



# McCarty Family Farms

Rexford, Kansas

**Winner: Outstanding Dairy Farm Sustainability**

## When every drop counts, a community flourishes

With a family history in farming that spans more than 90 years, the McCartys know what it takes to succeed. That's why they knew a major change was needed to brace for volatile milk pricing and water scarcity.

With ingenuity and a creative approach to addressing industry challenges, the McCartys run three full-scale dairy operations that produce 60,000 gallons of milk each day, as well as a state-of-the-art condensed milk processing plant in partnership with The Dannon Company, Inc., that extracts 39,000 gallons of water from the milk before it is transported each day.

## Best Practices

### 1 Partnership

#### Summary

From partnering with Dannon on developing the processing plant, to ensuring they work only with those that have a shared vision and values, the McCartys know how to work better together. They've even applied their successes from the Dannon partnership to other relationships, such as those with John Deere and Caterpillar, to ensure they have the most efficient equipment.

#### Key benefits

Partnering with Dannon provided the McCartys with access to experience and expertise that helped ensure the development of their condensed milk processing plant was successful. This plant allows the McCartys to employ a more economically stable business model that reduces volatile price swings, thus providing each partner with the advantage of having a more predictable budget forecast. For the McCartys, that advantage created the opportunity to invest in the community. In addition, the John Deere and Caterpillar partnerships help streamline unit servicing.



## 2 Local labor

### Summary

An operation the size of McCarty Family Farms takes many hands to keep running – 105, to be exact. That is a significant number in their sparsely populated area, so the McCartys focus on long-term hires who support families. The employee benefits package includes providing a home within a reasonable driving distance, as well as covering utility, insurance and upkeep costs. Today, the McCartys own or rent 70 homes for their employees.

### Key benefits

The McCartys' investment in their employees cultivates a sense of community and purpose. It also has improved the housing infrastructure in their communities and reinvigorated the local schools.

## 3 Water Conservation

### Summary

Every day, the McCartys are working toward their goal of achieving a water-neutral operation. The condensed milk processing plant helps meet that goal by extracting water from milk and allowing it to be used in other applications, such as cleaning the cows, feeding them water and, ultimately, irrigating crops.

### Key benefits

Each day, the processing plant extracts 39,000 gallons of water from milk. This not only creates significant savings and helps better defend the operation from the arid Kansas climate but also the savings continue because of reduced transportation needs. Today, 75 percent fewer trucks are used to transport the finished product.

The McCartys are helping other farmers realize similar successes, sharing their experiences via bus tours, farm visits and at major industry events, and they are not done making improvements to their business. They are continuing to explore options to further conserve water, as well as opportunities to improve their employees' and employees' families' lives.



The Sustainability Awards are part of the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Commitment, an industrywide effort to measure and improve the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the dairy industry. The award program recognizes dairy farms, businesses and collaborative partnerships for their contributions to healthy people, healthy products and a healthy planet and showcases that sustainability makes good business sense. An independent panel of judges evaluates all nominations based on the program's or project's results as measured by triple-bottom-line success – economic, environmental and social. For more information, please visit [USDairy.com/Sustainability/Awards](http://USDairy.com/Sustainability/Awards).