



DTN LIVESTOCK®

CASE STUDY

Wis-Lar Farms

Centuria, Wisconsin

Wis-Lar Farms is located in Centuria, Wisconsin, 50 miles northeast of St. Paul, Minnesota. Jerry Larsen, owner and president, raises 225 acres of corn and 86 acres of canning beans. He is also starting a cow/calf and feeder operation and has 60 replacement dairy heifers, some beef cows, beef heifers and feeder steers. They already sell their dairy heifers directly to other farmers, and they plan to do the same with their beef cattle. Their vegetables are contracted out to a canning company. Some of their corn is sold as feed, though most is sold to ethanol plants. A fourth-generation farmer, Larsen grew up on the farm he now owns with his mother.

The challenge

Larsen needs the latest weather and market information to efficiently and profitably run their feeder operation and raise their crops.

The solution

The Larsens have used DTN/*The Progressive Farmer* for at least a decade. In July 2006, they switched from DTN Dairy® Professional via satellite to DTN Livestock Professional Online when they sold their dairy cows. Jerry likes to access the online service remotely on his laptop when he's on vacation. DTN Livestock Professional includes DTN Six Factors® Market Strategies which provides analysis and recommendations for six factors that drive the markets.

The results

Larsen regularly follows the market strategies and finds that they help him decipher the wealth of information coming his way. He also believes it has helped him better market his grain. "The Six Factors information puts things into perspective and makes it easier to understand things. They have their opinions on the way grain is trending and things that are going to affect the market."

Jerry also depends on the weather information the service provides, especially the long-term forecast, and its accuracy. "I use the six-to 14-day forecast to plan planting, hay cutting, harvesting and spraying. A lot of this work, if you can plan it ahead, it works out a lot better." If it's going to be really cold, he'll schedule any herd injections around the cold snap.

Jerry also likes the system's DTN StormPath™ capability, which provides an animated picture of predicted rainfall, county-by-county, 72 hours into the future. "DTN StormPath is good at showing you where the storm is going to be so you know if it's actually going to come to your area."



Jerry uses the market information for contracting their crops. He likes to use the long-term charts as a reference tool for viewing historical activity. "Things go in cycles, and it helps to put things in perspective when you can get a longer picture."

Jerry finds the service has improved over the years. "I like the way it's arranged now. It's a lot better than it was five or six years ago. Now, more of the information is broken down into more usable forms."

There are charts and graphs, and when you go to the markets page, it even puts the closest elevator bids up on the screen," he said. "Overall, the information is just easier to get to. You could get to some of the stuff before, but you had to go through a lot more menus to get to it."

"When it's handy, you look at it more often," he said. They have already benefited from the updated service. "This year, we sold to a different ethanol plant that we never sold to before. We just happened to pick them off the DTN/*The Progressive Farmer* because they were paying more."

The client's view

"There are a lot of things that affect the market. Between DTN Six Factors and the other information on DTN Livestock Professional Online, I've found more opportunities to sell that I probably would have missed before."

Jerry Larsen, president and owner, Wis-Lar Farms