



Dairy's Bottom Line

Succession Plan: Start Early, Review Frequently

It's been said that "without some goal toward which to work, life settles for activity, rather than accomplishment." Keep that in mind should you question the need to establish a formal farm transfer and estate plan.

For over 30 years, George Twohig of the law firm, Twohig, Rietbrock and Schneider, in Chilton, has worked farm families statewide. He recognizes there are still producers who question the benefit, time commitment and cost of formal planning. "We're a family," they reason. "We get along well. If it's not broke, why change things." Others are too busy; they don't have time for a lot of meetings. However, the farm family's goals and objectives are best accomplished by developing clear understandings within the family, timely lifetime transfers and sharing of ownership and management and a complete farm transfer and estate plan.

Farm parents often share common goals and objectives:

- They want continued financial security and independence, adequate income and, often, ongoing involvement in management and ownership, with the father wanting to keep working as long as his health permits
- They want to protect the farm and each owner's personal estate from the risk of: casualty losses and lawsuits, failure due to mismanagement or a bad economy, the death of either parent or an on-farm heir and expenses of illness including long-term care
- They want to continue reinvesting farm profits so the farm will remain competitive and profitable
- They want to transfer the farm's management and ownership to committed and capable family

members, without too much debt

- They want to maintain family harmony and good relations between "on-farm" and "off-farm" heirs and to treat off-farm children fairly
- They want to avoid income and estate taxes
- They want to avoid the delays, expenses and public disclosures of probate, to the extent practical

Twohig says it's helpful for farm parents to keep in mind five "basic truths" when embarking on succession and estate planning:

No. 1: Involved children believe they have earned the right to take over the farm's management and ownership through their years of work and commitment.

No. 2: It's hard to share, and eventually give up, management and control and to watch things being done in a different way.

No. 3: Ongoing open and honest communication are essential as parents and children often have different management styles and need to develop shared business goals while respecting differing personal goals and lifestyles.

No. 4: Farms are "asset heavy and cash tight, which make farm transfers difficult" says Twohig. Therefore, transfers usually require gifts and bargain sales to the next generation during life or upon the parents' deaths.

No. 5: When transferring, parents must carefully protect their financial security and assure themselves of adequate long-term income.

There's far more involved in farm transfer and estate planning than visiting a lawyer and signing legal documents. It starts, says Twohig, with assessing your current situation – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

to the farm. The parents need to objectively assess each on-farm heir's skills, commitment, role and performance and the farm's resources, financial needs and the family's commitment to the farm's growth and development.



George Twohig

The parents and on-farm heirs must take the time to develop a vision, mission, goals and objectives for the farm. "Set priorities and gain shared values," Twohig directs.

Then, with the help of quality advisors, the family can develop a plan for future farm operations and transfers of ownership and management. What changes might need to be made in terms of facilities and labor? How can the farm better focus on net profit rather than gross production? How should the farm be legally structured? When should transfers of ownership begin? What provisions should be included in the estate plan to assure that the farm will effectively transfer if either or both parents die?

Farm parents need to develop a written plan for transfer of the farm management and equity – either within the family or to an outside owner. The succession plan documents the family's understanding about how, when and over what time management and ownership will transfer, while the estate plan assures that the transfer will be completed in the event of an untimely death.

Farmers realize that the farm's ongoing income will be the source

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PDPW Kicks Off Educational Year With Manure Management Systems And Dairy Technology Tours

Don't miss the Manure Management Systems and Dairy Technology Tours, Sept. 25, 26 and 27, coordinated by Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin.

Tuesday, Sept. 25

On Tuesday, Sept. 25 the bus departs from Sleep Inn, Corner of Highway 29 and County Road T (Eau Claire Travel Center) at 8:30 a.m. and returns at 5 p.m.

- Five Star Dairy, Elk Mound - Built in 2000, Five Star Dairy includes a 900-cow dairy operation and Stargest Power LLC, a manure digester. Learn how this dairy fulfills its mission to produce milk profitably and maintain environmental harmony.

- Emerald Dairy, Emerald - Currently milking 1,200 cows, Emerald Dairy demonstrates exceptional cow comfort and energy efficiency. This tour highlights an anaerobic digester and showcases how they utilize solids and liquids.

- Jon-De Farm, Inc. - Featuring a sand separator system, Jon-De Farm opens the doors to their 1,700-cow operation to share the positive effects they discovered with sand bedding. Learn about their environmental management system, and how their business grew on this multi-partner dairy.

