



Beckman Dairy Grows Next Generation

Jeff Beckman grew up on a dairy farm near Dennison, MN. But he took the long road to making cows his livelihood. After studying agronomy at the University of Minnesota for a couple of years, he married Cheryl. They started a family, and Jeff held seven different jobs before returning to the farm in mid-life. Even today, he's more at home with the cropping side of Beckman Dairy than with managing cow comfort. For this reason, he appreciates the advice of his Munson Lakes sales nutritionist, Steve Kallinen.

Jeff bought the dairy from his dad, Larry, in 2006. That same year, Jeff went to work as general manager of Vet Provisions in Northfield, MN. Over the next four years, he helped that two-vet practice grow from \$4 million to \$17 million of annual revenue and from 12 to 48 employees. For Jeff, this off-the-farm job was an opportunity to earn the cash he needed to start farming. Though it took him away from the cows for 50 hours per week, Jeff had a lot of help from Larry, who wasn't quite ready to retire. "It was nice to work into the

business with some oversight from Dad," says Jeff, who adds that his children were good help, too.

Jeff and Cheryl have nine children ranging in age from 5 to 21. The family lives on a farmstead about a mile from the dairy where Jeff's parents still reside.

When he purchased the dairy, Jeff didn't change cow numbers right away. He upgraded the parlor from four to 12 milkers, which cut in half the time it took to milk 70 cows. "With me being gone so much and the kids coming in to help, we had to do something to get consistency in the parlor," he explains of the decision to go to six milkers on both sides with automatic take-offs. "We saw the somatic cell count go down some and the milk production come up."

On the feeding side, Jeff brought in a vertical TMR that cut the mixing time from three hours to less than an hour. He also switched from silos to storing his corn silage and haylage in silage bags. More recently he began putting up his alfalfa in big round bales. "While I was working off the farm, I had to look at how we would survive and do two jobs well," he remarks. "Everything was about efficiency."

Jeff also put up manure storage so he did not have to haul daily, and in 2009 the family put up a commodity shed, so they could bring cotton seed and soybean meal in by the semi load when the price was right. "Our idea was to set up to eventually milk 120 to 150 cows," he explains. "We have the land base and the infrastructure to do that, except for the barn." Right now, the Beckman's are milking 77 cows and hope to be at 90 cows by year's end.

Jeff left his off-the-farm job in 2010. "We prayed about it, and we believe it was the right thing to do, for me to concentrate on the farm," he says. Jeff credits his Dad's progressive thinking that grew the dairy to the point where his son could make a mid-life career change and come home to milk. "Dad had some good

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The Beckman Family, standing left to right: Melissa, 20; Anna, 13; Krista, 19; Jenna, 11; Nate, 17; Isaiah, 5; Jeff; Cheryl; and Lynnea, 8. Kneeling in front: Alisa, 11. Not pictured, Matt, 21.

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genetics, and he installed the milking parlor back in the early '70s," says Jeff, who adds that Larry was using sand bedding for the cows for 10 years before his son took over. "He was always thinking about how to care for the cows and for the land," says Jeff.

Larry continues to help with the milking, and Jeff hopes to build on his father's legacy. Besides retrofitting the buildings so they can increase the size of the herd, the Beckmans have considered entering the bottled-milk business as well as marketing cheese and yogurt. With today's demand for locally sourced foods and a nearby urban market, their family business could expand into these and other value-added commodities. "God has opened other doors to bring us to this point," says Jeff. "We're praying and waiting to see what He'll do in the future."

Meanwhile, Jeff depends on Munson Lakes Nutrition and Steve Kallinen for quality feed and advice. "Steve is out here

every two weeks, making me aware of the little things I need to be doing consistently to keep the cows comfortable and milk production up," says the Dennison dairyman, who admits he was more interested in plants and bugs as he was growing up. "I had a lot to learn about the cows when I came back to the dairy," states Jeff. "The integrity and confidence Steve instills, as well as what he teaches me about keeping the cows comfortable, play a huge part in the success of our operation.

"It's one less thing I have to worry about," he adds.

When Steve began working with Beckman Dairy a year and a half ago, their rolling herd average was about 22,500 pounds. "He didn't change the ration that much, but he dropped my feed costs significantly and increased my production by 4,500 pounds per cow," states Jeff. "That's our profitability, and we've been able to maintain that level." ●

Showing Ag to the Public

Twelve years ago, the Beckman family began assembling educational displays and volunteering at places like the Minnesota Zoo to help people understand and appreciate where their food supply comes from. Today, with the sponsorship of the Farm Bureau, the Beckmans are working to convert four tractor cabs and two combine cabs into simulators to help non-farmers experience what it's like to

operate these modern agricultural machines.

