Producer’s View of Staying Ahead in the Dairy Business: 
Staying Ahead – Wisconsin Style

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STAYING AHEAD-
WISCONSIN STYLE 
(OR AT LEAST TRYING TO)
Don Niles DVM
Dairy Dreams LLC

Overview and History of Kewaunee County
• 2nd highest cows/sq mile east of Rockies
• More cows (42,000) than people (30,000)
• More digesters than any other county
• Tremendous dairy heritage
• Strong political support from both parties in Madison
Wisconsin Cow and Herd Trends

Kewaunee County #’s Up!
Wisconsin Production Trends

USA- Top Dairy Counties
Wisconsin Trend vs Kewaunee Since 1975

Overview and History of Dairy Dreams
Overview and History of Dairy Dreams

- Partnership of Don Niles and John Pagel
- Started milking cows in 2002
- Several planned expansions from 1200 to 2800
  - 2004 expanded to 1400 all on one site
  - 2006 expanded to 2100 brought calves home
  - 2008 expanded to 2500
  - 2010 built digester
  - 2012 brought all young stock home

Recent Shockwave of Environmentalist Activity
So What Does “Staying Ahead” Mean Now?
Two Controlling Factors

- The rest of the dairy industry is constantly improving
  - 3000 cows and competent is no longer a guarantee of success in Wisconsin

- More cows (and more manure) may not be a local option

Dairy Dream’s Idea of “Staying Ahead”

- We need to continue to extract more value from our current footprint
  - Not a new idea, but a heightened focus
- We need to create and fill a niche as a “Preferred Manure Producer” of Kewaunee County
## Extracting More Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Milk/Cow</th>
<th>ECM/Cow</th>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>82.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td></td>
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Extracting More Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Milk/Cow</th>
<th>ECM/Cow</th>
<th>Milk/Facility</th>
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<tr>
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<td>86.8</td>
<td>92.6</td>
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Improving and Preserving Genetic Progress

- Preserving
  - Focus on DOA's, Calf mortalities, Fresh culls and deads
  - Goal from birth to fresh is 95%
  - Goal for <60 day culls and deads is 5.0%
Maternity Protocols

Calf Protocols
Improving and Preserving Genetic Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DOA</th>
<th>&lt;60 cull</th>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Preserving**
  - Focus on DOA’s, Calf mortalities, Fresh culls and deads
  - Goal from birth to fresh is 95%
  - Goal for <60 day culls and deads is 5.0%

- **Improving**
  - Stratify herd into genetic “donors” and “non-donors”
    - Non-donors
      - Beef crosses
      - Embryo surrogates - Rent a Uterus
    - Donors
      - Sexed semen to meet herd needs
How much excess resource?

- With 90% survival, no sexed semen, 50% heifers and a 45% cull rate can be supported.
- Therefore, with a 35% cull rate, 30% of the heifer resource will be extraneous.
- How can that excess 30% be put to most profitable use?
- If my heifer resource is worth $2,244,350 I am talking about managing $673,305 for greater profit.
Make greater use of a strategic DNB program.

- Aggressive, focused DNB program
- Examples
  - >3 lact
  - Relv < 90
  - Mast/SCC
    - Save cost of tx and higher risk of reoccurrence
- This is the only tactic which doesn’t require a dry period (cost $250?)
- High value fat cull vs low value fresh cull (difference?)
- Best in a BST environment

Preferred Manure Producer

- Methane digester
  - Pathogen reduction
  - Odor reduction
  - Renewable power production

- Advanced manure processing
  - Explore new technologies
    - Nitrogen and phosphorus control