Wednesday, Sept. 26

On Wednesday, the bus departs from Fleet Farm on Highway 10 (1 mile east of Highway 51) at 8:30 a.m. and returns at approximately 5 p.m.

- Van Der Geest Dairy, Merrill - Learn about the business of this 3,000-cow family-

run dairy who is pioneering in nearly every way. See their manure separation system, rotary drum dryer and two-stage lagoon. You will discover technology at every turn of this operation!

- Badger Holsteins, Unity - This tour stop will showcase the Meyer family, their 600-cow dairy and the operation's solid and sand separation system. Hear about the planning, constructing and implementation of their manure system.

- Gordondale Farms, Nelsonville - This 900-cow dairy and 300-sow farrow-to-finish operation features a unique multi-generational business and an effective nutrient management system. Highlights include an aerobic digester with a gravity flush-flume system and screw press that separates the fiber used for bedding.

Thursday, Sept. 27

On Thursday, the bus departs from Marriott-Madison West (exit Greenway Blvd.) at 8:30 a.m. and returns at approximately 5 p.m.

- Cottonwood Dairy, South Wayne - This dairy switched to sand bedding in 2004. Today Cottonwood Dairy's 1,250-cow operation uses a flush-flume system, utilizing two gravity settling lanes and a solid separator.

- Bedrock Bovines, Brodhead - Showcasing their sand separation system, this tour of Bedrock Bovines' 700-cow dairy will highlight their nutrient management system. You will learn about their manure process from the mechanical scraper to the agitation pit to the separator.

- Larson Acres, Evansville - See how this 1,200-cow dairy business manages their sand separator with mechanical auger and two-stage lagoon. Also, hear about the water purification system that the dairy will be adding to their operation.

Thank you to our tour sponsors - M.P.B. Builders, Inc., Grow Wisconsin Dairy Team, Investors Community Bank, McLanahan Corporation, Focus On Energy and Foxland Harvestore Inc.

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Van Der Geest Cows Produce Fuel For Manure Dryer

Cows produce more than milk at Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle, Inc. They also produce fuel.

This 3,000 milking cow farm near Wausau - like others participating in the Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin (PDPW) Manure Management System Tours - employs a mix of technologies. On Sept. 26, tour participants will get to see them, including the manure solids dryer that's fueled by burning manure.

"We separate the manure solids and run them through a rotary drum dryer," explains Lee Van Der Geest, the farm's crops manager and son of Mary Kay Van Der Geest, the farm's owner and office manager. "Fifty percent of the product that comes off the dryer goes for fuel to make heat for (more) drying, and the other 50 percent goes for animal bedding."

Manure from the freestall barn goes to a reception pit. Then it's pumped across a slope-screen separator. The liquid portion of the manure drops through, while the manure solids travel to a screw press. From there the solids get augered to the drum dryer.

The Van Der Geests installed the manure dryer two years ago. Lee says the device works well, but the farm would like get more solids out of the manure.

"Right now we're getting about 30 percent of the total solids out of the mix," he says. "We're looking at other treatment processes to hopefully get more solids out, to have more bedding product."

The manure dryer has let the Van Der Geests stop buying five semi loads of kiln-dried sawdust per week. Besides eliminating that cost, Lee says they can bed the cows more often, using dried manure solids. And, they have the luxury of using more bedding per stall.

Milk production stayed pretty much steady after they made the switch from saw-

dust to dried manure solids, Lee says. But the somatic cell count (SCC) dropped.

In addition, he says the cows seem to prefer the dried solids over sawdust. For one thing, the solids are softer. For another, sawdust contained the occasional twig that detracted from cow comfort.

"There's no bacteria in this product when it comes out of the dryer," Lee points out. "It's taken up above 1,000 degrees. All bacteria and pathogens are killed."

The manure dryer offers another benefit. It eliminated the hauling of some 4,000 truckloads of manure solids that used to get applied to fields.

The dryer takes care of bedded-pack manure, too. Once a month, bedded-pack areas are cleaned and off the material goes to the dryer.

Lee says this drying technology could fit onto many dairy operations.

"Something like this could work for a compost barn," he says. "It could work for any size dairy, I would say, from 300 cows up. The equipment can be sized according to what the operation needs."

Van Der Geest Dairy uses other manure management technology, too. Exhaust gas from the dryer, along with liquid from the separators, is pumped to a sealed concrete oxygenation trench.

