



Grand Award – Small Company

Shiloh Dairy, LLC, Brillion

It isn't every day that a third generation dairy farmer decides to up and move their entire operation to a new country and not just succeed, but thrive and expand. That is exactly what Gordon and Cathy Speirs did in 2003. Not only did they move from Canada to the United States, they moved to the Dairy State, where standards are high and competition, fierce.

Gordon's grandfather, Harvey Spiers, began his small dairy operation in Saskatchewan, Canada, in the 1930s. Over the years, the farm moved twice, always looking for opportunities to expand the operation and become more profitable. As Gordon and Cathy took over the farm, and their family grew, their three children helped with milking, tending crops and performing maintenance.

The decision to move the entire operation to Brillion, Wisconsin, in 2003 involved relocating animals and equipment, as well as obtaining permits, building a new dairy facility, and establishing relationships with veterinarians, bankers, and fellow herdsman. Today, just over a dozen years later, Shiloh Dairy has grown to be one of the most successful single location dairies in Wisconsin.

Gordon and Cathy believe one of the factors in their success was getting their children involved when they were small, and making it fun and rewarding. They gave the kids responsibility early and then allowed them to pursue their individual interests through different aspects of running a farm.

Today, Gordon is the farm's general manager, and president of the Wisconsin Dairy Business Association. Cathy is the farm's manager of maternity, baby calves and genetics. She also shares her successes in calf genetics at speaking engagements in the U.S. and abroad. Sons Travis and Tyler, the fourth generation, both have management roles in running the farm.

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When they moved to Wisconsin, the Speirs intended to start milking 600 cows, and hoped to one day grow that number to 1,200. Today, Shiloh Farms milks 2,100 cows, raises all young stock on-site, and cares for 4,450 animals in total. The Speirs family searches out innovative methods in every aspect of their operation, and they host visitors from around the world who come to observe the advanced technology and protocols the farm has established.

Gordon and Cathy have developed a succession plan that will eventually move the farm's ownership into the hands of their farming sons, as well as their non-farming daughter.

The judges were impressed by the four generations of this family business, and their successful transition not only in moving to a new country but in growing their business more than three-fold, and becoming a leader in the industry.

The Grand Award in the Small Company category goes to Shiloh Dairies of Brillion, Wisconsin.

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