



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

DF-AP, LLC: Center for Advanced Energy Studies/Idaho National Laboratory Award for Outstanding Achievement in Energy

During a recent visit, DF-AP, LLC, shared how its innovative business model is delivering a win-win outcome near Gooding, Idaho.

Collaboration delivers results



DF-AP is the collaboration between Dean Foods Company and AgPower Partners that has tested, successfully, the economic and ecological viability of a dairy digester system that is built, owned and operated by a third-party developer.

The project, on Big Sky Dairy West near Gooding, Idaho, began in 2009. “Dean Foods joined us on this project to help us prove that the third-party owner-operator model was feasible and would be good for the dairy industry. We all believe the model is a success,” Bob Joblin, DF-AP project manager says.

Good neighbors and stewards of the land



Russel Visser, owner of Big Sky Dairy West, agrees. “We are very proud to be part of this successful project,” says Visser. “It is important to us to be good neighbors and stewards of the land, and through this project, we feel we’ve achieved both.”



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Producers able to focus on dairy



The model is designed to take the burden off the dairy producer to secure financing, operate the digester and sell the energy to utility companies. In this case, AgPower brings in investors who like the project for its long-term guaranteed and stable contracts, from manure to power. Bob Joblin focuses on negotiating favorable renewable energy and other revenue contracts as well as the financing. Andgar Corporation manages the system and ensures a smooth-running operation.

With these experts on the project, the dairy producers are free to focus on what they do best: caring for the animals and producing high-quality milk. For Marty Tolle, the Big Sky Dairy farm manager, the manure from their 4,700 cows is now a nonissue. Through the digester, the manure is converted to 1.2 megawatts of electricity, which is sold to Idaho Power. This provides enough energy for 900 homes, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



In addition to the electricity generation and sale, Big Sky West produces 34,000 cubic yards of ammonia-free fiber that is sold at retail as a landscape fertilizer. It can be used as an alternative to peat moss or compost material. According to Joblin, the going rate for compost is about \$3 a cubic yard; the digested fiber DF-AP produces sells for two to three times that price. On top of that, this new product can help prevent peat moss bogs from being overharvested, an environmental bonus.

Meanwhile, 40 percent of the solids from the digester provide for all of Big Sky Dairy's bedding needs. This reduces costs and benefits the cows. The fluid product that comes out of the digester is returned to Big Sky West as an organic fertilizer to apply directly to the crops, making it a sustainable cycle.

To learn more about DF-AP, LLC and this unique business model, visit USDairy.com/Sustainability/Awards.