There, oxygen is added and "air scrubbing" occurs, using four rotors that beat the liquid. The splashing eliminates ammonia, while the heat and oxygen help aerobic bacteria grow. This system, say the Van Der Geests, is similar to what municipal wastewater systems use.

Next the liquid is pumped to a lagoon where it's aerated and the recycled water is pumped and recirculated through the oxygenation trench. Two million gallons of liquid undergoes this process approximately five times a day.



Replacement Bedding

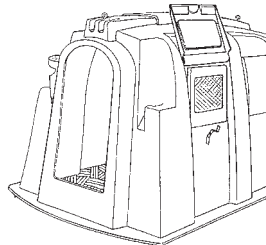
This manure dryer has helped replace sawdust at Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle, Inc., allowing the Van Der Geests to save money on bedding. They are also able to bed more often and use more bedding per stall.

Submitted photo

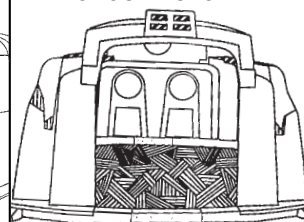
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See Dryer, on Page 13

"I have had so many opportunities for growth by attending the many seminars and conferences that PDPW has offered. By networking with others involved in the dairy industry, I have learned many things to try back home or been given information to think about. These opportunities have also increased my pride in being dairy farmer."

~Joe Thome, Redtail Ridge Dairy, Malone

Manage Stress, Prevent Farm Accidents

Fall harvest is busiest and most hazardous season. Stress contributes to farm accidents. Dairy producers who are already running on empty emotionally and physically simply won't have anything extra to give when the crops are ready to go.

No matter how good your management skills, farming is a career that's inherently stressful. There's the weather to deal with. Animals get sick. Machinery breaks down. Employees resign. And the work never ends. Milk prices are good (at the moment), but operating costs are also high.

Much of what a producer deals with – day to day, month to month, year to year – is uncontrollable and unpredictable (i.e. government policies, markets, Mother Nature). Ambiguity is also stressful. For instance, selling commodities – you never really know for sure if the time is right.

Chronic, prolonged stress

impacts your body and emotions, relationships, the business. It can result in poor decision-making and increase your risk of a farm accident. It can wear producers down and empty their tanks, so that when they need to kick it in gear (like fall harvest), they have nothing extra to give, says Roger Williams, Cottage Grove.

Williams is a private consultant in the areas of stress management, team-building, conflict resolution and men's issues. He also does mediation related to farm family/business issues, other small businesses and workplace and church conflicts. Williams, who has a PhD in adult and continuing education from UW-Madison, grew up on a dairy farm in Waukesha County. His older brother is still farming land that's been in their family since 1847. Williams was a UW-Madison professor for 33 years in continuing education and chairman of the Department of Professional

Development and Applied Studies for 15 years.

Williams career accomplishments include Sowing Seeds of Hope, a seven state initiative responding to farm family distress. That project provides getaways annually for farm couples, farm women, farm men and families, where producers can refresh and connect with one another. There's also a voucher program that provides five counseling sessions for producers in need of counseling but have no way to pay. He's also established the Harvest of Hope Fund, a faith-based fund that provides grants to Wisconsin farm families in times of need. Farmers fill out a simple one-page application to receive up to \$1,000 grant that is repaid if and when they're able to do so. Needs might include: A house or barn fire, medical or vet bills, spring planting costs, and other financial hardships.

See Stress, on Page 6

OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR

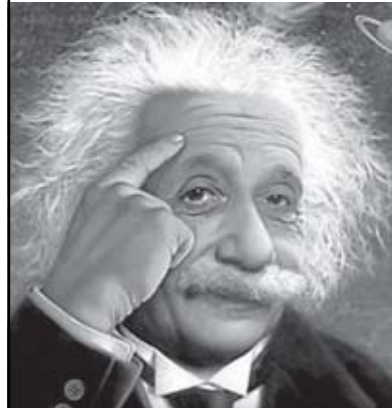
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Stress

Continued from Page 4

"What's abundantly clear is that producers can deal with short-term stress, but chronic, prolonged stress creates sleep disturbances, exhaustion, irritability, memory loss and lack of concentration. Then some bring a six-pack with them in the combine," he states. "When you're just not as focused on your work, accidents happen."

"We're coming into a very busy season. Night-time operation increases the chances of accidents as well," he contends. "When a farmer doesn't have the good sense to shut down, he's setting himself up for a major accident."

