

Dairy Farm Sustainability Award Winners

Robert James
Professor Emeritus – Virginia Tech Dept. of Dairy Science
3570 Indian Meadow Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24060
Email: Jamere60@gmail.com

When one considers the term “sustainability” the first thing that may come to mind pertains to sustaining our environment, which is undoubtedly extremely important. Nearly all farms strive to be good stewards of their environment. However, other factors need to be considered as well if the farm is to grow and prosper in the future. The environmental practices need to be economically sustainable as well. Sustainability also means that the farm must be well managed financially to continue its operation for years to come under very varying economic conditions that have become more common in our global dairy industry. Farms also need to be good neighbors and members of their community which has become increasingly important as our population grows and farms are increasingly faced with urban and suburban encroachment. Finally, in order to be sustainable the farm should have some farm succession plan. How will this operation continue to operate as business partners or family members age? Do conditions exist for the younger generation want to “sustain” the farm. I am pleased to present three recipients of the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards presented by the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. These awards are sponsored by Delaval, U.S. E.P.A., Elanco, World Wildlife Fund, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Syngenta, CTIC, DSM, Milk PeP and the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives. These panel members will share what makes them passionate about the future for their farm and the dairy industry.

Werkhoven Dairy – Monroe, Washington.

Jim and Andy Werkhoven

andy@werkhovendairy.com

Daryl Williams – Tulalip Tribe

dwilliams@tulaliptribes-nsn.gov

Werkhoven Dairy was faced with rising land values and encroachment of suburbia from Seattle just to the south of their farm. Today, the Werkhoven family is thrilled to be part of an alliance with the local Tulalip Tribe to form Qualco, a nonprofit organization with the goal to generate revenue through tipping fees and power generation to pay for multiple projects. These projects include recycling waste material, fish and wildlife habitat restoration, generation of renewable energy and the adoption of state of the art farming practices. Andy and Daryl will share their experiences in establishing this joint effort which has seen benefits to the environment, wildlife, Werkhoven Dairy, the Tulalip Tribe and the community. Through his involvement with the Werkhoven’s, Daryl has become more informed about agriculture which has led to his involvement with environmental policy and issues on a local and statewide level. The Werkhoven’s love the slogan: “Cows are better

than condo's". Through Qualco Energy, cows and people do their jobs to help preserve the land for agricultural use and the environment.

Bateman's Mosida Farms – Elberta, UT

Jason Bateman

jasonjbateman@gmail.com

The Bateman's have a history of dairy farming in Utah that spans 150 years. They have grown their dairy to be the largest in Utah with over 7,000 milking cows. Along with their father, four brothers currently own and operate the farm. They have a philosophy of continuing improvement which has led to numerous improvements to their operations sustainability. Recognizing the importance of close up and fresh cow comfort and management they constructed a state of the art, environmentally controlled maternity barns that has improved health of fresh cows, heifers and calves. A dual manure management and sand reclamation system allows them to more effectively utilize manure nutrients for cropping, improve cow comfort and recycle sand thereby reducing costs and fuel use. Looking towards the future and to make the farm more attractive for future generations a solar energy project is underway. The Bateman's use farm tours to demonstrate that large dairy farms can be excellent stewards of the environment and provide excellent animal care.

Homestead Dairy – Plymouth, IN

Brian Houin

brian@homesteaddairy.com

Our mission is to supply the highest quality agricultural products in a sustainable way, while creating a positive impact for cows, business and community. This mission statement from Homestead Dairy is a great indicator of why this family farm was selected for a 2016 sustainability award. Over the years the farm has expanded to its current size of 2,400 milking cows, bringing in four next generation families in what comprises a spirit of continuous improvement using a wide range of technologies including:

- Converting to 100% renewable bedding materials.
- Creating 800 kilowatts of energy daily from cow manure.
- Increasing efficiencies of young calf growth and management by converting to automatic calf feeders.
- Communicating the farm's dedication to sustainability by hosting farm tours and being active members of the local community.

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