



MORNING FRESH DAIRY

June 2021

Virtual Tour Video Transcripts

1 WELCOME TO MORNING FRESH DAIRY!



My name is Lori Graves and I want to welcome you to my family farm, Morning Fresh Dairy. The family started this dairy way back when, when they had cows and wanted to trade milk for other goods that perhaps other neighbors were offering. They started small, worked hard and didn't really have very many kids for the time. But the kids stuck with it.

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Morning Fresh Dairy has been here since 1894 and I am the fourth generation. I've got four of my children are currently working here and between the four children, we currently have three grandchildren. And the hope is that the grandkids love it as much as everyone else does.

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So, Morning Fresh Dairy is located in Bellevue, Colorado, which is in Pleasant Valley. The region of Colorado that we're in is northwest of Denver and we're on the eastern slope. So you get the beautiful mountains and we're on the edge of the mountains. So you get the valley and then you've got the plains. And I think we're in a perfect location. We've got a river that runs through it. It's just it's a beautiful place. Whoever named it Pleasant Valley did a very good job.

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Well, my husband was born and raised. His name is Rob. He loves farming, number one. And number two, he loves cows. He went to school for finance. He's very good at the big picture, very good at seeing how all the parts work together, very good at keeping an eye on everything so that the parts don't get bunged up. He's the nuts and bolts and I try to be the face of Morning Fresh Dairy. I try to make sure that people know about the things that we do here, about the work that we do and about how we want to take care of this valley and still provide what people in our community want and need.

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My oldest son, Brian, he went to school at School of Mines in Boulder, Colorado and he's a mechanical engineer. He does a lot of nuts and bolts kind of stuff in the fluid milk plant. And then my daughter, Alex, she's got two degrees, one in accounting and another in diesel mechanics. But right now, she's our accountant. She does a lot of our books. And then we've got Trevor, who is very entrepreneurial, and he is currently helping us with getting the corn planted and the farming because it's spring and that's very important. And then we have Amber, and she is currently trying to figure out what her position here is.

But the thing that she's taken on herself and that she's really enjoying doing is taking any cream that she can get her hands on and turning it into ice cream. And then we sell the ice cream in our storefront. And it's very good.

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There's so many working pieces that come together to make the family farm work. And my favorite part is actually more of a big picture view. It is the way that the family and the land have to come together to make it all work because we farm our own ground. And in order to do that from generation to generation and even just from year to year, you have to take care of it. And we decided a long time ago that we were not going to use pesticides. If you go out in one of our fields, you will get insects on you. We do our own farming and we take that and we feed the cows and then the cows give the milk and then we use the manure and we take that back to the land. It's a whole interconnected symbiosis that we have going on here.

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Around 20 years ago this Morning Fresh Dairy was just known as Graves' dairy and Graves' Dairy encompassed the land, the feed, the cows, the home delivery, the customers, the people in the office. And it was really hard to keep track of. And it was just this kind of big mishmash. And so we added definition and it helps to be able to explain to people the different components. One of the important things to me, one of my core values is that I wouldn't want to give our customers something that I wouldn't be happy to give my own family.

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We still have Graves Dairy, and that's the cows and the milking parlor and all things that are encompassed there. And then we have Morning Fresh Dairy, which is the face that people see. It's the store front. It's the home delivery. It's the milk and the grocery store. It's the company that interacts with the small local businesses and brings their products to offer to the community. All together, the people of the community help us by supporting us. They help us maintain this valley and maintain this area in a way that's beneficial for all. We are more than happy to have our customers come out and see our farm because we are so proud of the way we do it.

2

GENETICS AND REPRODUCTION



I'm Adam Vander Dussen with Alta Genetics. We're here at Morning Fresh Dairy in one of the breeding pens. I'm going to talk to you guys about how we select our genetics for bulls.

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Right now, they're selecting a balanced approach on production, health and type traits. The genetic plan on the dairy is forty, forty, twenty, for simplified terms. We put about 20 percent emphasis on type 40 percent emphasis on health and 40 percent emphasis on production. Their focus is a little bit on feet and legs, a lot on fluid milk production and a lot on daughter pregnancy rate and productive life.

So right now, they're using bulls like AltaGOPRO, AltaOLAF, and AltaTRILL. On the beef side, they're using our Sim-Angus breed.

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The repro it's fairly simple. We breed about 50 percent of the cows off of natural heat and the rest fall into the sync program, which works really well.

In the cows, we usually start with sexed semen on the first lactation and then after the second breeding we'll go to the beef. And on the second plus lactation we go with conventional and then we go to the beef semen.

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So recently this year in February, we just started changing their approach. In the past, they were using strictly conventional semen on all animals. And starting in February 2021, we started using heavily sexed semen on their heifers and mostly beef semen on their cows because they have so many heifers for replacements. In the next six to eight months, we'll probably have to modify that to adjust to have for replacement inventories.

Through Alta, we have Jon Holewinski, who has been crucial in creating a heifer replacement forecast and we have applied that here as well at Morning Fresh. And every three to six months, that needs to be updated based on repro numbers, weekly preg check data, and what their needs are on a farm – on if they want to grow, they want to maintain, or if they even want to shrink on cows.

