

Landview Farm LLC

Partners: Rody & Jane Walker, Randy Walker, Mark Anderson
White Creek, New York



- Well-structured partnership with family & non-family partners
- Milk 1050-1075 cows
- Average 91lbs/cow
- SCC– 140,000-160,000
- Satellite farm-Venture Dairy, Milk 325 cows
- SCC 60,000-75,000
- Haul own milk
- Crop 2,400 acres



- Venture Dairy is a rented satellite farm in Cambridge where bred, low somatic cell cows are milked after peak milk.
- A partnership between Randy and Mark
- Because of time spent to thoughtfully develop a partnership agreement, when a third partner walked away after losing interest in Venture Dairy, business continued smoothly.
- Crops purchased from farm owner.



- Most recent project was bringing home all the heifers. Randy spent a winter & spring touring barns and designed a very efficient barn. The extra couple hours of daily labor for 650 heifers required no new employees and increased labor efficiency greatly.
- 4 diets, 1 1/4 hr to feed.
- Foot baths; heifers have no warts



- The key was designing stalls to fit each age group of heifers and a chain-driven continuous alley scraper. No bedding is used. Heifers are clean. There is less manure to spread because there is no bedding.
- Home-grown heifers gave 7 lbs more milk during the first year of transition.



- Key to successfully bringing heifers home was Donna Horton who raises the calves. After 400 calves in 2 years, there has been no mortality.
- Calves are fed pasteurized milk.
- After individual hutches, calves are grouped into super hutches.





- A barn built in 2008 to prevent over-crowding. Herd grew to 900 cows, but there was no milk response to less crowding.
- Manure is scraped into short-term pits at ends of barns and then spread or pumped to the lagoon.
- At times manure is daily spread in winter to make use of available labor.



- Dry cow barn
- Sand bedding for the dairy—half with mattresses and half is deep sand.



- Average 91 lbs per cow per day, w/ rBST
- Participated in Livestock Gross Margin— Dairy & forward contracted milk with disappointments
- TMR diet, 54% forage for high group. Have had no success with high-forage diets.
- Have a high cull rate (37%) because of high criteria. Cull first on poor reproduction and then at < 70 lbs milk.
- Six milking groups: fresh, peak, two high groups, low group, and first calf heifers.
- Analyze refusals and weigh them back.



- Maternity area



- Rather than spend >\$100K for a new bulk tank and have unreliable milk pick, the partners decided to haul their own milk to Hartford, CT—Morning Star Dairy.
- This has been a profitable decision.



Labor and General Management

- Very little employee turnover. Night-time herdsman has 25 years. Time working at Landview for other employees is mostly 5 to 14 years.
 - Pay well. No perks. Time flexibility. Conduct exit interviews. No written standard operating procedures.
- Quarterly Staff meeting with Hispanic workers.
 - Some partners speak Spanish and every week an outside Spanish-speaking professional comes to facilitate communication.
 - The soccer net in the pictures is a clue that management pays attention to create a positive work environment.
 - Daily morning meetings between Mark and Randy.
 - Quarterly partner meeting with an outside financial advisor.
 - Have spent several years increasing efficiency. Now focusing on profitability.

Crops—Soil Health is the Key

- The benefits of soil health were driven home by a “dead” field that was newly rented. Turning under a single rye cover crop brought the soil back to life and the crops responded.
- Own 1000 acres and rent 1400. Use a standard rental contract and make modifications.
- Grew BMR corn silage for 5 years, but have switched to none in 2013. Experienced only a 3—4% increase in digestibility with a 5—6 ton/acre yield drag.



- Haul manure long distances and incorporate with an aeration tillage tool as often as possible.
- Rye seed is spread with manure. 500 to 800 acres of cover crops.
- Triticale is harvested for feed.



- One-pass corn planting with a 6-row planter pulled behind a 6-row zone-builder.
- Zone-builder has improved corn production, especially in wet spots.
- 2013 crop either totally drowned out from the rain, or has grown evenly.
- Soil health is improving, but have not yet reached their goal.



- Zone-builder shank is followed by two wavy coulters (towed out) which hills the soil 4 inches and is then firmed by a rolling basket.
- This provides a tilled raised strip, which improves soil warming and reduces water-logging.



- Most of the crop spraying and fertilizer spreading is done in-house.
- Carovail did some this year.
- A simple light-bar has helped improve application efficiency by reducing overlap. 10% less fertilizer is used with a light bar.
- Landview is still trying to incorporate the use of yield monitors and yield mapping.



Good people and good cows are what make this dairy successful.

Thanks to Rody, Jane, Randy and Mark and their wives for a great dairy tour.