

## Goat Dairy Grows and Prospers

Dammann Dairy near Glencoe milks goats instead of cows and is doing very well, thank you. Growing up in the country and with his grandfather in full-time farming, Marc Dammann dreamed of milking cows; but after helping a neighbor milk goats, Marc had an opportunity to purchase his own 100-head herd in 2009. The economics looked good, so he took the plunge.

"We sell all our milk to Stickney Hill Dairy in Kimball, where it's made into cheese," says Marc. The dairy is considering getting into yogurt or whey, and is apparently ripe for expansion since recently building a new processing plant. For now, they're taking all the milk the contracted herds can produce. Apparently, the market is booming for milk favored by consumers who are health conscious or lactose-intolerant.

"When we started," says Marc, "there were 25 people on the waiting list to sell their milk to the Kimball dairy, but we bought a herd whose milk was already contracted to the dairy, so we got in."

Marc says he is currently milking about 150 head with an additional 50 head of dry and young stock.

### Best practices

Three factors, among others, which have contributed to Marc's success: constructing a new barn for his herd, switching forages and customizing his feed bunks.

**Constructing a Barn** — "I started the dairy by converting an old farrowing barn into a double 12 swing milking parlor," says Marc. "We kept the herd in an attached lean-to." The first year, Dammann struggled with frozen teats.



Left to right, Savannah, Sarah, Weston, Marc and Mackenzie Dammann.

"It was a nightmare," Marc declares. The very next year, he built a 50' x 70' barn for his herd. "They're still able to go outside, but in cold weather the whole herd is inside," he explains. This has resulted in fewer vet bills and higher production over the winter months.

**Switching to Haylage and Silage** — "At first, we fed dry hay, but it kept raining on us and there was a lot of waste," says Marc.

"Now, we chop first crop hay and put it in bags," says the Glencoe dairyman, who notes that his whole forage production and feeding process is more economical.

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# Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

## From the Employees of Munson Lakes Nutrition

Daryl Adickes  
Lee Arnhold  
Terry Barfnecht  
Kirk Bengtson  
Tom Bobrowske  
Elroy Boehlke  
Mark Dahlman  
Austin Davis  
Jeannie Decker  
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Paul Wackler  
Gary Wilking  
Dusten Wilking  
Brian Yager  
Sue Zachmann  
John Zander

## Goat Dairy Grows

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**Custom-made feed bunks eliminate waste and keep goats from bothering each other while milking or feeding.**

“Before, the goats wasted so much hay, I had to clean the barn often,” he states. “Haylage is more palatable and there is less waste.” Marc says he’s saved on feed costs and labor by putting up haylage and silage.

### Customizing Feed Bunks —

The third factor in the dairy’s success, according to Marc, has to do with the way his herd is fed. Marc bought and replicated a feeder for the milking parlor (and the barn) that keeps the

goats separate. In the milking parlor, this feeder locks the goats in so they do not pull their heads out, waste feed, and bite each other—kicking off the milking machines.

“Basically, we designed and custom-built a bunk that worked,” he states.

### Importance of good nutrition

Marc raises all the forage he needs for his milking herd on 20 tillable acres. He buys corn and a protein pellets from Munson Lakes Nutrition, and MLN sales nutritionist Mike Foust works all his rations. “He tests all my hay, supplies the grain for my parlor and what we feed them outside,” says Marc.

“It’s very important to have someone who knows what he’s doing working the rations,” continues Marc. “That’s because of a female goat’s 12-month breeding and gestation period. “All of my milking goats come into heat in the fall, so they all kid in the spring,” he states. “You get one chance, and you don’t want to miss it.”

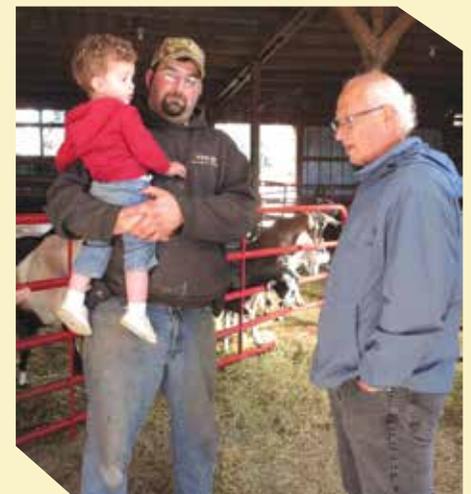
Marc sees a bright future for his goat dairy.

“I’d like to build my milking herd up to 250 head,” he states. He admits he

could get into making his own cheese, but doesn’t want the routine.

“I want to farm, and I love being my own boss,” says Marc, who previously worked as a mechanic for a manufacturing firm. “After punching a clock and then moving to this, I would not want to go back.”

