finishing operation. David's mother lives on the one with the baby calves. "We've had to assign who will go over to Grandma's to do chores this summer, because they all want to be with Grandma," says David. ●

Repair Waterers Before the Freeze

By Paul Schleif, Howard Lake Country Store

If you're going to replace a heat element, a thermostat, a float or a valve in your Ritchie® Livestock Fountain—do it now. Not when the temperature dips below freezing.

Go on—you can remember from last winter what parts were just hanging by a thread and will need to be replaced in



Paul with our display of Ritchie Livestock Fountains.

the ice and snow, if you don't take care of the job now.

Luckily, Ritchie Fountains (the gold standard of livestock waterers) are very reliable and easy to repair—even those 20-30 years old.

And, you know a reliable parts supplier: Howard Lake Country Store. Sure, we can order a part and get it here next day. But most likely, we've got what you need right now.

Of course, despite their durability, Ritchie Fountains (like everything else in this world) will eventually wear out. So, when you need a replacement, come to the Howard Lake Country Store. Again, we can order a fountain for a very special application. But chances are good that we have the Ritchie Fountain you need in our extensive inventory.

Check it out—and don't wait until the water flowing out of your supply pipe freezes in mid-air before you perform the maintenance you need. See us today! ●



Extra heavy-duty feeders

JUST IN: a new line of extra heavy-duty cattle feeders and bunks, manufactured by Spanier Welding of Paynesville. You have to see these feeders and bunks, with 10-gauge floors, to appreciate how sturdy and tough they are. Stop by the Howard Lake Country Store today!

A Friendly Voice Will Take Your Order

Lisa Schlechter started at Munson Lakes Nutrition (MLN) in February. At the beginning, Lisa found it challenging to learn about all the feeds MLN manufactures for almost every animal imaginable. Now, she's confident she can help anyone and put a smile on their face.

Lisa has a bubbly personality and encourages customers to joke around with her. "My husband, John, and I farm, too, and farming is not an easy life," she states. "I try to lighten everyone's spirits because each day is a gift."

At our Howard Lake office, Lisa takes feed orders and helps the accounting staff by entering purchase orders, invoicing and assisting with grain bank records.

On a good day, Lisa keeps up with every order coming in. "My personal goal is to have a good rapport with each customer, know exactly what they want and where they want it delivered," she states.

Lisa graduated from Howard Lake High School and earned a business degree at Normandale Community College before working 15 years at a division of The Schwan Food Company. When that division closed, she entered the cabinet and countertop business, co-owning a shop for several years.



Lisa Schlechter

Most recently, Lisa worked for Hutchinson Co-op as assistant to the manager of the Lester Prairie branch. "I helped with chemicals and our customers' farm plans," she states. "I even filled fertilizer carts."

Earlier this year, Lisa jumped at the opportunity to join MLN, "I wanted to stay in agriculture, and working for a company associated with Land O'Lakes and Purina is quite unique."

"I'm passionate about animals," adds Lisa, who grows grain and raises beef cows, chickens, ducks, pigs, horses and donkeys with her husband on a farm southeast of Winsted. "I want that one-on-one connection with the animals," she states. ●

PO Box 549
 Howard Lake, MN 55349

New Mill Office Hours
 as of September 15

Mon-Thu | **Friday**
8am-5pm | **8am-4pm**



Proud of Our Team

By John Zander, General Manager

We passed our fourth HACCP audit, thanks to Brian Yager and the whole team of office workers, sales nutritionists, mill workers and truck drivers at Munson Lakes Nutrition (MLN). It takes a great deal of extra effort to maintain the clean environment and extensive recordkeeping required to manufacture safe feeds and keep our certification. See Brian's article on page 2 to learn why scoring high on our annual HACCP exam is A REALLY BIG DEAL!

We're also happy to introduce Austin Davis, our newest sales nutritionist. He's riding with our most experienced sales nutritionists to meet our customers and

get the lay of the land. For this reason, you may see him on your farm in coming weeks. We'll introduce Austin in a future issue of the Munson Lakes Nutrition Advisor. But for now—please welcome him along with our trusted sales staff.

Please be careful as you head for the field to bring in the fall harvest. Your well-being is our concern.

Thank you for your business, and be assured: at MLN, we will always treat you and your neighbors with the utmost respect. This includes manufacturing great products at a fair price, offering dedicated customer service, and basing every decision we make on fairness and decency. Some things never change. ●



OUR MISSION
 Some things never change—even after 80 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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MLN supports youth programs at county fairs and achievement days. At left, general manager John Zander congratulates Isabelle Berning, St. Michael, who earned the title Junior Showmanship Champion at the Wright County Fair. MLN purchased her premium.

MUNSON LAKES NUTRITION DIRECTORY

HOWARD LAKE OFFICE

800-245-7717
 320-543-2561

THE COUNTRY STORE

800-663-9177
 320-543-3517