

Northeast



NORTHEAST REGIONAL WINNER Dimock Farms, LLC

Owners/Managers: Donald, Martha and Bruce Dimock
Location: Peru, New York
Nominated by: George Palmer, DVM,
Palmer Vet Clinic, Plattsburgh, New York
Herd Size: 244 cows
Production : 24,291 lb. milk (2X)
Somatic Cell Count (Avg. 12-month): 82,000
Somatic Cell Count (Low): 68,000
Somatic Cell Count (High): 100,000
Clinical Mastitis Cases (12 months): 20

Everyone at Dimock Farms contributes to the quality effort. Shown left to right: Martha Dimock, Ron Duprey (herdsman, standing), Michelle Edwards (kneeling), Anne Farrell, Bruce Dimock, Don Dimock and Adam Robertson.

No secrets, just hard work

Ask Don Dimock for the secret to producing quality milk and you'll get an immediate, "There are no secrets," says Dimock, who along with wife Martha and son Bruce, operates 245-cow Dimock Farms LLC near Peru, N.Y.

"It's a matter of keeping on top of a bunch of little things day in and day out."

Evidence that the Dimocks practice what they preach? During one recent 12-month period, somatic cell counts (SCC) for the herd averaged 82,000 cells/ml. During the same time frame, average standard plate count was 2,380 and average lab pasteurized count was 34. Milk production for the herd averaged 24,291 lb. milk with 3% protein and 3.9% butterfat on 2X milking.

Keeping cows clean, dry and comfortable in a 3-year old, 216-stall freestall barn is one of the little things emphasized by this family management team. After each group of cows leaves the barn for milking, sand-bedded stalls are given a thorough once-over with a rake. The goal is to remove debris and to fill in holes where moisture collects.

Fresh sand, purchased from a local sand and gravel company, is added to stalls every seven to 10 days. "We've been using sand since we first moved here 30-plus years ago," says Don. "I couldn't imagine using anything else. There's no organic matter in sand, so bacteria doesn't grow. And it's relatively inexpensive."

The Dimocks' effort to maintain a good freestall environment includes using automatic alley scrapers to move solids out of traffic lanes eight times a day.

They also avoid overcrowding in the barn. "We try not to exceed one cow per stall," says Don. "We learned years ago that overcrowding can lead to problems."

The payoff for all the work in the freestall comes when clean cows enter the double-10 herringbone parlor for milking. The milker—either herdsman Ron Duprey or one of two part-time milkers—starts with a light brushing of the udder to remove any dirt or debris. Teat ends are then sprayed with an iodine solution. After a minute, teats are

dried with individual paper towels. Before attaching units, quarters are forestripped to check for abnormalities.

The Dimocks rely on the service rep from a local buying association to change inflations after every 800 to 1,000 milkings. The rep also tests water twice a year, adjusting soap and acid levels for system clean up. Their equipment dealer checks the entire milking system once a year.

Don believes striving for quality pays off. "I'm convinced that keeping those somatic cell counts low boosts production," he says. "And making and selling milk is what we're in business for." Plus, quality bonuses from their handler, AgriMark, can run up to 30¢ per cwt.

"This family doesn't believe in taking short cuts," says herd veterinarian George Palmer, Palmer Veterinary Clinic in Plattsburgh, N.Y. "They're committed to doing whatever it takes to achieve such a low cell count and to produce milk of the highest quality."

NORTHEAST REGIONAL MERIT WINNERS

Coventry Valley Farm

Owners/Managers: Timothy Maikshilo and Kristen Dellert
Location: Irasburg, Vermont
Nominated by: Diane Bothfeld, Cooperative Relations Manager, St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Inc., St. Albans, Vermont
Herd Size: 45 cows
Production: 21,354 lb. milk (2X)
Somatic Cell Count (Avg. 12-month): 71,346
Somatic Cell Count (Low): 34,000
Somatic Cell Count (High): 180,000
Clinical mastitis cases (12 months): 1

Hildene Farms

Owners/Managers: Dave and Noreen Tillotson
Location: Wyoming, New York
Nominated by: Sara Gillette, Area Manager, Upstate Farms Co-op, Inc., Leroy, N.Y.
Herd Size: 522 cows
Production: 85 lb./cow/day, (3X)
Somatic Cell Count (Avg. 12-month): 110,000
Somatic Cell Count (Low): 70,000
Somatic Cell Count (High): 180,000
Clinical Mastitis Cases (12 months): 65