*Editor’s Note: Marc and Sarah Dammann are raising their three children on his family’s farm near Glencoe: Savannah (8), Mackenzie (6) and Weston (2). Sarah works full-time at Plato Woodworking. ●*



**Marc and son Weston talk with their MLN sales nutritionist Mike Foust, right.**

# Trucker to Haul Last Load in December

Long-time bulk feed truck driver Ken Loebertmann is retiring after driving for more than 30 years with Munson Lakes Nutrition. Before that, he drove a can milk truck for eight and a half years and spent the next eight years delivering bulk feed for the Winsted Co-op.

When asked what he has enjoyed most about his job as a driver, Ken says, "Meeting with the customers, delivering their feed and getting it in the right places on their farms." Ken also says he's enjoyed seeing the different farms—from the modern dairy farm to the Amish facilities.

In a story printed eight years ago, Ken remarked, "I've stuck with dairy, feed and trucking throughout my life, and haven't regretted one day of it." When asked about his motivation, Ken said, "I just like to be of service to the farmer."

Ken, who grew up on a farm eight miles south of Howard Lake and had a small dairy herd while in school, will retire December 22, 2017. He lost his wife Nancy a year ago. The couple raised three grown sons who have given them 10 grandkids.



When asked about his motivation, Ken said, "I just like to be of service to the farmer."

**Ken Loebertmann retires after more than 30 years.**

In retirement, Ken hopes to do a little more summer fishing. "I'll enjoy spending time in my camper at Cozy Corners near Richmond," he says.

Thanks, Ken, for the last 30 years of work and friendship. ●

# Specialist with Experience in Dairy Agronomy

Munson Lakes Nutrition's newest nutritionist grew up south of Cokato on a dairy farm, which is still in operation today. Austin Davis' father and three older brothers milk 300 Holsteins and farm 1,000 acres of corn, soybeans and alfalfa.

Austin took a different career track. After graduating from the University of Minnesota (U of M) with a degree in agricultural communication and marketing (and a minor in animal science) Austin took a position with Gar-lin Dairy of Eyota, Minnesota. "As assistant agronomy manager, my job was to put up forages during the growing season," says Austin, who also worked with herd health during the winter, and gained a good deal of experience with automatic calf feeders.

Austin worked in this job for 15 months before marrying and moving to the west side of Minneapolis/St. Paul so his wife Sara could pursue a degree at the U of M in veterinary medicine.



In August, Austin was hired as a dairy production specialist with Purina, calling on MLN customers and potential customers.

"I had interest in both nutrition and agronomy in college," he states, adding that he participated in the dairy judging team at the U of M. "In my new position as a nutritionist, I'll be able to use my agronomy experience to help farmers make better

forages for their cows and improve profitability."

Austin says he also brings to his new job a good deal of experience with newer technology, having worked for a progressive dairy farm.

"I look forward to getting to know you, and learning how you go about your business," he states. "Every farm is unique."

You can reach Austin by calling the MLN office at Howard Lake at 800-245-7717 or 320-543-2561. ●



## Quilt Winner

**Leo and Diane Dehn from Dayton at Pork Chop Dinner. Diane was the winner of our quilt from our drawing at the dinner.**

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# Keeping up with Technology

By John Zander, General Manager



We've accomplished several upgrades at our Howard Lakes mill this year. For instance, we upgraded our "Repete" batching system just a couple of weeks ago. Like any software-based system, it needs updating periodically.

These updates give us an opportunity to make improvements to our feed production processes. This latest upgrade gives us the ability to use liquid binder in our pelleting process. The previous software couldn't handle that.

Improvements in the new software allow it to give us better reports on how we're using ingredients—and it runs the system a little more smoothly and efficiently. As a valued customer, you can appreciate the importance of keeping our systems up to date.

We've also updated the cooling system on our pellet mill. This brings more air across the pellets as they come out of the mill so they cool down properly before storage.

For the most part, we had no big projects this summer. To stay ahead of things in operations, we'll replace a distributor before

the end of the year. We'll also add a tractor and trailer to our fleet—an auger truck like our current trailers.

The bottom line with all these investments? We're here to stay, and we're doing things we need to do to provide you with the best products and service possible in the years to come.

## Looking toward 2018

We had a solid year of manufacturing and sales. Our dairy tons have maintained their levels of the previous year, which was a record year for us. We continue to run the mill 24 hours a day, five days a week.

Inside this newsletter, you'll read that we've added Austin Davis to our team of sales nutritionists, and we expect him and the rest of our team to grow our business. We'll miss Kenny Loebertmann when he retires in December. He's driven truck with us for more than 30 years, and we wish him well.

We've recently hired a couple truck-drivers-in-training, so we're ready to fill the gap when Kenny does retire.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! We look forward to working with you in 2018. As always, we will continue to honor Our Mission, printed at right. ●

## 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.*

**MUNSON LAKES NUTRITION DIRECTORY**

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