



DTN DAIRY®

Paul Conard grew up on the farm he now runs with his father, his uncle, and his cousin. They farm 1,000 acres of alfalfa, corn, and wheat. They have 300 milk cows in a freestyle barn parlor, and they also raise their own cattle. The Conards use most of their crops as feed, but they do sell some winter wheat to local feed mills and to grain elevators. The milk is sold to Land O' Lakes.

The challenge

The Conards need real-time market and weather information to run their operation as profitably as possible. For years, they turned to their neighbors for this type of information. Doing so proved time-consuming and slow.

The solution

In early 2005, the Conards completed a remodeling project on their farm. It left them with an ideal spot for DTN Dairy Professional, so they added the system to their business tool set. With a simple satellite link, DTN Dairy provides the Conards with a comprehensive package of dairy news, real-time market quotes, and highly localized weather, as well as market analysis and commentary.

The results

The Conards depend on the system for both weather and market information. They especially look to the service to alert them to potential storms in late spring and early summer when they are getting the crops in or making hay. They also depend on it day in and day out throughout the year. "It's the first thing I look at in the morning, and I check the milk markets throughout the day. I also check the radar on a daily basis, especially in the summer and when there is a winter storm coming."

Conard especially likes that the radar is real-time so they can plan their work. With the system's localized radar, detailed hourly forecasts and plot maps illustrating how far a weather system is from them, the Conards can plan ahead for bad weather. For example, they like to put their machinery inside when they know inclement weather is coming.

"That takes time to do." You don't want to be putting your machinery away and then get caught in the middle of a bad storm. The weather information we get from the radar on DTN Dairy gives us a little extra time so we can get our equipment inside."

Pricing information is vital to their work, and DTN Dairy provides it to them with maximum convenience. "We do some futures contracting through Land O' Lakes, so obtaining the information via satellite through DTN/*The Progressive Farmer* is a faster way to get the pricing information we need than going through the Internet. Just three clicks and you have up-to-date futures prices for milk or wheat. It's right there at your fingertips."

The Conards also like to use the service to gather information about pricing at recent and upcoming auctions. DTN Dairy offers a comprehensive listing of local and national auction results that can be used to see current value and market trends. Users can also place their own "want ads." The Conards find they use the auction information that the system provides in a variety of ways.

"DTN Dairy has information about the latest auctions in our area, so we'll use it both to find something we may need at auction or, if we're interested in recent pricing, to find what price something got at auction. The DTN/*The Progressive Farmer* gives you an idea where the market is for cattle or machinery."

"I think that DTN/*The Progressive Farmer* gives us a competitive advantage," said Mike, who considers it critical to his operations. "The more you know, the easier it is to make decisions."

The client's view

"DTN Dairy Professional is something we use every day. When I had to do without it briefly six months ago, it was the longest three days of my life."

Paul Conard, New Franken, Wisconsin