



**UC DAVIS**

VETERINARY MEDICINE

# DAIRY TECH

# NEWS

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## ROBOTIC MILKING SYSTEM FIELD DAY

Greetings, dairy enthusiasts! In this edition, we are excited to share some highlights of our **ROBOTIC MILK SYSTEM FIELD DAY** hosted by two large dairy farms that recently transitioned to the new system: Fred Rau Dairy and Diamond H Dairy. Participants had the opportunity to meet the owners and learn more about the day-to-day robotic system operation and what the owners learned!

**We hope you enjoy this edition!**

DAIRY TECH  
NEWSLETTER

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## UPDATE ON AMS PROJECT

This newsletter is a collaboration between the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the University of Minnesota. This project is funded by the California Dairy Research Foundation. Our objective is to better understand the decision-making process when transitioning to AMS, and the most important aspects of management before, during, and after installing the AMS. We are finalizing the data analyses and will share the results soon. Last month we had the first Robotic Milking Systems Field day at two dairies in the Central Valley. Their stories are featured in this edition of the Dairy Tech News. Enjoy!



HIGHLIGHTS

## RMS FIELD DAY

BY THAISA MARQUES



On these two amazing days, **over 50 people** had the opportunity to see how the robots work in person!

Dairies' owners talked about their dairy's history and the process of transitioning to AMS.

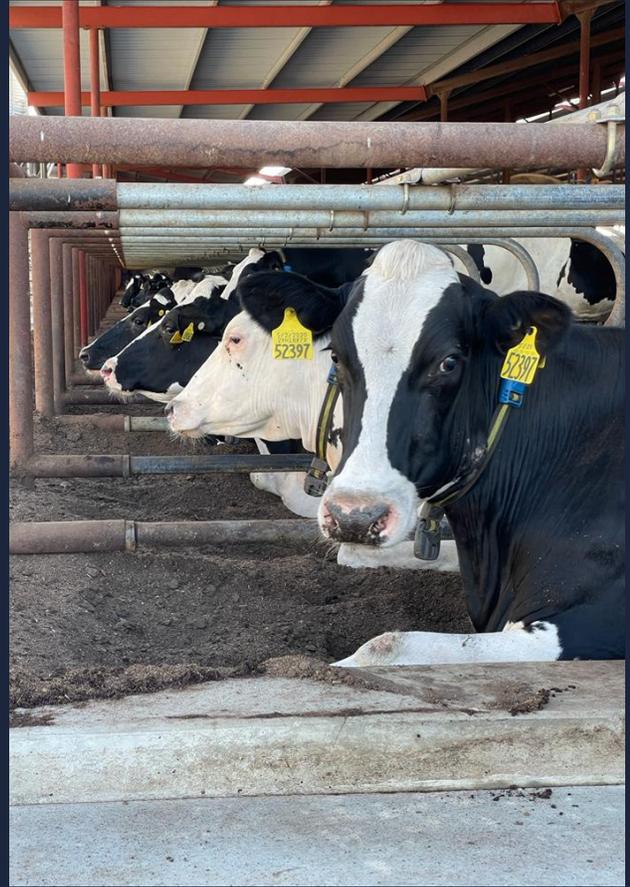
During the tour, participants had a chance to ask lots of **good questions** about managing cows, labor, water, and electricity consumption under a robotic milking system.

Farmers, industry representatives, consultants, professors, and researchers could socialize and learn from each other when lunch was served.

Diamond H Dairy is located in Chowchilla, CA. When Greg Hooker realized that he would need to make some changes to keep his kids engaged and interested in the dairy, he started to think about robots. In 2020, Greg began to implement the technology, and today they milk about 800 cows on 13 DeLaval robots. Some of the robots are housed in a new barn, and some in a retrofitted barn with room for growth if they decide to get more robots. The free stall barns have fans and sprinklers, cow brushes, and recycled manure beds, which are cleaned twice a day, and new bedding material is added once a week. Alleys are flushed 3 times a day, and the manure water is processed in a biodigester. They decided to go with guided flow- milk first system, where cows must go through the robots before having access to feed. In this flow, they ensure that cows stand after being milked and then have access to the beds. The number of cows per unit varies because they stratify them by number of lactations to be milked in the same Automatic Milking Robots. They select their best cows to be milked on the robots and kept the conventional parlor to milk the rest of the herd.

## DIAMOND H DAIRY

FAMILY'S LEGACY  
FOR NEXT GENERATION



Decisions regarding management are made according to the reports. **In this second year with the AMS**, they expect to have more information about costs and economic return to plan the implementation of more units. **Greg and Travis** also noticed an **increase in milk production and cow comfort**. Overall, they are satisfied with the decision to transition to milking robots and recommend this technology to other producers.



## FRED RAU DAIRY

EYES ON THE FUTURE

Fred Rau Dairy is located in Fresno, CA. Fred and Wilma Rau decided to transition to Automatic Milking Robots keeping in mind sustainability, animal welfare, and all the labor challenges faced by Agriculture. They saw excellent cow comfort and herd performance in several AMS dairies throughout the US. In December 2021, they completed the construction of two new barns with free stalls and the installation of 24 Lely A5 box robots. The last barn was filled in August this year. The L-shape design was chosen to help them sort the special needs cows into sorting pens. Free flow provides free access to robots, feed, and beds. AMS was set to a minimal milking interval because pellets are offered to cows in the AMS when they are ready to milk. In addition to the milking robots, they have robot feed pushers and a cow locator system, which is very helpful when finding cows. They also have fans, misters, and cow brushes for improved cow comfort. They saw better herd performance, comfort, and reduced water and electricity consumption.



According to Shonda Reid, Fred Rau's granddaughter and dairy manager, **they are extremely satisfied with the transition and feel confident it was the best decision for their family.** Despite these positive results, the transition came with challenges, such as employee and cow adaptation and overall management changes, which are expected in any transition.



# YOU CAN COLLABORATE!

Farmers, veterinarians, consultants, and companies...If you know a Robotic Milking System farm interested in sharing its experience, don't hesitate to get in touch with us!

## CONTACT US!



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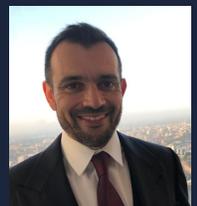
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