

## 2017 Fall Dairy Tour

### A.S. Leaflet R3243

Jennifer Bentley, ISUEO Dairy Field Specialist;  
Mariah Schmitt, Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation  
Coordinator

#### Summary and Implications

The second annual Fall Dairy Tour provided a two day, one-night learning opportunity for producers, industry, and potentially new dairy producers to network and learn more about the industry. These tours showcased farms and industry that have seen success in advancing and utilizing genetics, implementing technology, and facility design for improved herd health and efficiency.

#### Introduction

On November 9-10, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation partnered to host a 2-day bus tour, visiting Minnesota dairies and industry. 30 dairy producers, students, extension staff and media from Iowa and Minnesota attended the Fall Dairy Tour.

#### Materials and Methods

The tour began with a stop at Sheeknoll Farms near Rochester, MN. At Sheeknoll Farms, they focus primarily on developing a quality, healthy herd of registered Holsteins with high milk and good type traits. The Sheehan family exhibited the Grand Champion Holstein, Sheeknoll Durham Arrow "Thomas" at the 2016 World Dairy Expo.

The second stop included a tour at New Sweden Dairy and a lunch sponsored by CalfStar and STgenetics. Affiliated with the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine, New Sweden Dairy facilities are used for housing, teaching and demonstration in their program of teaching veterinary students, continuing education of industry professionals and researching emerging products and practices.

The third stop of the day was at Bonnie Mohr Studio and Glenmark Genetics, Inc. After growing up and living on a dairy farm, Bonnie Mohr began painting her passion-cows. In November 1997, she opened her art studio to the public, which is located on the Mohr family dairy farm. Glenmark Genetics, Inc. actively markets breeding bulls, embryos, bred heifers and milk cows. Their dairy herd consists of 70 Holsteins, with a rolling herd average of 25,300 on a twice per day milking.

The tour bus arrived in Willmar, MN, for the evening where participants enjoyed networking opportunities and meal sponsored by DeLaval.

Riverview, LLP in Morris, MN was the start of the second day. Riverview, LLP is a diversified agribusiness

and includes large-scale dairy farms and calf ranches with locations in Minnesota, Arizona, Nebraska, New Mexico, and South Dakota. Farms on the tour included Meadow Star Dairy, Chippewa Calves, Moore Calves, and Riverview headquarters.

The final stop on the tour was near Brooten, MN at Redhead Creamery and Jer-Lindy Farms. This family owned business has transitioned from a traditional dairy that sold milk to the local milk processing plant, to a dairy that now does on-farm processing of artisan style cheeses. Jer-Lindy Farms milks 200 registered Holsteins, makes management decisions based on science and best practices, and chooses high quality genetics that ensure high milk components for cheese yield.

#### Results and Discussion

A common comment on the evaluation was the appreciation for diversity of farm stops; from small to large-scale, on-farm processing to enhance value added production. These farm tours provided current producers and those interested in dairy farming a wider perspective that dairy farmers can be successful in many ways. Not only did the group see varying production practices, they also learned how each farm works as a team; family, non-family, transferring to next generation, employee management all take work and was showcased by farms visited. The group appreciated ways these farms diversified to be sustainable; from artisan cheesemaking to focusing on genetic marketing, to using art to capture dairy and agriculture. Overall participants learned, had a chance to network with others in the industry, and took something home they can apply to their own operations!

#### Acknowledgements

This tour was organized by partnering organizations, Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Meals were sponsored by CalfStar, STgenetics, DeLaval, and Riverview, LLP.

