

## Northeast

# Complete, Comprehensive and Consistent

The Whittier family of Sutton, Mass.—John and Janice, sons Wayne and Todd, and Wayne's wife, Mary—has an extra incentive for producing quality milk. They market the milk from their 120-cow registered Holstein herd through their own processing plant and two retail dairy stores. "On the retail side, quality means longer shelf life and better taste, and that leads to more sales," says family spokesman Todd Whittier. "On the farm, focusing on quality means healthier cows and more production."

The family's dedication to producing quality definitely shows up in a set of numbers from one recent 12-month period. Somatic cell counts averaged 85,000 cells/ml.

"The Whittier family's attention to detail is complete, comprehensive and consistent," says IBA Inc.'s Lennart Petersson, who nominated Whittier Farms for the National Dairy Quality Award. "Their facilities and animals are

kept very clean. They're committed to maintaining the healthiest animals and achieving the highest possible quality product."

Keeping cows clean and dry in the freestall barn sets the stage for quality milk production at this dairy. When cows head off to the parlor for morning milking, the sand-bedded freestalls are raked and leveled.

Most of the manure from the barn is spread on the Whittier's cropland. The rest is stockpiled for composting and sold to landscaping firms. "It's a way for us to diversify," says Todd.

One result of all this effort in the freestall area: Cows are extremely clean when they enter the double-6 herringbone parlor for milking. "It might be one cow out of 120 that has any manure or dirt on her," says Todd.

The Whittiers' milking protocol calls for the one milker (either Todd or John) in the parlor to work the cows in groups of three. After teats are predipped and wiped with two paper towels, the milker forestrips for letdown, then attaches the milkers and moves off to the next group of three cows. As the cows are milked out, machines are detached via automatic takeoffs. Cows are postdipped within 30 seconds. "It's more a matter of doing a bunch of little things right than doing one big thing," Todd says of milking procedures.

Patience while predipping is one of the little things. "We want to leave that dip on there long enough so that it kills any bacteria that might be on the teat," he explains.

Mastitis control is the third leg of the Whittier's quality stool. At dryoff, they treat all cows with a commercial treatment and vaccinate for coliform. Throughout lactation, they monitor closely for clinical symptoms and treat promptly.



**The Whittier Family.** Seated (left to right) siblings Diana (on lap), Samantha and John. Standing: Mary, Wayne, Todd, Janice and Jim.

### NORTHEAST REGIONAL WINNER

#### Whittier Farms

**Owners/managers:** John, Janice, Wayne and Todd Whittier

**Location:** Sutton, Massachusetts

**Nominated by:** Lennart Petersson, IBA, Inc.

**Herd size:** 120

**Production:** 23,826 lb. (2X)

**Somatic Cell Count**

(Avg. 12 months): 85,000

**Somatic Cell Count (Low):** 55,000

**Somatic Cell Count (High):** 130,000

**Mastitis cases (12 months):** 12

### NORTHEAST MERIT WINNERS

#### Bennett Farms, Inc.

**Owner/manager:** John Bennett

**Location:** Bloomfield, New York

**Nominated by:** Sara Gillette,

Upstate Farms Co-op, Leroy, New York

**Herd size:** 85

**Production:** 25,397 lb.

**Somatic Cell Count**

(Avg. 12 months): 80,000

**Somatic Cell Count (Low):** 38,000

**Somatic Cell Count (High):** 180,000

**Mastitis cases (12 months):** 7

#### Magnan Bros. Dairy, Inc.

**Owners/managers:** Henry, Loretta, Joseph, Karen, Martin, Susan, Mark and Peter Magnan

**Location:** Fairfield, Vermont

**Nominated by:** Diane Bothfeld, St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Inc. St. Albans, Vermont

**Herd size:** 515

**Production:** 26,500 lb. (2X)

**Somatic Cell Count**

(Avg. 12 months): 138,000

**Somatic Cell Count (Low):** 66,000

**Somatic Cell Count (High):** 220,000

**Mastitis cases (12 months):** 118