



Idaho dairy reduces energy costs by 90 percent and improves efficiency

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Terri Adams, The Prairie Star

Finding ways to improve efficiency and reduce overhead is a must for farmers; however, knowing what methods to use in streamlining operations and turning that into savings, is a huge challenge.

When producers are looking to reduce dependence on resources found off the farm, an Idaho-based energy management and development company can help farmers control and reduce their energy expenses.

"There are a lot of resources around us for both efficiency and energy generation to help farmers better leverage their assets, and, even more importantly, there are real ways to make these projects pay for themselves," explained Paul Conrad, Site Based Energy's President and CEO.

A perfect example of that is the Ballard Family Dairy & Cheese in Gooding ID. A typical propane bill at the dairy was approximately \$2,000 a month. Now, thanks to Site Based Energy the dairy is saving big.

"Since we put this system into place our total propane bill for the last six months has been reduced by 90 percent," said Steve Ballard.

The Ballard family dairy is the recipient of the prestigious 2013 Ag Innovator of the Year Award at Harvesting Clean Energy Conference. The Ballards provide a real-life example of how conserving energy resources can significantly improve a farm's bottom line. This project is also a candidate up for the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Award for Outstanding Dairy Farm. The nationwide winner will be announced in April.

Over the years, Ballard had gone to several contractors hoping someone could see what he was seeing and help him implement his ideas of how to save energy on the farm. He had ideas about what he wanted to do and he knew there were financial incentives available to assist in the process, but he didn't know how to capture those ideas or those dollars. "SBE worked with us to really understand the problems we were having and helped us find the right solutions that improved our overall operation while saving enough money to pay for it," said Ballard. "SBE also helped us through the process from beginning to end and didn't give up when others would have."

For their award-winning Ballard Dairy Project, SBE helped the Ballard's to secure over \$74,00 in tax credits, efficiency incentives, and grant money. The project is estimated to produce \$19,000 annually in energy savings. SBE performed in-depth project analysis and collected data to create an agricultural management plan.

With a blueprint for success in hand, SBE designed energy solutions, installed the designed systems, and will continue to maintain the system to ensure energy savings are met during the payback period. Some of the energy saving measures in the project included installing a solar-thermal heating system, electric back-up boilers, heat pumps, variable frequency drive milk vacuum pumps, insulation for mechanical systems, as well as retrofitting the existing lighting system with LEDs and motion sensors.

According to Conrad, an effective project starts with a thorough energy audit or agricultural management plan, which establishes an action plan. From there it's about careful, integrated management and implementation.

"What sets Site Based Energy apart is our ability to integrate, manage and implement all technologies and services found in the energy audit, effectively carrying projects from start to finish, said Conrad. "We build a solution that is specific to each client. For many agricultural operations, the projects we design and execute will cash flow from day one, and can generate significant capital after they have paid for themselves."

Site Based Energy will be hosting a seminar to learn more about ways they can improve their bottom line and control their energy costs. The seminar will be held on March 19, 10:30 a.m., at the "The Risk Barn" in Jerome Idaho. Admission is free. For more information contact Riley Buck at: riley@sitebasedenergy.com or 208-928-7583.

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