

Herd Management, Next Generation Style

Technology leaves nothing unchanged. It has altered the way we buy everything—from dog food to dinner—and the way we communicate with family and friends. It has even changed the way we get news, and, how we respond to that news.

The dairy industry is not immune to the technology evolution either. As the next generation enters the work force and begins to assume operation of the dairy, management on the farm is changing too. These young people, who grew up in an electronics-filled, socially-networked world, look for new products to manage the herd differently than their predecessors. Often, their approach to career and family also differs from that of their parents. And their challenges are a whole new ballgame.

The *Jersey Journal* wanted to get a glimpse of what is happening on dairies that are being transitioned to Generations X and Y. What technology and apps are they using? What facility changes were made to accommodate their return? What are they doing to transition the farm? What tips can they offer?

In the roundtable that follows, five young Jersey breeders from across the country were invited to answer questions like these. They are from a diverse range of operations, milking a couple hundred cows to thousands. Two farms began processing their own milk to allow future generations to return to the farm. Others expanded the herd. All are traveling a road that leads to farm ownership.

Though inherent differences between the generations exist, there remains a common thread that weaves them together—a burning desire to care for cattle, breed good cows and operate profitable dairies. The dairy legacy continues with this generation, even if the business itself looks a tad bit different from generations past.

Roundtable Participants

Clark Egelston, Fultonville, N.Y.: This fourth-generation Jersey breeder owns Glen Meadows Farm in partnership with his father, Dennis, and gets a hand with its operation from his wife, Mackenzie, uncle Bill, cousin Neil Walton and three full-time employees.



Clark Egelston and his wife, Mackenzie, operate Glen Meadows Farm with his family. He and his father, Dennis, recently completed a buy/sell agreement with his uncle, Bill, to transition the farm to a partnership between Clark and Dennis. The plan also takes into consideration options for Clark's retirement.

The 340-cow Registered Jersey herd has a 2017 lactation average of 19,307 lbs. milk, 1,001 lbs. fat and 721 lbs. protein. The herd ranks among top 25% in the nation for genetic merit with a herd average JPI of +51. Glen Meadows Farm consists of 300 acres of owned land and 185 acres of rented land and was the first in the state to adopt a rotational grazing plan. Clark was a member of the inaugural Jersey Youth Academy in 2009.

Trey Huffard, Crocket, Va.: Trey and his father, Jim, and uncle, John, own and operate Huffard Farms, which has been in the family for more than 200 years and breeding Registered Jerseys since 1929. The 400-cow Registered Jersey herd has a 2017 lactation average of 21,124 lbs. milk, 993 lbs. fat and 783 lbs. protein. The herd ranks among the top 25% for JPI, with an average index of +47. The Huffards have also been operating Duchess Dairy with Joey Blankenship and Dan Slemm since 2010, bottling about 25% of the milk produced by the herd using the Queen of Quality label. Trey attended Jersey Youth Academy in 2011.

Derrick Josi, Tillamook, Ore.: Derrick and his wife, Kaycee, and parents, Don and Desi, own and operate Wilsonview Jerseys, a 500-cow Registered Jersey herd. The herd ranks #16 in the nation for genetic merit with a herd average JPI of +73. Ninety percent of the cows have been genotyped; 51 rank among the top 1.5% for GJPI. The 2017 lactation average stands at 20,308 lbs., milk, 960 lbs. fat and 702 lbs. protein. The family markets milk to Tillamook Cheese and farms 450 acres, primarily for grass silage production and grazing.

Amy Maxwell, Donahue, Iowa: Cinnamon Ridge Dairy is owned and operated by brothers John and Edwin Maxwell, and John's daughters, Amy and Kara, and wife, Joan. Animals in the Max-Lord partnership, owned by Amy and Heather Lord, are also housed at Cinnamon Ridge. The 200-cow herd milked with four Lely robots leads the nation for protein production with a 2017 lactation average of 25,701 lbs. milk, 1,220 lbs. fat and 985 lbs. protein. The fully-genotyped herd has a herd average JPI of +56.



Trey Huffard and his father, Jim, and uncle, John, operate Huffard Farms. Milk from the 400-cow herd is bottled at Duchess Dairy, a business venture with Joey Blankenship and Dan Slemm. The Huffards have worked together trying new ideas to improve profitability and efficiency. Trey and his wife, Savannah, have a year-old son, Easton.



