

# Jackson County Success from the Field

## 7th Generation Dairy Farm Diversifies with Grazing

### Background

In 1876, the Peasley Family planted their farming roots a few miles north of Black River Falls, Wisconsin, in Jackson County. Today, Peasley Dairy Farm is a Century Farm run by Dave and Tammy Peasley, along with their son Will Peasley. Will's son marks the 7th generation to be part of the farm.

The Peasleys milk 72 cows and raise an additional 82 young stock, heifers and dry cows. They also raise close to 250 acres of corn, oats, hay and pasture.

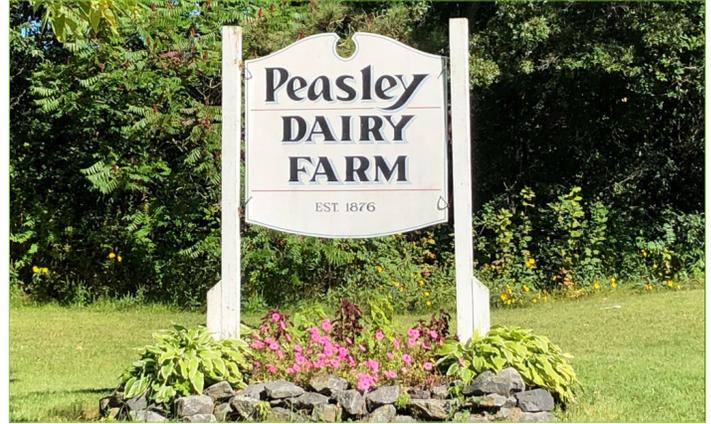
### Program Successes

The Peasleys first came to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office after Will graduated college with an interest in converting the farm to grazing. They started working with a grazing plan writer. In 2015, he signed his first Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract to fence in 19 acres. Immediately after completing that contract, Will applied for EQIP again in 2016, and was awarded a contract to fence in an additional 30 acres, as well as install livestock pipeline, a watering facility and a stream crossing.

With the conversion of some of their cropland to pasture they began noticing decreased vet bills for their cattle. "We've noticed a change in the health of our cattle since incorporating grazing into our farm. We aren't seeing the hoof problems we used to and as a result we aren't paying as much in vet bills," Will shared with the local staff while applying for a third EQIP contract to convert more land to pasture.

In 2018, Will signed another EQIP contract and is currently converting the remaining 91.5 acres of the home farm to pasture. When this contract is complete and the pasture fully established, the Peasleys expect to be getting 65% of their cattle feed directly from pasture during the growing season.

Dave then turned their attention to the farmstead and completed an Agricultural Energy Management Plan to identify improvements they could make on the farm to reduce the amount of energy used on the farm. Dave signed another EQIP contract through the On-Farm Energy Initiative in 2019 for Lighting System Improvement in the dairy barn. The new lighting system is expected to reduce the amount of energy used on lighting by more than 65%.



Established in 1876, Peasley Dairy Farm is a small, 7th generation farm that lies just outside of Black River Falls, Wisconsin.

Ryan Swatek, District Conservationist for Jackson and Trempealeau counties said, "Dave and Will continue to grow and progress as farming becomes more difficult in today's economy. NRCS has been able to assist them with their conservation goals through technical and financial assistance."

### Future Plans

Dave and Will are currently converting to organic milk production and plan on implementing more energy saving practices on the farm. They plan on applying for EQIP again in 2020 to install a plate cooler to cool the milk entering the bulk tank to improve milk quality, reduce milk cooling costs by 40% and extend the life of the bulk tank compressors.

The Peasleys have committed themselves to improving conservation on their farm and plan to continue working with NRCS in the future.

