

OUTSTANDING DAIRY FARM SUSTAINABILITY

Dorrich Dairy Glenwood, Minnesota



Small solution has big impact on cow comfort, dairy success

The Volds, fourth-generation dairy farmers, are doing a lot of little things to ensure they can pass Dorrich Dairy, their 400-cow farm, to their children. One of those things could even be called tiny, but it has had a big impact.

Most summertime visitors to the Glenwood, Minnesota, farm notice there are hardly any flies buzzing around. What's their tiny secret? They are using wasps to fight flies.

Wasp larvae are placed in fly nests to consume fly pupae. Once the wasps hatch, they repeat the cycle as adults by planting their own larvae. Over time, through continuous monitoring and use of wasp larvae along with natural insecticides, Dorrich Dairy has maximized fly control while minimizing insecticide costs by 85 percent.

Reducing the number of flies is important to cow comfort, a key to producing more quality milk and keeping the farm viable.

"Cow health may be the one thing that keeps our business going, and that will help us with the next generation," says Suzanne Vold, who farms with her husband Brad, his brother Greg and Greg's wife Charity, and the Vold brothers' parents, Dorothy and Richard.

Using wasp larvae to control flies is just one part of an integrated pest management system, which they've used since 2009, that contributes to making their operation financially strong and environmentally sound.

"We've always had to depend on each other," says Richard Vold. "One generation has to depend on the next. We would not be here without my children's knowledge. And that was the same for my parents."

The Volds' innovative pest management system has resulted in:

- Dramatically reduced synthetic chemical use to control for flies
- 58 percent reduction in herbicides on corn silage
- 50 percent reduction in insecticides on soybeans
- 30 percent reduction in insecticides on alfalfa

85%

REDUCTION IN
INSECTICIDE COSTS