Scheele Organic Dairy

May 22, 2022

“Like most Canadian dairy farmers who take pride in their farm, when someone drives by or stops in we want them to see happy, healthy, productive cows,”



Left to right: Kyla, Kristen, Dave and Sierra Scheele

Dave Scheele speaks of the organic dairy. The Scheels have a sincere devotion to not only a high-quality end-product, but a high-quality experience for the animals and the family. Dave runs the farm with the help of his wife, Kristen, and his mother Corrie. His father, Ron, passed away in June of 2021, but his dedication lives on every day in the love and care of the dairy herd.

Many Threads Make a Tapestry

“All life stages of the cow are equally important, and we try to make sure they aren’t hindered at any point,” Dave says, emphasizing that though there is a special focus on certain areas, they are all interconnected.

The Scheeles strive for consistency in milking, cleaning, nutrition, and comfort in order to bring out the very best in their herd.

The decision to go organic started with an overview of the farm as an entire system. “With our current crop rotation and manure from the dairy, we felt organic farming would fit well for us,” mentions Dave. “We wanted to reduce synthetic fertilizer use, among other things.” The relationship between the cows and the crops extends from the Scheele’s 400 acres back into the barn, where careful attention to the full scope of organic management takes place.

Automation and Feed Quality

The Scheele’s find that there are many advantages involved in automating their dairy. From the routine of a milking robot to the precision of the Lely Vector feeder, predictability and convenience has benefitted their barn significantly.

“We love organic farming,” Dave adds, “but it comes with its own set of challenges.” The automatic feeder that regularly dispenses quality TMR impacts herd health, fertility, production and labour efficiency. With it, the challenge of consistency is met head-on for the largest single expense in the dairy. “We can focus on forage quality and yield knowing the mixing and dispensing is handled,” Dave elaborates.

With 30% of the cows’ dry matter coming from pasture as part of organic requirements, pasture management and the TMR composites are now the primary area of focus.

Proactive Solutions

Managing SCC in the Scheele’s organic herd was a hurdle as well, but changes have reduced the annual average to 92. Some of these

improvements include sand bedding, progressive dry cow care, and the addition of SCC testers in the robot. The dry cow care focusses on the use of superior teat sealants at dry off. Attention to cleanliness in the dry cow pens has really paid off as well.

“We keep them very well-bedded”, explains Dave, “and the difference is seen in low SCC and rate of mastitis, especially after freshening.”

Integration of their robot data into DairyComp helps keep everything accessible in one place. “We can deal with issues before they become a problem,” Dave explains, “we get quick and accurate measures for proactive decision-making.”

Lastly, Dave is grateful for the opportunity to be able to farm and carry on his father Ron’s legacy. “I learned a lot from my dad, especially in his final years,” says Dave. “While farming is always busy, my dad always did his best to put his family and faith first. Life will always have trials and joys, but if we can learn and grow through trials, we will have joy. Although my dad was never one to push for awards, I know he would have been proud of our standing.”

Progress Reports

Our renown annual Progress Reports also features profiles of top scoring dairies.

Read Our Progress Reports



Scheele Organic Dairy Farm Profile

Wallacetown, Ontario

Owners: Dave & Kristen Scheele, Corrie & Ron Scheele

Ranking:

- #1 Organic Dairy in Ontario
- #11 Organic Dairy in Canada

Herd Size: 125 lactating cows
Barn: Free-Stall
Milking System: 2 Lely A4 robots Average
Age at 1st Calving: 22.7 months
Average SCC: 92

Cows in 3rd Lactation or Higher: 44.2%

Lactanet Services:

- DairyComp
- eDHI Milk Recording
- SCC
- Management Reports