Mark Purschwitz, research engineer in ag safety at the National Farm Medicine Center in Marshfield, agrees. "When people are under stress, they're preoccupied, thinking about other things. They're more easily distracted, irritable; they get more tired. It can lead to injuries."

When producers are under stress for long periods of time, they're apt to experience a number of signs and symptoms:

- Physical – Headaches, ulcers, backaches, eating irregularities, sleep disturbances, frequent sickness, exhaustion
- Emotional – Sadness, depression, bitterness, anger, anxiety, loss of spirit, loss of humor
- Behavioral – Irritability, backbiting, acting out, withdrawal (stop attending church, drop out of 4-H or other groups), passive-aggressiveness, alcohol use, violence, reduced activity (doing anything is just too much of an effort)
- Cognitive – Memory loss, lack of concentration, inability to make decisions
- Self-esteem – Thoughts like "I'm a failure," "I blew it," "Why can't I...?"

Another telltale sign of stress in a family is appearance. The family no longer takes pride in the way the farm buildings and grounds appear or no longer has time to do maintenance work. The appearance of the farmer himself changes (i.e. sad face, unkempt look, slow move-

ments).

Children will also show signs of stress. They may act out and decline in academic performance.

Differences noted

Just as no two farm operations are alike, producers also differ in the amount of stress they can handle. According to Iowa State University, even under similar circumstances, operators vary in the amount of stress they experience. Some producers face one calamity after another; nothing ever seems to go right for them, yet they experience low levels of stress because they've developed effective ways to cope. Others seem to have it all together. Their farmstead is neat as a pin. Their kids excel in everything. They serve on multiple boards and are frequently asked to speak at producer meetings. Yet the pressures of farming exceed their coping resources and chronic stress whittles away at their health and happiness.

According to the ISU experts, studies show that:

- Younger producers report more stress than older farmers
- Those in dairy or mixed grain and livestock operations report higher stress levels than cash-grain producers
- Farmers employed in off-farm jobs report more stress than full-time operators
- Farm women experience additional stressors; besides working as a full partner in the farm business, many carry full responsibility for home and family matters. On top of those multiple roles, many farm women also have off-farm jobs with their own set of difficult demands – in addition to being the traditional nurturer for the rest of the family.

Williams says the stressors in farming today are different than in the '80s, when the "farm crisis" got agriculture looking at stress in a serious way for the first time. Back then, land values had plummeted. Farmers couldn't meet their debts. Farms were being lost.

See Different, on Page 14

Emerald Dairy Uses Blend of Technologies

If you're looking for manure management technology, Emerald Dairy is a must-see. The 1,200-cow operation owned by John Vrieze and Dan Goodwin uses a blend of technologies.

Emerald Dairy is the Sept. 25 stop for the Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin (PDPW) Manure Management Systems Tour.

Some of it has become fairly common among larger dairy farms. There's a covered manure lagoon, an anaerobic digester, and a manure solids separator.

But Emerald Dairy also employs a bit of cutting-edge technology. For example, a water clarification system has been installed and is being used part-time. Meanwhile, a biogas cleaner is operating, too.

Here's how the various segments fit together.

All manure from the operation goes into the anaerobic digester. It's the plug-flow vari-

ety – essentially a concrete tank underground.

The methane gas that's a product of the anaerobic digestion is used – just as it's used on many farms that utilize digesters. But here's the Emerald Dairy twist: Instead of burning the methane to power a generator and create electricity, the biogas goes to an on-farm cleaning facility, where impurities are removed.

From there the cleaned gas – now essentially "natural" gas – gets pumped into a semi tanker. From the farm, this cow-produced natural gas is trucked to the nearby community of Baldwin.

There it's injected into a natural gas pipeline that, Vrieze says, stretches all the way from the Gulf of Mexico

to Minneapolis, Minn. Blended with the rest of the natural gas, it's used by homes and industries.

Digested manure then has its liquid portion clarified. The result, Vrieze says, is "clean water" that's drinkable. Emerald Dairy has a permit to deposit that clarified water in a wetland on the farm but had not yet done so. But if conditions – such as a drought – warrant, that water could be provided to the cows for drinking.

After the liquids have been removed and clarified, the manure goes to the farm's 12-million-gallon lagoon. Much of these digested manure solids are applied to fields, as fertilizer. Meanwhile, some of the solids are used for bedding in the freestall barns.

