



managed grazing for dairy profits

Haverinen Dairy

Written by Kent Solberg, Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota

Wayne and Heidi Haverinen
Menagha, MN

Introduction

Haverinen Dairy has been located in Wadena County, MN for 22 years. Wayne and Heidi farm with their children – Trevor, Devon, Isak, Kyle, Lana, Karl, Edric and Thelma. The Haverinen family farms 752 acres, with 350 acres owned and 402 acres rented. They graze 325 of those acres.

Wayne included grazing in his dairy operation from its earliest days, but he found himself deep in debt and working to the point of mental and physical exhaustion. At a point around 2012 when Wayne felt they had only one year left in dairy, he attended a Dave Ramsey financial class. He realized that change was needed, and the grass-only model fit their operation really well. Going to 100% grass/forage based was a lifestyle choice as much as a financial decision. Now they no longer need to borrow money to farm and can take out-of-state family vacations.

Herd and milking

Haverinens milk their predominantly Holstein herd of 60 cows once per day in a 14-unit parabone-style¹ pit parlor built in 2007. The cows' average age is five years old and average weight is 1,350 lbs. Milk from the herd averages 3.7% protein and 4.65% butterfat. When not being milked, cows either graze or are loose housed and fed baleage on pasture. From mid-May through the end of October, all classes of cattle receive 100% of their feed from pasture. Minerals are offered cafeteria style. Calving occurs spring through fall, and calves are grafted to nurse cows. The nurse cows and calves use about one-third of the grazing acreage

Pasture and land management

Pastures are composed of primarily orchard grass, quack grass, Kentucky bluegrass, red and white clover and alfalfa. They try to maintain 25% to 30% legume in the stand. The herd is given a fresh paddock every

¹Ron Young and Barry Steevens. 2002. Chapter 11: Facilities Design. In Dairy Grazing Manual. University of Missouri Extension. <http://dairy.missouri.edu/buildings/facilitiesdesign.pdf>; accessed 9/13/2018.

12 hours, and average pasture rest period is around 40 days during the growing season. Pasture renovation is accomplished through management of grazing density and rest. No annuals are grazed, but they do grow some small grains for baleage.

cost, grass-based system. Wayne recently returned from a farm financial course in Canada that focused on analyzing all aspects of the farm. He intends to utilize this information to further refine the operation.

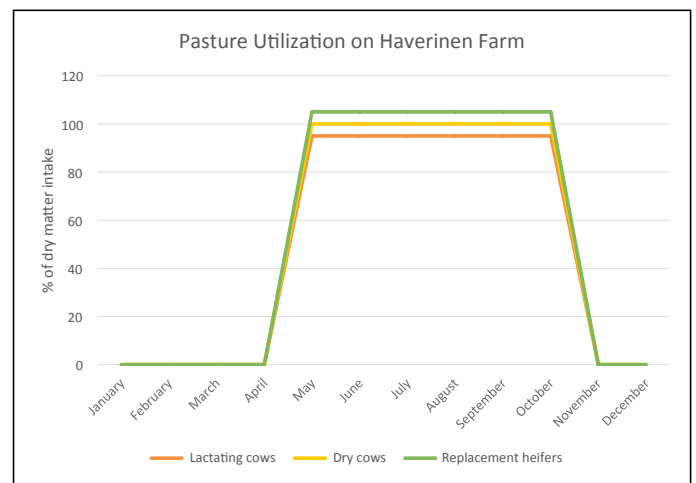
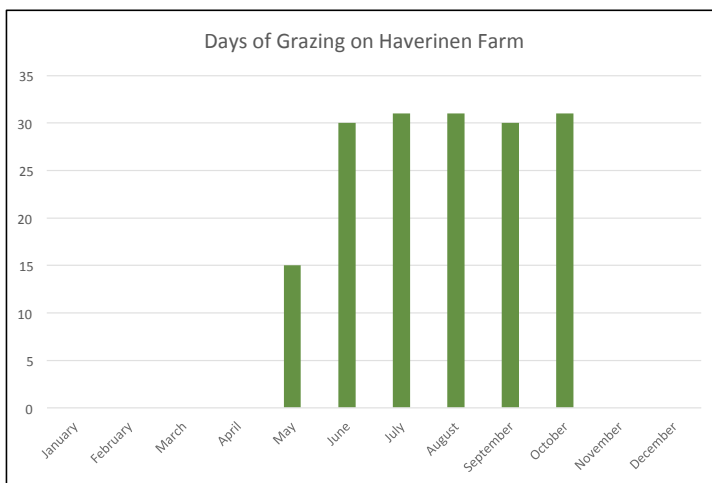
Marketing and financial management

Milk from Haverinen Dairy goes to an organic processor. The organic milk premium allows the Haverinens to gain a market advantage for their low-

Summary and key points

Wayne says: “Grass works well. Get out of the way, and it grows! Even if you don’t have money for seed or diesel, the grass will grow.”

Monthly Grazing on the Haverinen Farm in 2017				
Month	Days of Grazing	% Dry Matter Intake (DMI) from Grazing		
		Lactating cows	Dry cows	Replacement heifers
January	0	0	0	0
February	0	0	0	0
March	0	0	0	0
April	0	0	0	0
May	15	100	100	100
June	30	100	100	100
July	31	100	100	100
August	31	100	100	100
September	30	100	100	100
October	31	100	100	100
November	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0



Testing Dairy Financial Risk through Grazing and Insurance. 2018. Midwest Perennial Forage Working Group, Green Lands Blue Waters. www.greenlandsbluewater.com/dairy.html. Study conducted with funding from USDA-Risk Management Agency.

This project was conducted by members of the Midwest Perennial Forage Working Group of Green Lands Blue Waters, with funding from USDA-Risk Management Agency.



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