Derrick Josi and his wife, Kaycee, operate Wilsonview Jerseys with his parents, Don and Desi, in Tillamook, Ore. Changes have been made to the farm to improve sustainability, including a more efficient manure management program and new milking facilities that are no longer located in a flood plain.



Amy Maxwell, second left, and her family operate Cinnamon Ridge Dairy in northeast Iowa. The Maxwells also operate an agri-tourism business and make cheese on the farm. Pictured with Amy are her sister, Kara, uncle, Edwin, father, John, and his wife, Joan.

The Maxwells also process cheese on the farm and operate a farm tour business. Amy was a member of the inaugural Jersey Youth Academy and received the Fred Stout Experience award in 2011.

Brent Wickstrom, Hilmar, Calif.: Brent and his father, Mike, uncle, Scott, and grandfather, Duane, own and operate Wickstrom Jersey Farm Inc., a 2,400-cow Registered Jersey dairy. The herd has a 2017 lactation average of 23,123 lbs. milk, 1,145 lbs. fat and 841 lbs. protein (third in the country for fat among herds with 750 or more cows) and ranks #21 in the nation for herd average JPI at +69. Wickstrom Jersey Farms is a charter member of both Project Equity and REAP. Brent was active in 4-H, FFA and other youth organizations growing up and recently received the California Young Jersey Breeder Award.

Questions

Why did you decide to pursue a career in dairy farming?

Egelston: Dairy farming is as much a lifestyle to me as a career. I was brought up on our dairy farm and quickly fell in love with the animals, the outdoors, the ideals of farming, and, of course, the Jersey cow. More importantly, the people in this industry drew me into this career. The dairy industry is full of people that share the same ideals, values and drive as me. They understand the hardships and obstacles that need to be overcome to survive in this ever-changing industry. These people are my family and close friends.

Huffard: I have always enjoyed it and was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to come home and farm alongside my father and uncle.

Josi: Growing up on the farm, I always knew I wanted to be involved in the dairy industry. It's a great industry full of people with a passion you don't find often in other careers. The opportunity to come home to the farm became an option while I was at college, so I took it and have never looked back.

Maxwell: Growing up milking cows in a 40-cow tie stall, I always appreciated the joys and challenges of dairy farming. It is very rewarding to see years of breeding decisions result in cow families with generations of highly productive cows. Adopting new technologies, such as robotic milking and genomic testing, ensure that I'm always learning and striving to improve. With no single

right way to dairy, I've always been excited to find out what works on other farms, what direction the industry may be headed, and what I can glean to advance our farm.

Wickstrom: I grew up on the dairy and from a young age spent time around the cows doing little tasks that grew into additional responsibilities as I grew. So, I have looked forward to becoming a dairy farmer my entire life. I have always known it was what I wanted to do. Then, after college, I got to come home and start working full time and helping the previous generations work toward making a more profitable business.

What is your education, or what training did you undertake to prepare for your career?

Egelston: I have a bachelor's degree in dairy science from Virginia Tech. The years of work I did on the family farm before college were equally important in preparing me for my career. I started milking



Brent Wickstrom operates Wickstrom Jersey Farms with his family in Hilmar, Calif. The third-generation Registered Jersey breeder has adopted new technology and made facility changes to better manage the 2,400-cow herd for cow comfort and task management and increase high-end genetics.

cows with my father at the age of five and have followed him and my uncle around as an apprentice since.

Huffard: I earned a bachelor's degree in dairy science from Virginia Tech. I traveled to many dairies around the country during college, to learn how other farmers operate and bring home as much knowledge as possible.

Josi: I dual enrolled at Oregon State University and Linn-Benton Community College, majoring in animal science. Two years in, I decided that home is where I wanted to be, so came back to the farm in 2004. Though I have no regrets about that decision, I do regret not finishing my degree. So, kids stay in school!

Maxwell: I graduated from Iowa State University with a bachelor's degree in economics and agricultural business in 2011. Following graduation, I interned at High Lawn Farm, Lee, Mass., Forest Glen Jerseys, Dayton, Ore., Beer's Robo Holsteins, Mascoutah, Ill., and Meyer Electric and Farm, Breeze, Ill. My Fred Stout Experience was fulfilled at High Lawn Farm in Lee, Mass.

Wickstrom: After high school graduation, I attended Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo and graduated in 2013 with a major in dairy science and minors in agriculture business and crop science. Of all my college courses, I got the most value out of Dairy Challenge. We won the Western Regional competition in 2012. But, what was especially informative to me was the opportunity to tour dairies throughout California, where I saw how different operations accomplish things in different ways.

