

Sunset Farms

Allenton, Wisconsin

At Sunset Farms, we are dedicated to providing safe, high-quality milk and dairy products as well as other produce. Our commitment to quality also means caring for our animals and the land.



Mission Statement

Our mission is to enjoy working together in a pleasant atmosphere. We aim to produce safe nutrition for our fellow man and quality of life for employees, owners, and their families as well as our neighbors and friends. We strive to respect each other, to respect ourselves, to respect our animals and to respect the land through sustainable environmental management.

As we work together, our mission is to provide consumers with the highest quality products in the world and to foster an environment of personal growth and advancement for our employees and family.

Our History

In 1847 Joseph and Maria Anna Langenecker and their 4 children arrived in Addison, WI from Germany. Their son Antone stayed at the farm with his wife Maria. Antone and Maria's son Mathias married Otilia and their daughter Mildred married Albert Wolf in 1947 and they had four sons; Ray, Dan, Bernie, and Paul and three daughters; Marilyn, Judy, and Linda. The four sons are farming here on the Langenecker homestead.

In 1972 the farm was named Sunset Farms, Inc., formed by Albert and Mildred and their sons, Ray and Dan. Bernie joined in 1975 and Paul in 1985 as they turned 18. When each son married, his wife joined the family and the farm: Anne married Ray in 1972, Ellen married Dan in 1975, Cindy married Bernie in 1982, and Sue married Paul in 1996. The 6th generation of this family also joined the farm: Carl, Ed, Karen, and Dave. A number of valued employees also began working at Sunset Farms: Tim Baier in 1995, Greg Ritger in 1999 and Marcus Asmus in 2009.

Dairying is a very multigenerational business: Skills are handed down from generation to generation. It is common for dairy farm families to grow and adapt their facilities as new generations of family members want to join the business.

Until 1972, cows were milked in two stanchion barns. This type of labor can be extremely stressful to the long-term health of those doing the milking. For this reason, and because of the research and science that has improved dairy farming techniques, Sunset Farms has made improvements through the years:

- In 1972 a new dairy barn was built including three Harvestores silos and a 200 head dairy barn. This allowed all the brothers to work together in one barn instead of in separate barns.
- The steer barn was added in 1979, and a calf barn, now used for steers, was added in 1982 along with the addition of more harvesters over the years.

- In 1990 all of the calves were moved into hutches, and super hutches in 1992.
- A 430 stall dairy barn, feed bunkers, and commodity shed in 1995.
- The pole building, now used for small heifer groups and bale storage, was added in 1999 and the calf barn in 2000 to replace the hutches.
- In 2001 an additional 450-stall slatted dairy barn was built.
- In 2009 a 217-stall transition and special needs barn were added, as well as the conversion of the 1995 barn to sand bedding.
- Currently we are constructing a 500 cow cross ventilated facility with sand freestalls and additional manure storage to invest in the health and comfort of our animals.

These gradual and continuous investments helped improve the health and comfort of our animals, and enabled us to continue farming together as a family while supporting our growing family.

What is a Day Like at Sunset Farms?

Cows are milked three times each day. Fresh feed is delivered twice a day with a feed mixer wagon delivered by trained employees to create the proper ingredient mixture for each group of cows. Each load of feed is specially balanced for each group of animals by our nutritionist for optimal cow health. We are constantly monitoring the recipes, as well as the feed, to make sure that each cow gets exactly what she needs.

Cow comfort and consistency are important to insuring healthy cows and high quality dairy products. Sand bedding, rubber flooring, fans, and sprinkler systems are ways we assure excellent cow comfort.

New calves are raised on farm and fed pasteurized milk three times/day and 24% protein starter until weaned at six weeks of age. They are then fed a special high-protein diet through breeding age of 13 months. With all of our animals, the exact feed recipe depends on feeds available and carefully managing the body condition of each animal.

All forages are grown on 3,300 acres the farm either owns or rents. Crops include corn (for corn silage and grain corn), alfalfa haylage, winter wheat, soybeans, peas and oats, and winter rye.

All cow manure is collected into the storage located near each barn. Manure from the sand bedding is separated and the sand is recycled. The cow manure nutrients are returned to feed the soil as part of a balanced nutrient management plan. Liquid nutrients are returned to the soil according to this plan. Soil samples are taken each year to create and maintain this nutrient management plan.

We live and work on our farm, so it's important to protect the land, water and air for our own families, our surrounding community and future generations. Our environmental practices are tightly regulated by both federal and state agencies. We protect air quality by following proper manure storage practices and maintaining clean facilities. We have invested in piping and application systems to minimize odor, and we are continually reviewing university and industry research to identify new ways to control odor and be good neighbors.



Sunset Farms: Community-Minded

...A steady employer

Sunset Farms employs 26 full-time people and 6 part-time and seasonal workers. Among these employees are family members, and also local, hard-working young people who were hired in high school and decided to grow with us as a career.



...Stewards of the land

We are stewards of the circle of life. Soil samples are taken each year to create and maintain a nutrient management plan that takes into account the types of soil on the farm, the terrain of the fields, soil moisture levels, and the amount of nutrients the next crop on that field will need. Liquid cow waste is hauled each summer and injected into the ground according to this plan.

...Caretakers of animals

Farmers have a saying, “Take care of your cows and your cows will take care of you.” Cow comfort is a big motivator for our modernization. In addition, we have participated in the Dairy Farmers of America Gold Standard Dairy program, an on-farm audit that assesses areas including animal care and wellness, environmental stewardship, employee training and milk safety and quality.

...A contributor to the local economy

The vast majority of our operating expenses go to businesses within a 20-mile radius of Allenton. Dairy farms are very important to rural economies. Based on financial benchmark information from UW-Madison's Center for Dairy Profitability, a 250-cow Wisconsin dairy farm will spend, on average, about \$675,000 annually in supplies, products and services that are purchased from local businesses and retailers.

...Serving our neighbors

All of the Wolf brothers are volunteer firefighters, as well as many of our employees. Ray served as the fire department chief for 16 years. Paul is the deputy chief responsible for emergency medical services, and Bernie is the deputy chief of support operations. Dan also serves as an Addison Town Board supervisor, and is active in his church.

...Committed to continuous improvement

We are members of the Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, which provides the latest training and research to dairy farmers and their employees. We are also members of Dairy Business Association and Wisconsin Farm Bureau.

...Open to our community

Visitors are always welcomed to tour our facilities. To schedule a tour, please contact us: Phone and fax: (262) 629-1702. Email: sunsetfarms@nconnect.net, or connect with us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/SunsetFarmsInc>. You can also read about us on www.dairydoingmore.org.

