



Outlook Dairy Nominated For The Inaugural U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards

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The George DeRuyter & Son Dairy in Outlook has been nominated for Outstanding Achievement in Energy in the inaugural U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards. The awards recognize dairy farms, businesses and collaborative partnerships for practices that deliver outstanding economic, environmental and/or social benefit, all helping to advance the sustainability of the dairy industry.

The George DeRuyter & Son Dairy in Outlook was nominated for Outstanding Achievement in Energy.

Owned and operated by George DeRuyter and his son Dan, the senior DeRuyter began the dairy in 1972. Today, the operation includes two dairies with a milking herd of 5,000 head on 4,500 acres where they grow a variety of crops including: grain corn, corn silage, hay and alfalfa. The dairy markets 143 million lbs. of milk each year.

After analyzing soil sample results that showed increasing nutrient loads, Dan began to proactively search for solutions. In 2006 he decided to construct an anaerobic digester, the first in south central Washington, to handle the manure from their dairies. The methane created by the digester fuels two 900-horse engines generating 1,000 kw/day of electricity that is used by area homes.

“We operate on the premise that everything coming out of a cow has value,” said Dan DeRuyter. The dairy currently employs 70 individuals who play an integral role in their long-term success. Job training with opportunities for personal and professional growth are provided with many of their key employees having started in entry level positions.

In November of 2010, the DeRuyters partnered with Organix, Inc. to create the nation's first, large scale commercial operation to produce a wholesale peat moss alternative made from dairy waste. Using Organix' patented system, the post-digester fiber is preprocessed and fed from the digester into poly vessels that keep the material contained minimizing environmental impact and maximizing product quality and consistency. The dairy now ships all of its treated dairy fiber as "RePeet – The 100% Renewable Peat-Free Alternative" to horticultural suppliers throughout the northwest. In the process, they are capturing the excess phosphorus as a struvite that will be sold as a fertilizer component to commercial fertilizer manufacturers.

The environmental goal was to reduce the nutrient loads of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium in the fields and minimize odor. The economic goal was to increase revenue by selling power to the grid, reducing manure handling costs, reducing bedding costs by the onsite manufacture of recyclable bedding and the reduction of commercial fertilizer costs.

Other Washington state nominees are the Werkhoven Dairy in Monroe, twenty-five miles north of Seattle, for Outstanding Dairy Farm Sustainability and the Washington based processor Darigold Inc.® for Outstanding Dairy Processing & Manufacturing Sustainability.

The nominations were the result of submissions made by private businesses, dairy representatives and the faculty of Washington State University.

Presented by the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy® in affiliation with the Dairy Research Institute™ the national U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards will be presented on February 1, 2012.