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We have a technician who services this account who shows up and breeds seven days a week, 365 days a year. The technology that we use here is with Valley Ag software. We use DairyComp, and we also use Pocket CowCard. We use that to scan EIDs in cows' ears for shot purposes. And we'll also use Pocket CowCard to enter breedings

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Well, I choose to use Alta because the program we had before just wasn't working. I mean, it was OK, but not where I wanted it. So I decided to call Adam at Alta and he was out here to help me. So after we started working with Alta our preg check just kept going up. The conception rate increased quite a bit. We're doing really well. So now we've got a tremendous amount of heifers lined up for the future.

3

MILKING PARLOR



I'm Lorenzo Garcia and I'm the manager at Morning Fresh. And right now we're going to talk about parlor management.

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We have a 40 stall DeLaval Parlor – it's a rotary. This barn was built six years ago, so it's relatively new.

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So once the cow gets loaded, we strip her to check for mastitis or blood in the milk. And then we use the brush to clean them. We do dip the cows. We don't spray them. I think it works better on mastitis control. It's been working for us really well. And from there we kind of wait for about a minute to hang them. And then once they get done milking, we'll dip with iodine and they go out.

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Our somatic cell is really low. It ranges from 30 to 50 thousand, pretty consistent. We get a lot of milk. So it's been working well for us.

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It is just keeping the protocol in place. It's just that you've got to have a protocol in place and enforce it. If you don't enforce it, then it doesn't work. We usually have a monthly meeting, and we address all the problems and talk about different ways of making it easier and better for everybody, cows included.

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We also try to keep the barn quiet, no yelling, no screaming. And just keeping the cows and the employees safe. That's our goal.

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Well, on the new employees, we usually try to teach them the easiest job to begin with and then move them up as we go. We have four people per shift working in the parlor and the cow pusher. So it's a total of five. Each group has a team leader and he's in charge of making sure that the others do their part, and also gives him the lunch breaks and stuff and each shift will do the same.

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On mastitis, we don't really have a whole lot, so it's not a huge problem for us. We get one every now and then, but it's usually not severe.

4

COW COMFORT



My name is Lorenzo Garcia and I'm the manager at Morning Fresh Dairy. And today we're going to talk about cow comfort.

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We have sand bedding, and we also have a flush system which sends the sand into the flush lane. And then we recover it, spread it on a concrete pad, and dry it, and reuse it. Mainly, we use new sand on high producing cows like fresh cows, breeding cows, and we use a reclaimed sand on pregnant cows and some dry cows. We bed the freestalls once a week.

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After the cows calve, they go to the fresh pen, which is a small pen that we hold them for two days. And then they go to a transition pen. And then from there they go to the breeding pen.

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We separate first lactation cows and second and greater, you know, they all go together.

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We have free barns, naturally ventilated, and our pen capacities are about 200 each pen. When it's dry enough, the cows go out to their exercise lot for a certain amount of time. And they really do enjoy that.

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We don't really have heat stress. We don't have fans here because it's normally cool, so that's the nice thing about being next to the mountains.

5

HEIFER RAISING



I'm Lorenzo Garcia, manager of Morning Fresh Dairy, and we're going to talk about heifer raising.

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As soon as a baby is born, whether it's a heifer or a bull, we pick them up and carry them out of the pen within 15 minutes. No longer than that. We put them into a trailer that we maintain pretty clean and nicely bedded. We give them the first colostrum bottle within a half hour. And four hours later, they get another one and twelve hours they get another one.

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We test colostrum. We usually use a digital refractometer. We do freeze colostrum because we want to keep enough so that we'll never run out. We only freeze good quality colostrum because if it's not good quality, then it doesn't do you any good.

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After they get their third feeding, they move to the calf hutches and they'll stay there for 60 days. On the hutches, we normally feed straight milk replacer, no whole milk at all. And it works for us. And then we'll move them to a group pen. Those are normally twenty-five head per pen, and they'll stay there for three months and they'll move here to my left. Once they get here, they're normally in seventy-five head groups and then they just keep moving on down until they get to the breeding pen.

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Here at Morning Fresh, heifers are eligible to be bred after three hundred eighty-five days old, but we also breed them off of size as well. The heifers get bred the first three services with sexed semen. The next service is with conventional semen and the fifth and last service is with beef semen.

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After about four hundred days old, the animals that have not been bred off of natural heats are given a shot of prostaglandin. And we breed off of that shot of prostaglandin. Seven days later, if anything has not been bred, we give another shot of prostaglandin. And any animals that do not come into heat after the two prostaglandin shots, we use a CIDR sync to breed them.

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And once we get them pregnant, we get them out of the breeding pen and out to the pregnant pen behind me and they'll stay there until they get moved to the maternity area and we start all over again.

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The biggest challenge as far as climate, it's snowstorms. They can really get bad, but we'll just clean it up and keep going.

