

Blue Star Dairy Farms

Number of cows: 2,400 cows (milking and dry) at 2 locations

Breed: Holstein

Milking Parlor Type (2 Locations): Cows are milked three times a day in Germania herringbone-style parlors. The DeForest milking parlor is a double-16 and Arlington is a Double-18. Both parlors are equipped with Afimilk. This provides daily milk weights. They use the deviation report from AFI to help find sick cows.

Cattle Housing: Recycled sand-bedded freestalls. All cows freshen at the DeForest farm. Arlington has just milking cows.

Heifer Enterprise: Calves and heifers are raised at the DeForest farm. Calves are in individual pens in an enclosed barn with flap-duct ventilation tubes. After weaning, heifers are raised in open fronts until they are around 9 months old. From there, they are moved to a freestall barn with mattresses. About 300 are raised off site due to not enough space.

Reproduction Program: Cows are put on a Double-Ovsynch program. The first breeding occurs at 79 to 85 days in milk. All cows go through all shots for first breeding. There is no cherry picking before first breeding. If they are open, they go into a Resynch program. All animals are genomic tested. Their DWP\$ ranking determines who gets sexed or beef semen. Lactating animals who get sexed semen are given two chances. Then, beef semen is used. We use Select Sires for our semen on all the animals. We strive to get 85 to 87 heifer calves each month.

Owners/Hosts: Brian, Craig and Sherri Meinholz, and Jim and Allison Hahn. Some of the fourth generation of the Meinholz family have finished college and returned to the farm with the younger ones interested in the industry.