What new technology has been implemented at the farm since your return?

Egelston: Since my return, we now use automatic calf feeders, a forage defacer, Koster moisture testers, Excel spreadsheets for feed management and business profitability breakdowns and JerseyMate.

Huffard: In late 2014, we installed three Biotic ID-TEK automatic calf feeders. We chose these machines because of price, as we could buy four units for the price of one Förster-Technik unit at the time. The automatic feeders were more labor intensive than anticipated. Therefore, cost savings on labor were nonexistent. As well, we were spending roughly 30% more on powder milk because we could not use waste milk from the milk herd and expired milk from our milk plant (as we had done before). We did not feel the increased rate of gain was worth the additional costs. In less than one year, we sold the units and went back to limit feeding.

I purchased ultrasound equipment and now do all pregnancy checks on my own.

Josi: Since I've been home, all records have been transferred to DHI-Provo on the computer (yes, I know that aged me). We have moved to online record keeping for manure management and become very involved with IVF, moving away from our traditional embryo transfer program.

Maxwell: T4C, the Lely robotic software, is used for herd management. TMRTracker is used for feed rations and mixing. All heifers and selected bulls are genomically tested and results evaluated using infoJersey.

Wickstrom: After I graduated from college we started an IVF program at the dairy in 2014. The goal was to get superior genetics out of our top animals and implant them in mid to low-level genetic animals. We are now transferring around 1,000 embryos per year.

What equipment/facility upgrades have been made at the farm since your return?

Egelston: In the past year, we have built two new barns. One is free stall housing for short bred and pregnant heifers and dry cows. The other is a compost bedded-pack for young stock and third-plus lactation dry cows. As well, we constructed another pond to supply water to the new barn. We purchased a twin screw vertical mixer for feed and a sheepsfoot roller to pack forage bunks during harvest.

Huffard: In the late 1990s, Dad and John installed an AFIFARM system for the lactating herd. This allows us to track milk weights, conductivity and activity during every milking for each cow. In 2015, we overhauled this system, installing new flow meters and displays to each stall.

With the increasing emphasis on milk quality, we installed a chiller and a plate cooler to keep PI and LPC counts at a level that would qualify for a bonus from our milk cooperative.

We have placed cameras in the milking parlor and tank room to monitor milker performance and keep an eye on the tanks. A calf barn was constructed to house the extra calves we are now raising due to heavy use of sexed semen.

Josi: 2004—completely remodeled our parlor, converting it from a double-eight to a double-12 herringbone. 2005—built a new dry manure storage for our heifer facility. 2007—invested in an underground mainline for manure and irrigation and a dragbar for application, bought two irrigation reels and built a new liquid manure storage tank. 2009—started leasing a second dairy several miles down the road, where we continue to milk today. 2010—built a new heifer barn to relieve overcrowding (somehow we are overcrowded again). 2013—purchased a neighboring parcel of

land that is out of the flood plain. 2016—started and finished phase one of our new facility, which includes two new bunkers and a commodity barn.

Maxwell: In 2012, a new barn was built for the Lely robots with tourism in mind. It includes a robot viewing room, second-level meeting room overlooking the barn and cheese-processing room with viewing windows. The barn also has a residence for the herd manager (Amy) and cheese-making and storage areas. Our old tie stall barn was converted to dry cow freestall housing, a maternity pen with in-floor heat was completed in 2013, and a heifer barn was finished in 2014. Mister nozzles were added at the air intake in the tunnel-ventilated robot barn in 2017 to increase cow comfort during extreme heat.

Wickstrom: We began construction on a new transition/special needs facility in early 2017 and began moving cows in July 2017. The facility houses all dry, close-up and hospital animals. As well, we added fans in all milk strings to help with summer heat abatement.

Why were these changes made? How have they changed efficiency, productivity, morale, etc.?

Egelston: Most of these improvements and additions have been made to more efficiently handle more animals at once and cut rearing costs per animal, to improve internal growth and production.

Automatic feeders: saves on calf feeding labor, allows us to feed more milk than we could with the traditional, twice-a-day feeding and propels growth. This allows for earlier first breeding and age at calving and a quicker recovery of rearing expenses.

Forage defacer: keeps the forage faces cleaner and fresher and eliminates unnecessary waste of feed during feeding.

