

# Barron County Success from the Field

## Thinking Outside the Box

### Background

Alex and Mary Olson, of Breezy Hill Dairy, in Dallas, Wis., operate a 550 cow facility. They also plant crops on 1,000 acres and strictly practice no-till. The Olson's dairy farm was purchased in 1949 by Alex's parents. Alex joined his parents in the operation in 1981 and started a partnership in 1983. The farm family is an advocate of conservation and progressive in utilizing the newest innovative technologies. In fact, they hosted the most popular Wis. farm show, Farm Technology Days, in 2013, showcasing innovative technologies on their dairy farm.

### Program Successes

Over the years, Breezy Hill Dairy has partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to plan and implement conservation practices that improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related natural resources on agricultural and forest land. Breezy Hill Dairy took their conservation one step further by partnering with NRCS through CSP, which helps farmers build on their existing conservation efforts while further strengthening their conservation efforts and sustainability of their operation.

Personal interaction and farm visits contributed to a successful conservation partnership and relationship with Alex and Mary. According to Patrick Richter, Barron County NRCS District Conservationist, "A consistent conservation message from Barron County Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) and NRCS has helped this farm succeed at reaching its goal of 100% no-till this year, in 2016." Alex and Mary are advocates of no-till and are willing partners in conservation

efforts. They enjoy collaborating with NRCS and the SWCD to receive conservation technical assistance and funding. In recent communications with Alex and Mary, they stated "We are still learning, but want to say thanks to the soil and water conservation department and the NRCS for helping us think outside the box!" Local NRCS staff and SWCD partners look forward to working with Breezy Hill Dairy in the future to continue in helping them help their land and foster their learning of conservation and sustainability.



*Above: Alex completes a no-till planting into cover crop and corn silage residue at Breezy Hill Dairy.*