The farm's manure lagoon is covered with a layer of polyurethane. A few years ago, the cover was used partly to con-



John Vrieze

"PDPW has always challenged us to think of ourselves more as a business - the cow milking business. A way of life is ok, but you need to make a profit too! PDPW has been great at identifying areas of interest and issues that need to be addressed and finding speakers and programs to get the word out. We see them as educational and a good network of individuals."

~Debbie Crave, Craves Brothers Farm LLC, Waterloo

See Emerald, on Page 10

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Succession

Continued from Page 1

of funds necessary to purchase the farm's future assets, pay debt, provide income for the parents and on-farm heirs, to purchase a withdrawing or deceased member's equity and even to pay for life insurance or outside investments. Twohig says the goal shouldn't be to build a farm transfer or estate plan with the idea that life insurance or investment products will solve transfer problems. The goal should be to create and document a plan for the farm's transfer that will not impede the farm's future, using "products" only when the best alternative.

But planning is not finished after documents are signed. Farmers need to review progress and "communicate and then communicate some more," says Twohig.

You can't draw up a farm transfer and estate plan and accompanying legal documents, then place them in the safe or lock box and forget them.

Succession and estate planning is a "process," not an "event," says Twohig.

"What appears to work well on paper has to work in practice," this farm legal expert stresses, noting, for instance, that increased farm assets and farmland values and existing farm debt can make a purchase formula that appeared to work even a couple years ago "not work" today. Prices and terms must be practical given the available farm income, he stresses. Often, the parents' farm interests must be transferred as a gift or at a substantially reduced price so that the on-farm heirs can continue to reinvest profits in the farm's future.

Buy-sell agreements are an important component when on-farm heirs become co-owners. Twohig says in exchange for the opportunity to take over the farm, the next generation must be financially tied or "penalized" for leaving early. "The commitment must be from both genera-

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tions," he says, adding that the time to start actual transfers of ownership is when the "parents are absolutely convinced the farm is the successors' permanent career" and "they won't be leaving."

When beneficial, life insurance can play an important role in farm succession and estate planning. Life insurance can be used to provide cash to pay estate and income taxes; to provide cash to pay or reduce loans and debts; to partially fund the purchase of a deceased owner's interest in the farm; and for "estate equalization" or money for off-farm heirs. Correct policy ownership and beneficiary designation is critical, Twohig reminds.

Twohig says estate planning should actually be viewed as "final protection" if you don't accomplish the full transfer of the farm to the next generation during your lifetime or if farm assets are intentionally retained by the parents for tax or estate planning purposes. A well-developed estate plan assures that the family's shared goals and objectives that have been developed continue to move toward accomplishment after death, he notes, cautioning that estate planning is not simply a "will."

Wisconsin estate planning attorneys can use a number of methods, often in combination, to assist farmers in avoiding court probate. A Living Trust and Marital Property Agreement are generally used for larger farm estates or when planning farm transfer to the next generation. The decedent's estate can be transferred, without probate, by titling assets to the Living Trust before death or at death,

by non-probate transfer to the Living Trust under the Marital Property Agreement.

In smaller farm estates, probate can be avoided by titling assets as survivorship marital property, by Transfer on Death Deeds, by non-probate transfer directly to children through a Marital Property Agreement or through a simple Living Trust.

Twohig says that classifying appreciated property as marital property is important as the basis will receive a full step-up in basis to fair market value on the death of either spouse. This permits the surviving spouse, or the heirs on the surviving spouse's death, to sell farm assets to heirs or third parties without income taxes or to take new depreciation on depreciable assets.

Parents must carefully consider their long-term retirement income needs before completely terminating ownership. "In the past, parents have often locked themselves into fixed incomes from installment sale of their farm assets," Twohig discusses. They must realize that expenses will increase with inflation and that when the next generation takes over, the milk check will no longer be available for discretionary income. Good off-farm investments or "diversification" can partially insulate the older generation from financial problems of successors and/or setbacks in the farm economy.

It's a complicated business and universal formulas cannot easily be applied, as every situation is unique. Producers can contact Twohig at 920-849-4999 or george@twohiglaw.com.

By Jane Fyksen

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– Emerald

Continued from Page 7

tain the gases given off by the stored manure. Those gases were not used, but simply flared. Now, with the anaerobic digester, there are no gases from the lagoon.

Even so, there are still benefits to keeping the lagoon covered. One of them is that rain and snow stay out, meaning there's no extra water to haul to fields along with the digested manure solids.