So far, they've placed one AgCabLab simulator in the Children's Museum at Rochester and one in Bemidji. The family is in the process of retrofitting others for display at the state fair and elsewhere. The Beckmans homeschool their children, and this is a part of their educational curriculum as well as an important family activity. ●



Jeff Beckman with his youngest, Isaiah, in an AgCabLab simulator.



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“Chew on This” Tour Coming Sunday, June 23

Nutra Blend and Elanco have put together a Drive to Feed the World. Their “Chew on This” tour is designed to educate people on how safe U.S.-produced food is and how much food will be needed in upcoming years to feed the world. The tour consists of two semi-trailers, one containing a 24-seat video theatre. A 15-minute video presentation narrated by Bill Goldberg, former NFL lineman and champion wrestler, talks about the public's perception of food and compares it to reality.

This exhibit is a perfect way to better understand the facts and issues of your industry, plus help educate your non-ag friends and their families. After viewing the video, participants will be treated to a meal.

The “Chew on This” tour will stop in Howard Lake from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, June 23, as part of Howard Lake's Good Neighbor Days. Come and bring a friend, neighbor, or family member.

For more information on the tour, visit www.DriveToFeed.com. ●



Feed the World spokesman Bill Goldberg, former NFL lineman and champion wrestler.

Raising Calves: Calculating REAL Cost of Gain

By Doug Sawatzke, Munson Lakes Sales Nutritionist

Recently I visited a large calf raiser who was feeding a competitor's 20/18 milk replacer at 1 lb/head/day. During our conversation, I talked with him about Munson Lakes commitment to feeding calves according to their genetic potential. For this reason, our sales nutritionists recommend feeding calf milk replacer at 1.5 lbs/day, and we don't offer a calf milk replacer with less than 22% protein and 20% energy.

"This may put us at a negative price point, if you're looking only at the cost per bag and the rate you're feeding now," I told him, "but when you consider the performance of the calf that you could be getting, you may be money ahead to feed our product at a higher rate."

Next, I did a little price comparison for him. This is what we learned.*

1. Feeding 1 lb/day of his 20/18 milk replacer (costing \$69/bag) would result in a potential gain of 0.74 lb/day at a total cost of \$2.93/lb of gain.
2. Feeding 1.5 lbs/day of his 20/18 milk replacer (again priced at \$69/bag) would result in a potential gain of 0.93 lb/day at a total cost of \$2.22/lb of gain.
3. Feeding 1.5 lbs/day of MLN 22/20 milk replacer (costing \$66.50 per bag**) would result in a potential gain of 1.05 lbs/day at a total cost of \$1.90/lb of gain.

4. Feeding 1.5 lbs/day of Land O'Lakes Amp Max 22-20 milk replacer (costing \$71/bag**) would result in a potential gain of 1.23 lbs/day at a cost of \$1.71/lb of gain.

So, I pointed out to him, it's not the price per bag you want to watch, but the cost per pound of gain. True, when you buy milk replacer with more energy and protein and feed it at a rate of 1.5 lbs/day, you'll spend more per feeding. In the end, however, you'll actually lower the cost of growing that calf, because it'll spend fewer days on milk replacer.

What about you? Are you buying your milk replacer one at a time from a route truck or a fleet store and feeding it at the minimum rate? Call me or any Munson Lakes sales nutritionist at 800-245-7717, and let's calculate your REAL cost of gain. Remember feeding 1.5 lbs/head/day of milk replacer means calves will eat less starter because they are receiving their dry matter needs through the milk. ●

**Estimates based on the calculations set out by the NRC for a 90 lb calf at 60 degrees (thermo-neutral).*

***Total cost based on the ability to purchase pallet quantities of milk replacer at full discount. Cost does not include calf starter.*



Upgrade to Mill Almost Complete

By John Zander, General Manager



Thank you for your continued support and the opportunity to help you reach your goals.