Excel spreadsheets: help us determine which rations are best for production and profitability and what areas we need to change to become more profitable.

Morale: It improves when there is a direct correlation between a management change and increased production/profitability. Morale decreases when it is apparent that no further changes to be made to improve profitability.

Huffard: Before the installation of the chiller and plate cooler, we were relying on older tanks to cool the milk to 35°, which took too long. With the chiller and plate cooler, we are meeting our PI and LPC goals, which has translated into dollars from our co-op and extended shelf life for our bottled products.

The cameras in the parlor hold the milkers to a higher level of performance.

The ultrasound saves us a weekly preg-

nancy check fee of \$4 per head.

Josi: We made the improvements to our manure management to cut down on labor, be more efficient and have a smaller environmental footprint. All other improvements were necessary for us to build our new milking facility out of the flood plain we had milked in for decades.

Maxwell: New facilities were needed as the herd grew from 40 in a tie-stall barn to 200 milked with Lely robots. Heifer growth and efficiency has improved dramatically with the new barn, which provides more ventilation and bunk space. Cow longevity and comfort increased with the robotic barn, sand-bedded free stalls, and climate control. Feed efficiency and accuracy improved with TMRTracker and bunks being under roof.

Wickstrom: This construction gave us room to max out the rotary parlor that was built in 2010. Because all transition animals (dry cows and close-up cows) were moved to a single location, this freed up the stalls that are closest to the milking barn. The transition process was streamlined to a few pen moves, so greatly increased productivity and allowed us to milk another 500 cows on the main part of the dairy. Our efficiency improved tremendously because we are producing additional milk without an increase in labor. The fans have been a no-brainer, as we have seen increased milk flow of about 5-7 lbs. per cow in the summer and conception rate increases of 8-10% from June-September.

How did you work with others on the farm to adopt the changes? Did you have to overcome obstacles or challenges? If so, please explain.

Egelston: My father and uncle, who were partners at the time, were very receptive to new ideas and changes I offered out of college. There really were no obstacles. I shared the knowledge I had gained and explained how it could be used to improve our operation and profitability.

Huffard: The day after I graduated in the spring of 2013, Dad and John passed management of the herd over to me. They have welcomed my ideas and been willing to give them a try. If there was a change I felt we should make, we had a meeting about it, and made the correct decision. There is always a "best" answer, and we always seem to agree on what that is.

The biggest challenge was getting a much older workforce to listen to a 20-year-old fresh out of college. We quickly let go two employees as I could do my job along with theirs. Just three of the eight employees that were with us when I started four years ago remain. Though we have since been through other employees, I am happy

with the crew I currently work with every day.

Josi: We all share the common goal of trying not to go broke. All investments are designed around that philosophy. Although, at times, it seems I have to give my dad a nudge to get projects started (like the next phase in our new facilities: hint, hint, Don Josi).

Maxwell: Learning to operate the software for Lely robots and TMRTracker was challenging at first. But, training from the helpful company representative made the transition easier. With time, the software has become second nature.

Wickstrom: We had to change milking schedules from 3x to 4x on fresh cows and 2x on the rest of the herd to accommodate a larger milking herd. So, that took a little adjustment. Employees had to get used to doing similar tasks in a new location. But, in the end, it removed a lot of the stress for employees working with the transition animals because they are now all housed in a facility designed specifically for their needs and stage of lactation.

What stage are you in transitioning farm management from the previous generation? What resources have you utilized to help with this?

Egelston: I am now a 50% partner with my father after recently completing a buy/sell agreement with my uncle. The plan considers my retirement options down the road as well. I didn't rely on outside resources as my father, uncle and I patterned the agreement much like the one that had previously transitioned the farm from my grandfather to them.

With the move and an expansion of the farm, we have hired non-family labor to help with some of the tasks that had been done by my uncle, who was full-time manager prior to retirement.

Huffard: We have an estate plan in place. However, as the tax laws evolve, we will reevaluate our estate planning to take advantage of these changes. We regularly discuss this with our C.P.A. and our investment adviser.

Josi: I would say we are in the middle of the transition. We have a buy sell agreement in which I am gaining shares in the corporation. Once we are equal shareholders, Dad says he will be ready to retire. Nobody believes him, though.

