



DTN LIVESTOCK®

M Farms

Benedict, Nebraska

M Farms includes a commercial feed yard with 4,000 head, crops of 700 acres of corn and 80 acres of alfalfa. They also run a cow/calf operation of 120 head. All their crops are used as feed. Calves are retained ownership and returned to the herd. Owner and manager Max McLean is the third generation in his family to farm the land on which he and his father were raised. His grandfather started the farm and his son just returned to join him in the business. He also has three full-time employees.

The challenge

McLean needs the latest weather and market information to run his operation efficiently and profitably.

The solution

After using the DTN/*The Progressive Farmer* service for more than 20 years, McLean switched from the satellite version to online access five years ago. In September 2006, he upgraded to DTN Livestock Professional Online which includes DTN Six Factors® Market Strategies. The strategies provide analysis and recommendations for six factors that drive the markets: trends, noncommercial outlook, commercial traders, seasonal index, volatility and price probability.

The results

"What intrigued me about the new service was access to DTN Six Factors Market Strategies and a little more commentary than I was getting before. I use the Six Factors as a tool to get different ideas.

Before I make decisions I try to read a lot of different views."

"Using DTN Six Factors Market Strategies puts things in a different perspective. Rather than just the production side, you're looking more at the technicals and some outside factors that might be affecting the market. This might include the weather, the import/export market, what the people in Chicago are thinking and how the speculators are thinking."

McLean also likes the charts. "I can get to them easily. I think I've probably done more with the charts since I got the upgraded service than when I had the standard version. The standard version had some charts too, but not quite as many as DTN Professional Online does. You can get more detail and more daily charts rather than just monthly. Trend lines become more evident with the daily charts."

McLean is pleased with the additional weather information he receives with his new service. "We use the weather information a lot. I never had it this extensive before. I think it'll help us prepare for big storms coming. In the summer, it will help us prepare for haying. We can plan a little better at putting hay up at the right time."

McLean likes that he can get location-specific weather. "I can enter the locations for our pasture, where our hired man lives and a couple other places where we farm. I can put all those places in as locations and then I can just click on that location and the system will tell me what the weather is going to be doing right in that area. It'll tell me exactly when it's going to rain or when it's going to snow." McLean finds the PrecipTimer®, which tells users when precipitation is going to start and how long it's going to last, to be accurate. "Sometimes it's been right on the money. It's said that it's going to start raining at 3:04, and it's started raining at 3:04." He also likes the humidity reading for determining the best time for hay to dry.

Overall, McLean is very pleased with the upgraded service. "This is way better than what we had before. There's quite a bit more information. I'm pretty happy with it."

The client's view

"I enjoy using DTN Six Factors Market Strategies, and I use it quite a bit. It gives you the technical side with the charts that show you the different trends that are affecting the market such as the seasonal trends, commercial buying outlet trends, and cattle trend charts."

Max McLean, owner and operator, M Farms