Vrieze says the multifaceted manure management system is working well. "So far so good," he comments.

"We can even put it (the cleaned biogas from the digester) in vehicles," he points out. "I've got a couple of vehicles that run on natural gas, so we can actually make our own gas here at the farm for those."

Dairy producers don't have to employ the entire system that Emerald Dairy does to reap some of the same benefits.

Speaking about the water

clarification setup, Vrieze says, "That equipment can be bolted onto anything. It doesn't have to be an anaerobic digester. You can bolt it onto a building that has green manure."

Reclaiming water from manure makes sense, he says.

"All the problems we have with manure, whether they're environmental or the cost, deals with the volume of all that water," he says. "It's nuts to have to store that water – that dirty water – and move all that dirty water to the fields. There's got to be a better way to do it than that. So it's really the industrialization of manure processing on dairies."

Vrieze says that while a lot of the technology Emerald Dairy is using is new and somewhat expensive, the cost will likely fall. That means dairy farmers might want to seize this opportunity to view it, to get an idea how they might one day apply it to their farms.

By Ron Johnson

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AgJOBS Bill Addresses Immigration Reform

The resurrection of an immigration bill isn't likely to happen this year – or next year which, after all, is a presidential election year.

But that doesn't mean nothing is being done at the federal level to address immigration reform.

To see where immigration is being addressed right now, one has to look at the AgJOBS bill, introduced last January which then became part of the Immigration Bill. When Congress twice failed to pass the Immigration Bill, AgJOBS is again receiving serious consideration.

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Larry Craig (R-Idaho), Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), Mel Martinez (R-Fla.), Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and George Voinovich (R-Ohio) last January introduced AgJOBS, which is also known as Senate Bill 340.

U.S. Senator Herb Kohl (D-Wis.) is one of 30 co-sponsors

of the measure and provided the following comment on the bill:

"AgJOBS is bipartisan legislation that was carefully crafted as a fair and pragmatic way to meet the workforce needs of agriculture all across the United States. We have some important segments of agriculture in Wisconsin that depend on reliable guest workers to fill the jobs that otherwise go unfilled by Americans. This bill goes a long way to improve the temporary agricultural worker program which will provide a legal and stable workforce for our farmers," Senator Kohl said.

In late July, Senator Feinstein spoke on the Senate floor of her intention to work to include AgJOBS as part of the 2007 Farm Bill.

Scott Gerber, communications director for Senator Feinstein, said "both Feinstein and Craig are looking for ways to move this legislation that

was part of the immigration bill, forward. We will be looking for ways to move it and that could be as an amendment to another bill."

AgJOBS is really a two-part bill. Part one would create a pilot program to identify undocumented agricultural workers and legalize the immigration status for those who have been working in the United States for the past two years or more.

The second part would create a more usable H-2A (applies to temporary foreign agricultural workers) program to implement a realistic and effective guest worker program.

AgJOBS summary

These provisions are part of the AgJOBS bill:

- Undocumented agriculture workers would be eligible for a "blue card" if they can demonstrate having worked in American agriculture for at

See Immigration, on Page 12

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– Immigration

Continued from Page 11
least 150 work days over the previous two years.

- The blue card would entitle the worker to a temporary legal resident status. The total number of blue cards would be capped at 1.5 million over a five-year period, and the program would sunset after five years.

- Blue card holders would be allowed to travel in and out of the United States.

- The spouses and minor children of blue card workers would be eligible to apply for a blue card if they already live in the United States. This would permit them to work and travel.

- Blue card holders would be allowed to work in other, non-agriculture jobs as long as the agriculture work requirements are met.

- The blue card holder would be required to work in American agriculture for an additional three years (working

at least 150 work days per year) or five years (working at least 100 work days per year), before becoming eligible to apply for a green card to become a permanent legal resident.

- Before applying for a green card, participants would be required to pay a fine of \$500, show that they are current on their taxes, and show that they have not been convicted of any crime that involves bodily injury, the threat of serious bodily injury, or harm to property in excess of \$500.

- The H2-A Program would be modified so that it realistically responds to agriculture's needs.

Similar language was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee during the 109th Congress and was included in the comprehensive immigration reform bill that passed the Senate.

By Joan Sanstadt



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Dryer

Continued from Page 3

Van Der Geest Dairy also irrigates some liquid manure. The farm 4.5 miles of buried pipe that goes under roads and streams. Once at a field, that liquid manure is immediately incorporated into the soil.

