

Technology Revolutionizes America's Dairy Farms

Dairy Farmers And Olympian Rulon Gardner Celebrate Benefits Of High-Tech Farming

(NAPSA)—Technology has revolutionized, redefined, and improved our personal lives, our schools, our businesses...and even America's dairy farms.

That's right. That cell phone, personal digital assistant, and computer that many big business executives depend on every day—plus some additional cutting-edge technologies—also have modernized and improved business for America's dairy farmers.

"Technology helps today's dairy farmers be more efficient and deliberate in their care for the land and animals, the delivery of safe and wholesome milk, and their dedication to the community," said Olympic gold medallist Rulon Gardner, who grew up on a dairy farm.

Goodbye Power Plants, Hello Dairy Cows

In a time of anticipated energy crunches nationwide, farmers have discovered a unique on-farm efficiency via a new source of farm-fresh power—manure.

Dennis Haubenschild, a dairy farmer from Princeton, MN, creates energy from his 850 cows by converting manure into electricity. The manure is pumped into collection tanks beneath two barns, then into a digester. The digester heats the manure to high temperatures to break the substance down into a fuel called "biogas" that is routed to an engine generator, which converts it to energy.

"This recycling effort saved us 35 tons of coal and 1,200 gallons of propane in January alone,



Olympian Rulon Gardner, who won a gold medal in Sydney, credits his success to his upbringing on a dairy farm.

which equals about \$2,000," Haubenschild said. "We also sold about two-thirds of the energy to a local utility for \$4,380. It's completely satisfying to boost the financial level of the farm while doing something positive for the environment."

Computerized Cow Care Helps Create Quality Milk

Technology also has revolutionized the way farmers care for their cows. Electronic collars and ear tags track nutrition intake and milk output, while personal digital assistants enable farmers to monitor their cows' health at the touch of a button.

Sutton Rucks, manager of Dry Lake Dairy Inc. in Okeechobee County, FL., uses a computerized record-keeping system to provide individualized care to each of his farm's 1,000 cows. Rucks understands safe and high-quality milk production begins with the health of the cows.

"Thanks to computers we have immediate access to each cow's

accurate records and are able to address health issues early, which helps keep our cows healthier and happier," Rucks said.

Quest for the Best—Dairy Farmers and Athletes

Dairy farmers have long demonstrated a commitment to excellence and resourcefulness in their quest to deliver the best care to their animals and the environment, and create the best milk possible. Given that commitment, the dairy farm is in fact the perfect breeding ground for world-class athletes.

Olympic Gold Medallist Rulon Gardner—who stunned the world when he became the first wrestler in 13 years to defeat Russia's Alexander "the Great" Karelin—credits much of his success to his upbringing on an Afton, WY, dairy farm.

"During my days on the dairy farm, I developed a dedication to working hard and accomplishing goals in all aspects of the work I was doing," Gardner said.

Today, Gardner appreciates his farm history, as well as the work his brother Roland continues on the farm, using technology to create a modern dairy operation and produce safe, wholesome milk.

"Too many people take for granted where that glass of milk they're drinking came from," Gardner said. "It takes the dairy farmer's commitment to the land, the animals, and the production of quality milk—plus a commitment to improvement through technology—to bring that milk from the farm to the table."