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What I'm most proud of, of this whole operation is the mortality rate. We rarely lose an animal. A quality heifer gives you quality milk, so I focus on quality.

6

MILK BOTTLING AT MORNING FRESH DAIRY



Hi, my name's Bryan. I'm a process engineer at Morning Fresh Dairy, and we are standing in the primary processing room.

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I'm a fifth-generation dairy farmer. We've been doing vertically integrated farm-to-customer delivery of milk since about 1912.

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Everything in this building is basically designed to process the milk as gently as possible.

The advantage Morning Fresh has is everything is on site. So the cows are milked 20 yards away from where it's processed. We can milk a cow in first shift, process it the same day, and have it on a customer's doorstep and under six hours. Everything is close, fast, fresh.

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We've got whole milk, two percent, one percent and skim. We also produce a whole milk cream-top, two percent, and we also do a lactose-free two percent. Probably our flagship is chocolate milk. Our special products are every month we come up with a random flavor I think this month is salted caramel. We do a strawberry milk, which is like a quarter actual strawberries.

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We bottle in glass bottles, which helps with the thermal capacity of the bottle helps get it to the customer fresher, especially when it's 95 out. They're fully reusable, so the only thing you're throwing away or trying to recycle is the cap, which is a lot less ecological damage than our gallon jugs

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This plant was designed to process the milk as gently as possible. We go straight from the cow to a glass bottle to our customer. Basically, everything in between is wide-channel, low-frequency pumps. Everything we can do to process the milk gently and get it straight into a nice reusable glass bottle.

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So right after it comes out of the cow, it goes through a couple sets of filters to remove any fine particulates or anything that didn't get cleaned off in the first place by the milkers. Immediately after filtration, it goes into a press chiller which drops us from cow temperature down to 35oF or 36oF for storage. And that gets transferred into three storage silos and then those just rotate for each three shifts, fill up clean in between and we kind of just rotate between those three all day.

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After being chilled, we store the milk anywhere from four to twenty-four hours. Milk on the weekends or any time the processing plant at Morning Fresh isn't running is sold to Noosa Yogurt, which is about 100 yards from where we're standing.

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During the week, any milk will be brought over to our primary processing room where we separate into cream, skim, two percent, all the flavors of milk. We've got a mixing tank where we can make chocolate milk or any of our special flavors like strawberry or chocolate mint.

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The majority of our products are short time pasteurized, so that's the HTST standing behind me. In the United States, HTST is high temp short time. By international standards compared to UHT milk, it's a very gentle processing method. HTST in the US is 165 for fifteen seconds.

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Whole milk – we don't standardize that. So it's three point five up to four point two, whatever the cow produces is what we put in the bottle for our whole milk and our cream top. Whole milk is homogenized so you don't get that cream on top. Homogenized milk is homogenized, so you get a consistent product throughout the glass. Almost everything else is homogenized. Cream top and a couple of our special flavors are the only ones we don't homogenize in-house.

3:08

And then post-pasteurizing, all of it is bottled on site, and most of it's delivered through our own distribution network on wholesale trucks, refrigerated refo trucks you see on the highway we do a good deal of local home delivery, which is a guy in a step van, very traditional kind of home delivery method. We bring it to a milk box on your porch.

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MILK MARKETING & COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Hi, my name's Pinky. I am a digital content manager for Morning Fresh Dairy and I am standing in front of our front office and café. We'll be talking a little bit about what we do to get our milk out to, out to the masses. How we go from farm to table, and how we do things like tours, to do all of our community outreach.

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A lot of our customer outreach is through things like events and things like tours. We give anywhere from 12 to 16 tours a week on average open to the public, and then we also do private tours for wholesale businesses and things like that are just curious about the farm. Schools and things like that as well come through from time to time.

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We really want them to come here to the farm to see in person how much we care about the cows, how much we care about the quality of the milk. And we can really show people every single step, you know, knowing that we use companies like Alta and knowing that we have things like our milking rotary to just make every single step of the process comfortable, and at the same time being good stewards of the land. Largely things like tours, events, and we also do a lot of work with charity. Happy cows, sustainability and high quality milk all really go hand in hand and I think Morning Fresh has found a lot of the ways to perfect that.

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We have a series of delivery drivers, 'milkmen' if you will, who take Morning Fresh Dairy trucks and deliver it all around northern Colorado. We deliver Monday through Friday in the afternoon so that when you get home from work, you can have nice, fresh, local milk sitting on your doorstep.

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While we primarily focus on our milk and we do bottle and deliver our own milk, orange juice and lemonade as well as cream and a few other things. We also distribute other local businesses that do things sustainably and efficiently the way that we do with a focus on quality. Things like granola, we deliver to a lot of coffee shops. We deliver to several thousand homes all around northern Colorado.

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I really love everything about the dairy. I get to spend a lot of time teaching people, children, wholesaler's, other businesses about what it means to make a dairy environmentally friendly, sustainable, but still delicious and high quality.

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My other motive for working on a dairy farm is I drink about a gallon of milk a day. It puts me in a pretty good place for testing new flavors!