Says Lee, "It works out really well for us. It cuts back substantially on truck traffic and allows us to pump to satellite lagoons where we can load trucks away from the dairy here, two or three miles out and alleviate some truck traffic around here."

What's more, the farm employs a dragline hose behind a tractor and injector. Manure applied this way is injected two to three inches into the soil.

"There's no odor and no chance for runoff," Lee states. As for the farm's manure dryer, he says, "We're real happy with it."

By Ron Johnson

"PDPW is a great organization. I've gained a lot of knowledge and met a lot of different producers to network with. It's been very helpful, and I enjoy going to meeting and events."

~Terry Gaeu, Park Avenue Dairy LLC, Merrill

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- Different

Continued from Page 6

Farms have gotten larger. More acreage and more cows means more balls to juggle. Many producers manage labor. They've found themselves in new and unfamiliar roles, which can be stressful. Instead of dealing with crops and cattle, they're called upon to deal with people, including folks from a different culture. The stress is "in the intensity of the operation," says Williams. "They're stretched thin."

Further, the wife may be working off the farm. She's no longer at home in the support role, being able to run for parts at a moment's notice. She's not there to cook a good meal, to rake hay if needed, even something simple as rubbing her husband's tense shoulders. And when she gets home from her own stressful off-farm job, she has little to give in the way of support. There's laundry, canning, the kids clamoring for

attention.

Stress quiz

Take this ISU-generated quiz to find out how stressed you actually are. For each statement, consider whether you feel that way "rarely," "sometimes" or "often":

- I feel tense or anxious
- People or animals make me feel irritable
- I drink, smoke or take drugs to relax
- I have tension headaches or pain in the neck or shoulders
- I have trouble going to sleep or staying asleep
- I find it difficult to concentrate on what I'm doing
- I have a hard time finding time or being able to relax
- I feel sad or depressed for no good reason
- I feel tired even after I rest or sleep
- I argue with family or co-workers

See Quiz, on Page 15

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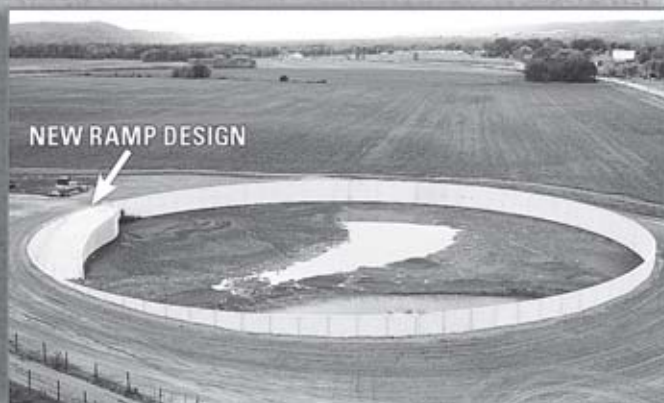
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"We appreciate the kindness and never-ending support of Jim Loefer and his team at CP Feeds," said Shelly Mayer, PDPW executive director. "The 'I Believe' campaign focuses on continuity and strengthening the future of the dairy industry, and we are thankful for their donation as we establish a legacy of learning for the

dairy industry."

Since kicking off the "I Believe" program nearly two years ago, the initiative has continued to grow in awareness and support from generous donors who believe in the future of the dairy industry.

To learn more or to support the future of the dairy industry through the PDPW Education Foundation, contact PDPW at 800-947-7379. Tax deductible gifts can be sent to PDPW Education Foundation, N5776 US Hwy 151, Suite 1, Fond du Lac, WI 54937.

Quiz

Continued from Page 14

• I give others the "silent treatment" when I'm upset.

Give yourself 0 points for every "rarely" answer, one point for every "sometimes" you jotted down, and two points for every time you answered "often." Scoring: 0 to 5 points – You probably

are handling stress well; 6 to 11 points – You could benefit from some stress reduction techniques; 12 points or more – Your stress is causing significant difficulties; it may be time to develop new strategies to cope with farming and family pressures.

By Jane Fyksen

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Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin Calendar of Events

Dairy Connect Issues Communications Training Madison Sept. 5
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Nutrient Management Dairy Tours NW, NE, SC Wisconsin Sept. 25, 26 & 27
Three separate one-day tours with an emphasis on manure handling facilities, systems and technologies.

