

Winnebago County Success from the Field

Saving Energy Makes Sense for Hinz Farm LLC

Background

Mike and Dan Hinz have been farming in Pickett, Wisconsin, since 1998. Together, the father and son duo operate a 290 cow dairy and 245 acres of cropland. The Hinzs invested in an Agriculture Energy Management Plan (AgEMP) to find out how they could save money and energy on their farm.

Program Successes



The new washer extractor that "lightens the load" on the farm.

NRCS first worked with Mike Hinz in 2008, when he had a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) written for the farm. The AgEMP includes a headquarters efficiency analysis, which is used to identify potential conservation practices to reduce energy consumption from non-renewable sources on the farm. The AgEMP is necessary if farmers wish to seek financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program for the recommended upgrades.

The conservation practices the Hinzs are in the process of implementing are improved lighting in the barn and milking parlor. They are also installing a high capacity washer extractor. The extractor will save on water usage and energy, decreasing loads washed from 7 to 2 daily. A high efficiency on-demand water heater will be installed to solve the hot water shortage issues on the farm. The Hinzs currently run out of hot water before all the milking equipment is clean and sanitized.

Environmental benefits of the project are a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions and improved air quality. The cost-saving in energy is \$5,567/year and 201 fewer MMBtu/year being used.



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.



Mike and Dan Hinz on their family farm.

Once farmers see how much energy they can save, Merrie Schamberger, District Conservationist, is hoping this will encourage others to get AgEMPs completed for their farms. The Hinzs commented, "we can see now when they are milking, the light is much brighter, closer to natural sunlight." Amy Moore, NRCS Engineer adds, "we're very proud the way the project has turned out so far."

Future Plans

The installation of the complete upgraded, energy-efficient improvements should be completed by 2020. The Hinzs are interested in learning more about the Conservation Stewardship Program that NRCS offers. If they do apply they will be the first farmers that can answer "yes" to the energy audit questions on the Conservation Measurement Tool.

Wisconsin Natural Resources Conservation Service

wi.nrcs.usda.gov