Maxwell: As herd manager, I make decisions and perform tasks that pertain to the animals—breeding, health treatments, pen moves, culling, etc. I'm very fortunate that my father created a position for me to return to the farm and gives me complete autonomy over these decisions. While I frequently seek his counsel, along with that

of our veterinarian, nutritionist and others, these calls are mine to make. Quarterly farm meetings with advisors and employees are a great time to reflect on the outcome of past decisions and plan future decisions.

Wickstrom: At this point, I manage all the daily tasks involved with the dairy, employees and cows. We employ 23 people on the dairy, so I try to ensure we are all on the same page and keep the dairy running as it should be. My dad, uncle and grandpa are still here on a daily basis, actively involved with everything that happens and ensuring nothing is overlooked.

What apps and programs are you using to make farm management more efficient?

Egelston: JerseyMate, Excel and PCD-art.

Huffard: I use infoJersey to quickly look up an animal's performance progeny report before making a mating decision and PC Dart's PocketDairy app to input all health events, treatments, calvings, breedings, etc. The app is synced to the farm computer which has made me more efficient with my daily tasks. I have made many spreadsheets with Excel to track feed inventories and some expenses.

Josi: We use DHI-Provo for our records and Odark for our manure and nutrient management and record keeping.

Maxwell: T4C (Lely robotic software), infoJersey and TMRTracker improve farm management efficiency. Additionally, our nutritionist uses TeamViewer to monitor T4C and TMRTracker. This allows him to always have current information about the herd. I use the Cool Cow app to monitor temperatures and make ventilation and sprinkler decisions. Dropbox, Google Drive and WhatsApp are tools used for communication and file sharing. Cameras located in the maternity pen and the robot room and throughout other buildings help me keep an eye on cow activity. They also allow me to manage off the farm.

Wickstrom: We use DairyComp 305 and EZfeed to manage animals and feed. Pocket CowCard enables us to do pen moves, treatments, vaccinations, vet checks and many other tasks as quickly and precisely as possible. All our milk strings are 300-330 cows, so the quicker we can get in and out of pens to reduce lockup time the better, especially in our hot summer months. Our milk barn is equipped with daily milk weights that are assigned to individual cows via their EID chips. I cannot imagine running a dairy today, when efficiency is paramount to survival, without any of these tools. Because of this, we are always looking for the next thing that can help us become more efficient.

How have apps changed the way you do business (manage employees, cows, feed and health, interact with customers/community, etc.)?

Egelston: Essentially, apps have made us more efficient. We can do the same job faster. New technologies enable us to make more informed decisions and better trace and evaluate our decisions.

Huffard: Mobile apps save time and increase accuracy. Manually transferring written records takes an enormous amount of time and increases the error rate.

Josi: Apps have made farming easier because of the information I can access any time.

Maxwell: Apps make it easier to work off the farm. I can check T4C (which gives information on cow rumination, activity production, etc.), farm cameras and TMRTracker anywhere I have internet connection. Social media makes it easier to interact directly with consumers and promote our product sales.

Wickstrom: Primarily, these tools help us see what is really happening on the farm every day. A lot of companies are working on apps that can incorporate all farm inputs into a single location, to give a “snapshot” of all the vital information that helps us manage the farm. Using these tools, we can keep a pulse on different areas of the operation, from breeding to feeding accuracy, to make sure we aren’t cutting corners or overlooking things.

What “dream” apps and programs could help you better manage the farm?

Egelston: I dream of an app that would allow me to complete my crop reporting and track manure spreading.

Huffard: I wish there was an app that could compile all the feed brokerages in a particular region of the U.S., and post their commodity prices on a daily basis as they react to market changes. Currently, I call eight or nine different feed brokers to get the best price to ensure I am not leaving money on the table. I have seen variances up to \$80/ton between different feed brokers on the same day.

Also, I would like a Jersey app that would allow me to quickly pull up an animal’s genomics/pedigree, etc.

Josi: I think the apps we have now just need to be refined. Perhaps an app where farmers can find deals on equipment or feed would be useful.

Maxwell: I would love a program which would integrate the data available from infoJersey and T4C. I could envision many benefits: registrations would automatically pull the data from T4C (calving date, breeding date, service sire, etc.) and input registration number and name; JerseyMate

choices could be displayed on the T4C heat probability report; and performance progeny reports, production data, and genomic data could be included on the cow card in T4C.

Wickstrom: I think these companies working on the “dairy snapshot” apps have a good idea of what a dream app would be. I think as soon as they have precise, trustworthy and real-time information that can be accessed anytime, they will be a key part of our management.

