

# Automated milking systems: Why it was right for us and might be right for you



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## Farm Overview

- **Location: Waunakee, Wisconsin** (just outside of Madison)
  - A lot of traffic and rural housing
  - Competition for labor and land is fierce
- **Current size:**
  - 280 milk cows
  - 600 owned acres (doing a lot with cover crops)
    - Corn
    - Alfalfa
  - Farrow-to-finish hog enterprise with 120 sows and 3,000 market hogs yearly
- **Farm owned by brothers Fred and Dave Laufenberg (Dave is my father)**
  - My role (among others) is "technology implementer"
  - Limited outside labor now (3 outside employees ahead of robots and calf autofeeder)
  - Grandpa plays role



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## Farm History & Move to Robotics

### • At an impasse

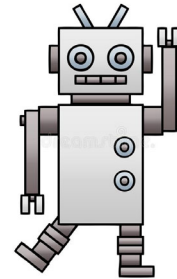
- Old stall barn in "tired" set of barns; switching numerous times
- Labor difficult to find and keep

### • Key factors & exploratory process to AMS

- Limited footprint
- Quality local dealer
- Team and family comfortable with technology
- Structural changes needed in buildings; also needed new calf barn

### • 4 DeLaval units

- Interesting first year
- 11th year into them
- Maintenance manageable



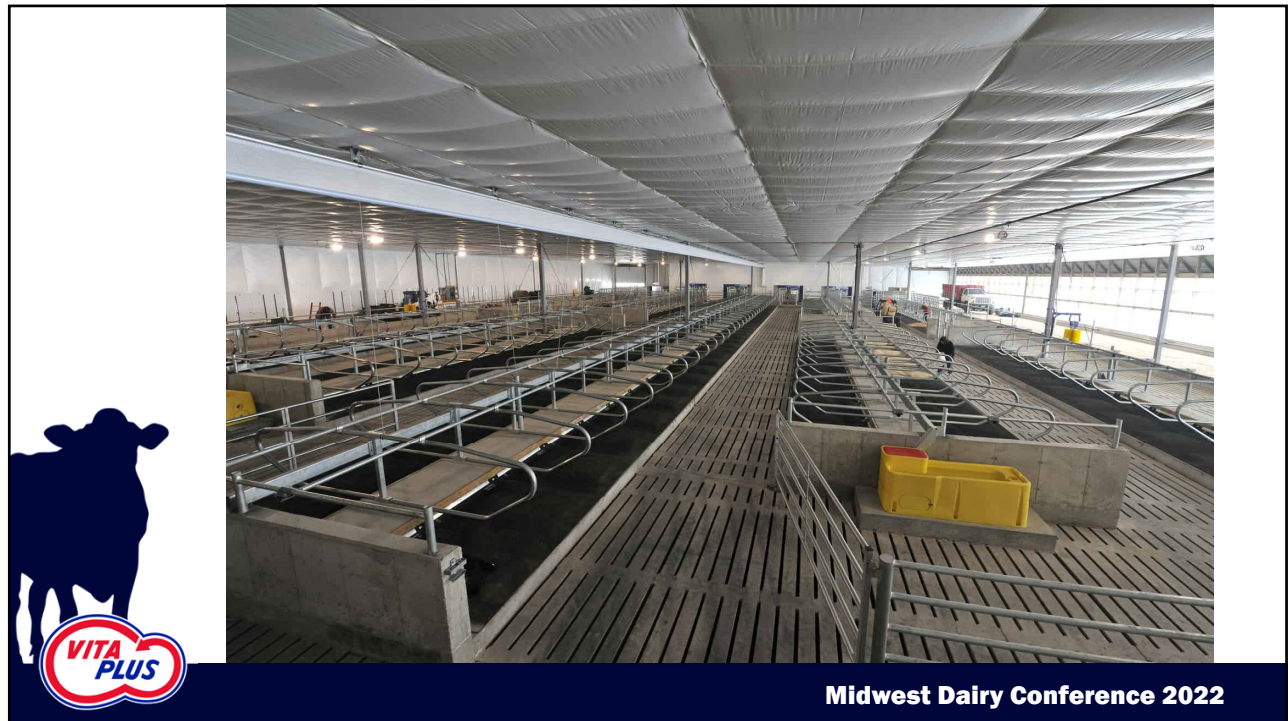
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## Calf Feeding Automation

- Our growth: Let it evolve and be patient
- Ease of automated calf feeding



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## Investment Start-up

- **Budget variances**
  - Stayed close with few changes
  - Moving dirt and site preparation was significant
  - Purchased more cows than anticipated
- **Labor savings**
  - Two people handle all the cows
  - Significant time managing data versus cows
- **Financial nuggets learned during the planning process**
  - Investment versus cost



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## Installation & Start-up Process

### • Investment

- Fair value at the time
- Price has come down

### • Time and team Involved: Labor & equipment

- No "cowboys"
- Just install team

### • Cow perspective

- Most cows adaptive
- Stubborn cows a factor on leaving

### • Learning curve for people/team

- A lot of work, patience and cool heads needed
- Feed first over milk first



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## Maintenance

### • What makes for a good dealer relationship?

- Accessible
- Willing to teach
  - Learn maintenance from them

### • Routine maintenance and care

- Inflatons, rubber parts, cleaning detergents



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## Knowledge Gained from Data

- Online somatic cell counter
- Hands on over data



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## What's Next? Technology into the Future

- New somatic cell counter-test farm
- Another robot for special-needs cows
  - Minimize any chance of contamination
- More cover crops
- More focus on "sustainability"
- Focus on social license
- Find our next diverse opportunity
  - Challenge you all to do the same



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