Dairy Policy Summit Marriott West, Madison Oct. 30-31
A two-day conference that brings together dairy producers, legislators, regulators and local officials to address top-of-mind business and industry issues, exchange ideas and seek solutions.

Youth Leadership Derby Marshfield High School Nov. 3-4
A weekend lock-in intended to stimulate interest and excitement in production dairy careers for ages 15-18 with hands-on workshops and labs, one-of-a-kind tours, leadership and career skills.

National Dairy Issues Forum Madison Nov. 14-15
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-Kent Frydenlund, DVM,
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Cow Comfort Dictates Cottonwood Dairy's Manure Management

Cow comfort and milk production have helped dictate the manure management methods at Cottonwood Dairy. This Lafayette County operation near South Wayne milks 1,250 cows and prefers to pamper them with sand-bedded stalls.

Cottonwood Dairy is the Sept. 27 stop for the Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin (PDPW) Manure Management Systems Tour.

"We know what our herd has done on mattresses and sawdust, and we know what our herd has done on sand," says farm co-owner Jim Winn. "We'll do whatever it takes to make that sand work."

That "whatever it takes" has meant altering the manure system not once, but twice. Winn, who owns Cottonwood Dairy with local farmers Brian and Randy Larson, recalls that they started out nine years

ago with a simple gravity-flow setup.

Manure and soiled sawdust bedding went to a holding pit at one end of the barn. Once a day, the holding pit was opened and the contents flowed into a storage lagoon that got emptied spring and fall.

But, says Winn, "We had some issues with the mattresses and sawdust, so we wanted to go to sand. And we wanted to reclaim the sand."

So in 2004, Cottonwood Dairy installed a flush-flume and sand settling lanes. With the push of a button, pumps bring reclaimed wastewater from a lagoon and send it racing through the concrete flume. At the same time, a skid-loader operator scrapes manure into the flume, "and - boom - it's gone," Winn describes.

That is, the water, manure

and sand are gone from the barn and into one of two concrete sand settling lanes. Since sand particles are heavier than manure particles, they drop to the bottom, leaving manure and water to make their way into a 25,000-gallon tank. From there it's pumped to an "upper" lagoon that holds the solids.

In this upper lagoon, manure particles settle to the bottom, while the water "weeps" into a lower lagoon by way of a pair of pipes. It's this lower lagoon that provides the water for the flush flume.

That setup worked well until April of 2004. Winn recalls that "a couple of real warm days" made the upper lagoon "invert," or turn over. It's the same thing that happens to many lakes each spring and fall.

See Cottonwood, on Page 22



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Cottonwood

Continued from Page 18

This inverting brought solids from the bottom of the lagoon to the top. Eventually, these suspended solids migrated to the water lagoon, dirtying the water.

"I went out to change the sand lanes and the lane was full of manure," Winn says. "I went from flushing with good water to soup overnight."

To keep such an inversion from happening again, Cottonwood Dairy has installed four manure solids separators. These rotating drums equipped with screens let liquids run out. These liquids go to the water lagoon. Meanwhile, the separated solids go to the manure lagoon.

"For clean sand, you need clean water," says Winn. "It can be lagoon water, but it has to be free of debris."

With the solids separa-

tors in place, "There'll never be a chance of getting solids back in that water lagoon," he adds.

Just why is Cottonwood Dairy so sold on sand for bedding? Winn says the herd averaged 88 to 89 pounds of milk per cow per day with sawdust and mattresses. But only a week after all the stalls in the barns had been converted to deep-sand bedding, production had climbed 10 pounds a day – to an average of 98 pounds per cow per day.

"And we didn't change anything other than having them on sand," the dairyman emphasizes. "Sand is hard on equipment. I'll be the first to admit that. But I'd rather fix a few pieces of broken equipment than fix broken cows all the time."

By Ron Johnson

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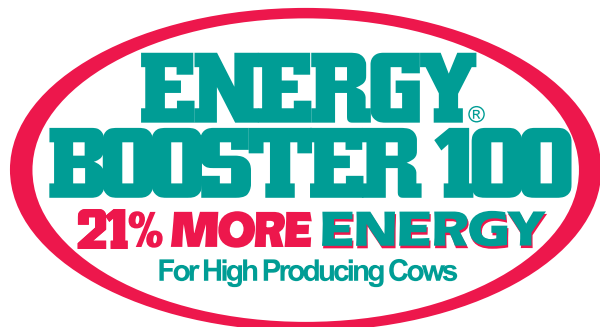
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