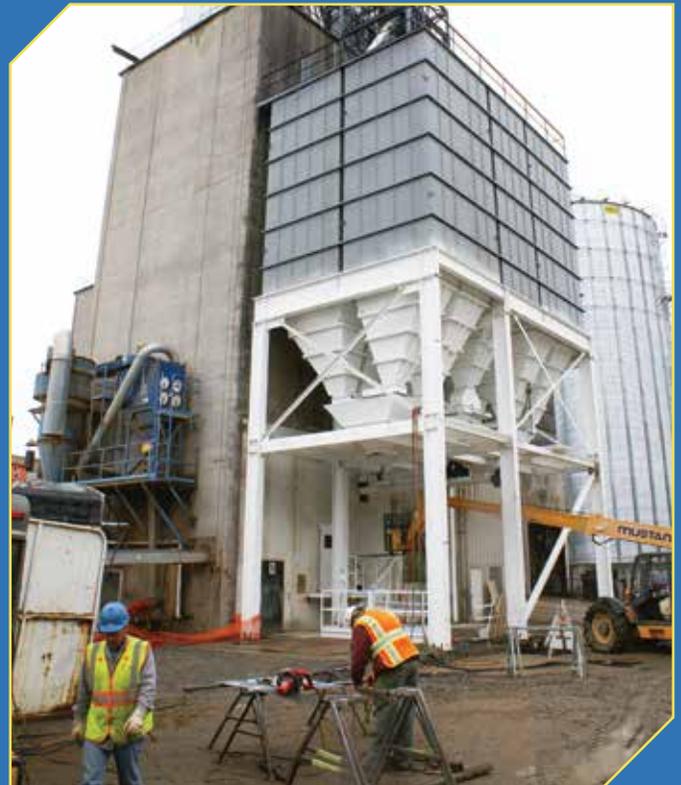
The project we started last fall at the Howard Lake mill, which involves replacing the six finished feed loadout bins on the north side with 10 loadout bins, has been delayed a bit but is nearing completion. We should be using the new bins by early July. With this increase in capacity, we will be able to have finished feed ready to load onto each truck as it returns from the country.

Through September, Munson Lakes Nutrition is offering free price later contracts to encourage the flow of corn from your farm to our mill. Price anytime between now and Sept. 30, 2013. This should allow you to take advantage of any summertime weather rallies, while cleaning out your bins in preparation for harvest.

To sell your corn, call our grain manager Mark Dahlman at 320-543-2561 or 800-245-7717. **Check our corn bids daily at www.munsonlakes.com.**

As you read in Doug Sawatzke's article above, our sales nutritionists are making a concerted effort to help current and prospective Munson Lakes customers realize the benefit of focusing on cost per pound of gain rather than cost per bag when choosing the quality and rate of milk replacer they feed to their calves.

In this, as in everything else we do, we're working to make our customers more profitable. This is consistent with "Our Mission," which has not changed in 77 years. Read it on page 4. ●



These newly constructed loadout bins on the north side of the Howard Lake mill should be in use by early July.



Use of Bio-Mos® in Raising Calves

By Brad Rortvedt, PAS, Territory Representative, Alltech

The gastrointestinal development of calves is critical in raising them. A healthy intestinal tract will optimize nutrient absorption, which is where the conversion of feed to gain and growth occurs.

The question is, "What can be done to insure the best development of the intestinal tract for optimal feed conversion?" The answers are well known, and hopefully this article will remind you of some early calf-health fundamentals.

Reduce exposure to gram-negative bacteria. The calving area is the general source of contamination. Remember that even prompt separation of calf from dam does not guarantee breaking the disease cycle. The colostrum could be a source of transmission.

These calves are born monogastric and also sterile. The last thing you want is for the first bacteria

introduced to be the bad ones, without any sort of competitive exclusion.

In the case of intestinal health, your success depends above all on reducing the amount of exposure through good hygiene practices. This should be your first priority. The use of Bio-Mos® along with Lasalocid can be an effective multifaceted approach to maintaining intestinal health. These two strategies work well together. Bio-Mos® will promote good bacteria and build natural defenses, and Lasalocid will prevent or control coccidiosis.

Typically, Bio-Mos® is added to milk replacer at 4 grams/head/day (range of 2-12 grams/head/day). Trials conducted between 1993 and 2005 found that total calf bodyweight was significantly improved by 3.42 kg (15%), average daily gain was improved by 0.07 kg (70 g), and starter feed intake was improved by 2.18 kg (9.77%) in Bio-Mos®-treated calves compared to control calves.

The important thing to remember in calf rearing is that you can try everything from essential oils and vaccination to MOS and probiotics, but where is the source of your problems? What is the bottleneck? Why are they getting scours? Is it a hygiene problem?

If you focus on the root of the problem, many of the treatment issues may be minimized. You need to treat the cause by managing the systems.

Contact your Munson Lakes sales nutritionist at 320-543-2561 or 800-245-7717 for help in developing a treatment program for your calf-raising enterprise. ●

OUR MISSION

Some things never change – even after 77 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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