



DTN DAIRY®

Skyward Dairy

Dalhart, Texas

Founded in 2000, Skyward Dairy currently has 1,400 Holstein cows in two California locations: Ontario and Corona. Roger Sybesma, a partner in Skyward Dairy, owns the dairy with his wife and mother-in-law and is in the process of moving the entire business to Dalhart, Texas. They are building a new facility in Texas to take advantage of the dairy friendly environment and house their operations in one central facility. Sybesma joined the business in 2000 and left his technology career to work on the dairy full-time in 2002.

The challenge

Sybesma needed pricing and weather information to efficiently manage his time, energy, and resources while moving Skyward Dairy to Texas. Previously, Sybesma had to rely on pricing information that the commodity salespeople provided to him. His weather information came from broadcast television.

The solution

Sybesma recently started using DTN Dairy Online to do research, keep track of weather, buy feed, and watch the milk market. He and his family are excited about the move to Texas, and he's been commuting to and from their new dairy to supervise the building process.

The results

"I use DTN Dairy Online quite a bit for checking commodity prices in Texas," he said. "I need to see what the markets are doing for alfalfa, corn, and canola," said Sybesma. He has already purchased 1,600 tons of feed which is now stored in Texas. "Mostly, I use DTN Dairy for figuring out the best time to buy feed," he explained. "DTN Dairy Online gives me advice about where they think the market is going," he said. He likes being able to gather his own information rather than relying on what the salespeople tell him about pricing. "The more information you have, the more power you have in dealing with them," he explained.

Sybesma uses weather information from DTN Dairy to determine whether it makes sense to fly to Texas every other week. If there's been a lot of rain in Texas preventing the builders from making significant progress, he may decide to hold off on flying there, saving him time and money. "If they get a few inches of rain, then you know they're not able to do much, so there's really no reason to schedule another trip that week because they couldn't get a whole lot accomplished."



Sybesma is also using DTN Dairy weather information to plan how to move his cattle to the new location. "I have to truck cattle over Interstate 40, so I'll be tracking Flagstaff and all the high points to make sure the trucks can get through," he said. Sybesma expects that he will also use DTN Dairy to monitor temperature and animal care. "Typically, if you have more than a 30-degree change in temperature in a single day, you may want to be preemptive getting the animals on antibiotics so they don't get pneumonia," he said. Ultimately, he may do some farming in the new location and, if that happens, he expects to use DTN Dairy to make crop related decisions like when to plant and when to cut.

He likes the localized weather that DTN Dairy provides. "I like that I can track weather in California and Texas at the same time," he said. He's been tracking California weather to be prepared should they get any rain. "We try to have the corrals in the best possible shape before rain hits," he said.

He likes that all the information he needs on DTN Dairy is available on one screen and that he can jump quickly from one subject to the next. "Rather than having to search the Internet for different things, I can jump from commodities to weather to news and see the market analyses — with just a couple clicks," he said. "Everything is right there." It's been a good investment for him. "I think it pays for itself pretty quickly," he said.

The client's view

"The information that DTN Dairy provides empowers you to make better business decisions."

Roger Sybesma, Dalhart, Texas