



**U.S. Dairy
Sustainability Awards**
Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy®

Brubaker Farms: *Center for Advanced Energy Studies/Idaho National Laboratory Award for Outstanding Achievement in Energy*

Leading the way to a sustainable future is exactly what this year's winner, Brubaker Farms of Mount Joy, Pa., is doing. The Brubaker family shared some of their best practices during a recent visit.

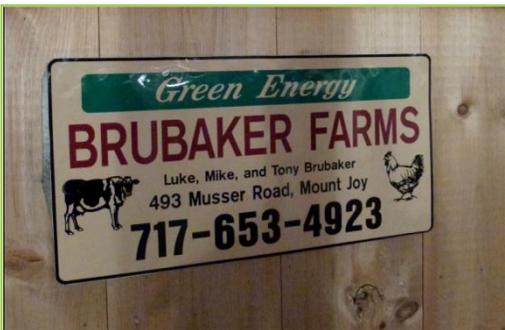
Sharing the message of sustainable dairy



On two recent occasions when Luke Brubaker hosted former Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman and the governor of Pennsylvania at Brubaker Farms in Mount Joy, Pa., you may have heard them discuss things like the viability of the dairy industry and the future of renewable energy on Brubaker Farms. Always the advocate for the dairy industry, Luke serves as chairman of the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board and has been a long-time board member of the Farmland Preservation Board of Lancaster County and Preservation Committees. He has hosted innumerable farm visitors to learn about the profitability of their manure digester system on their farm.

He also is an appreciated neighbor, father and dairy innovator. Whether meeting with state senators or school children, the Brubakers want to explain how their innovative smart practices have improved their energy efficiency. "Best management to some might sound like stress or a job, but best management practices mean money in the pocket," Luke says.

Brubaker family takes on role of educator



Elizabethtown sends a class of students out to the farm every semester to learn from the successful recycling model. Franklin Marshall has contacted Brubaker Farms to learn more about composting options. Luke Brubaker and his son Mike have hosted doctoral and master students, and they taught high school for a day at the behest of an agriculture teacher.

"I really like when students visit. Most of them are from nonfarm background and the questions they ask are really interesting. It reminds you why you're doing this," Mike says.



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A team approach to decision-making



What began as an eight-cow operation in 1929 is now a 950-cow, forward-thinking farm with Luke's sons Mike and Tony sharing partnership. Together with the local community, the Brubakers have developed a successful economic and environmental model for a manure digester system on a relatively small dairy farm. That model involves plenty of family meetings where Mike's wife Lisa, Tony's wife Rebecca, and Luke's wife Barb brainstorm potential projects for Brubaker Farms.

The younger generation is involved too, with the teenagers rooting for an ice cream parlor next. But Mike approaches this project with as much care and diligence as every other aspect of the operation. "That's what they're pushing for, and I said, 'I love your idea and I'd love to do it. We just need to make sure we can do it in a way that can survive long-term ... it has to be something special.'"

Manure management and more



Through the digester, the cow's manure, combined with food waste products from nearby Elizabethtown College, provides energy for a six-cylinder Guascor genset. That generator produces 200 kilowatts a day — enough to power approximately 200 local homes through the local utility grid. Underground lines run to the milking center, and the system's excess heat is enough to preheat water for the parlor and calf feeding prep room, break room, laundry machine and for pasteurizing calf milk in a 300-gallon tank.

The dried manure becomes ultrahygienic bedding for the cows. The liquid portion of the Brubakers' digested manure is a replacement for commercial fertilizer, saving money on purchases of all fertilizer. Today, the farm's neighbors enjoy the benefits of the nearly odorless digester.

To learn more about Brubaker Farms' sustainability initiatives, visit USDairy.com/Sustainability/Awards.