



#FridaysOnTheFarm: Keeping the Glass Half Full

Each Friday meet farmers, producers, and landowners through our [#FridaysOnTheFarm](#) stories. Visit local farms, ranches, forests, and resource areas where USDA customers and partners *do right and feed everyone*.

This Friday meet AJ and Jeanne Wormuth, operators of Half Full Dairy in Elbridge, New York. These farmers stay true to their name, always looking at the glass half full.

Joining the Business

AJ and Jeanne purchased the cows from Hourigan's Dairy Farm in early 2019, the first step in buying the farm from retiring farmers, John and Nancy Hourigan. While the couple recently started the process of buying the farm, they've been involved with the operation for years.

Discussions on making the transition began in 2014. In 2016, the Wormuths became farm managers, learning the ins and outs of the farm.

Now owners of 1,400 cows, AJ and Jeanne now operate as [Half Full Dairy](#), renting the facilities and purchasing feed from the Hourigans until the transition is complete.

Expanding the Farm

In preparation for buying into the farm, the Wormuths planned to build a 15,000-gallon milk silo on the farm to expand their milking capacity.

With a [Farm Storage Facility Loan](#) from USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#), AJ and Jeannie installed the new milk silo and an upgraded milk cooling system in April. The program provides low-interest financing so producers can build or upgrade facilities to store commodities.

"The staff in my county FSA office were very helpful in the application process," said AJ. "They were there every step of the way making sure we got through the process successfully."

Having the extra storage has increased production and helped save the farm money. With more milk storage capacity, the Wormuths consistently milk three times per day, with their milk being picked up by their milk cooperative once a day.



Prior to adding the new milk silo, their milk picked up twice a day due to having a smaller milk tank. The addition of the milk silo not only added much needed storage, but saved the dairy money by eliminating one milk pick-up each day.

The new cooling system has also provided an economic benefit to Half Full Dairy by reducing energy costs. Fresh milk is warm and needs to be cooled to below 40 degrees quickly. The chiller system uses propylene glycol and a plate cooler, which is essentially a heat exchanger. The warm milk runs through the plate cooler and then even colder propylene glycol chambers. As the milk passes over these chambers it cools quickly, ensuring its freshness and quality.

AJ and Jeanne believe that staying positive is essential to their success. Dairy farming is full of challenges, but with their glass-half-full mentality, the Wormuth family is hopeful for the future.

More Information

USDA offers a variety of risk management, disaster assistance, loan, and conservation programs to help agricultural producers in the United States weather ups and downs in the market and recover from natural disasters as well as invest in improvements to their operations. [Learn about additional programs.](#)

For more information about USDA programs and services, [contact your local USDA service center.](#)

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