

## **Greendale Dairy in Transition**

*by Ronald T. Schuler, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Schuler Dairy Farms, near St. Nazianz village in Manitowoc County in Northeastern Wisconsin, has been owned by the Schuler family for six generations. Brothers, Dale and Roy Schuler, have been managing the dairy since 1971. The farm is currently transitioning to the seventh generation with Mike Schuler, Dale's son, and Nick Schoenberger, Dale's son-in-law. With a new generation comes a new name – Greendale Dairy.

Greendale Dairy produces hay and corn silage for their dairy cows and baled hay for their heifers. They also purchase high quality baled hay from South Dakota, primarily for the dairy cow ration.

The Schuler family has always been early adopters of new technology. Dale and Roy's father, Ted, transitioned from a stanchion barn to a milking parlor and loose housing in 1962 and a few years later to free stalls. He was also one of the early farmers to use a forage harvester/chopper in the late 1940's for harvesting corn silage and dry chopped hay.

In 1979, they had one of the early drive-through free stall barns constructed to reduce the labor required for feeding. At the same time they started using a TMR.

In 2001, they updated the free stall barn with alley scrapers and added a six-row free stall and calving barn for 230 cows. In 2006, Greendale Dairy added a four-row, 352 free stall barn with alley scrapers.

Currently, they are milking 360 cows with plans of going to 420 shortly. They are milking in a herringbone milking parlor with eight stalls on each side. They milk three times a day with the milking parlor in operation 22 hours per day. They have 120 bred heifers which will provide for the herd increase. The feed for the dairy cows is mixed in a TMR with a ration including dry hay, hay silage, corn silage, corn gluten, cottonseed and brewer's grain. They have a rolling herd average of 26,900 pounds of milk and 1,026 pounds of fat per cow. They have maintained a somatic cell count in the 180,000-200,000 range.



*Greendale Dairy, with a new four-row free stall barn with 352 stalls on the right.*

They own 860 acres with about 812 acres cropped. In addition, they rent about 180 acres. Typically, they have 270 acres of alfalfa for silage, 14 acres of dry hay, 230 acres of corn silage, 100 acres of high moisture shelled corn, 130 acres of oatlage seeded down with alfalfa, 36 acres of oats seeded down with alfalfa and 32 acres of canary grass. The oatlage is used for heifer feed. The oats for grain provides for bedding straw. They grow some winter rye for emergency feed that can be harvested in early to mid-May.

For harvesting the alfalfa for silage, they cut the crop with a 14.5 foot self-propelled mower-conditioner with a disk mower and an impeller conditioner. They cut and condition the alfalfa in the late bud to early bloom with an RFV of 160-170. They have a merger to bring two windrows together for chopping. If the crop is low yielding they will merge three windrows together. They harvest the alfalfa silage with a pull type forage harvester with a theoretical length of cut of 5/8 inch. They store this silage in upright concrete silos. They bale fourteen acres as small square bales which are fed to the heifers.

For corn silage, Greendale Dairy uses the pull chopper with a crop processor and then stores it in silage bags. Their goal is to harvest at 68% moisture with a theoretical length of cut set at 5/8 inch.

Family members have been involved in local co-ops and other local farm organizations, in some cases serving on local boards. They are members of Midwest Forage Association and have been active in the Manitowoc Council Forage Council, serving as officers of the Council and hosts for forage field days. Greendale Dairy has been involved in numerous extension field days and several on-farm research studies conducted by county extension staff and University of Wisconsin-Madison researchers.