What AJCA programs/tools are most valuable for herd management?

Egelston: I most frequently use JerseyMate, BullsEye and performance progeny reports. JerseyMate and BullsEye are my most-used and valuable tools as they help me purchase semen and then mate those bulls with the most-suitable females on the farm.

Huffard: The infoJersey program is used almost every time a stick of semen is used on the farm. The performance progeny reports are big for me. We also order genomic tests and review results through infoJersey.

Josi: I use infoJersey to register animals, order genotyping tests and review genomic results. As well, we use JerseyMate.

Maxwell: I use infoJersey to register animals, request genomic tests, transfer animals and look at performance progeny reports. I make mating decisions using JerseyMate, the inbreeding calculator, and the Herd Genomic PTA Report that is included with monthly genomic evaluations from the AJCA. All the programs uniquely aid in herd management, none more beneficial than another. I believe the AJCA staff is the most valuable tool.

Wickstrom: All cows and heifers are mated with JerseyMate. Whenever we pick a new group of A.I. bulls to use, I run them through the program and give our breeder the mating lists to use. We genomic test all ET calves as well as the top 20% of the herd through the AJCA, so infoJersey is also used to check genomic results. Occasionally, I run a virtual pedigree when deciding IVF matings.

Do you use social media to communicate with community, provide an element of transparency for management practices and educate consumers? If so, how is it used and how often?

Egelston: Personally, I do not. However, my mother and wife use social media to help us communicate with community, to provide an element of transparency about our operation and promote dairy. Though it is used occasionally, we don’t use it enough.

Huffard: I should take more time to interact with the public on social media platforms, as many of my peers do this very

well. But, I stretch my time so thin, it just doesn’t make the priority list. As the general public becomes further removed from agriculture, this is going to be increasingly important for our industry moving forward.

Josi: Yes, I am active on Facebook and Instagram, blogging as Tillamook Dairy Farmer. I started a little over a year ago and have been showing the day-to-day life on the farm. On Facebook, I usually post once a day and make it relevant to what’s happening on the farm. I use my blog to help teach the public about current issues, such as GMOs and animal care.

Maxwell: I run a Facebook page for The Country Cupboard, our on-farm store that sells beef, pork, cheese, eggs and baked goods. I also post to this page about products, farm events, accolades and such. Additionally, I operate a page for the dairy that is mostly used to market animals, such as postings about animals consigned to sales.

Wickstrom: We do have a Facebook page for the farm—Wickstrom Jersey Farms, Inc. It is used to show what happens day-to-day here and give consumers some knowledge about our industry. We also use it to market animals we are consigning to various sales around the country. We try to post regularly, once a week or so.

What tips would you give others who are trying to incorporate the next generation in their farms or transition management to the next generation?

Egelston: Make sure the business can handle another family or partner. And, make sure each incoming partner has something new to offer that will aid in the success of the business.

For the older generation passing the farm down, cover your own assets and make sure you have enough put away for your personal retirement. Don’t bank on selling the farm for your retirement. Likewise, to the generation taking on the business, have a backup plan. Don’t put all your eggs in one basket; these are trying times with a grim outlook on the foreseeable future. Don’t put you and your family in a situation that depends on the sole success of your operation.

Diversify your operation. Pick a few things you are interested in and good at and attempt to do it better than your competitor. Don’t be afraid to try something new. What worked for the last 50 years might not be the best option any more. Think and talk it through with your partners. Use break-evens to assist.

The reality is, it is becoming harder to pass the farm to the next generation. And, in many cases, it is no longer feasible. Dairies are becoming larger, making it much more difficult for a college graduate, likely with student loan debt and no assets, to assume

the financial scenario a dairy represents.

This response may be viewed as being negative. However, for both generations, old and new, there is hope because it is still being done. The transition process needs to be well thought-out and handled responsibly. If, at the end of the day, transition is not feasible, there are many great professions that fall under the dairy industry. There is no shame in making a responsible decision, even if that may mean the ending of a family farm. Your predecessors do not wish for you to take on a business that would mean constant hardship on you and your family.

Huffard: Every situation is different for every farm or business. The younger generation must realize that the older generation has been in business for a long time. They have gained a wealth of knowledge and poured more sweat and equity into the business than they can comprehend at this point. The older generation must make the younger generation prove on paper that a proposed change is a good one. If the numbers check out, then the idea must be seriously considered and discussed. The only thing constant is change, and that must be realized by all ages.

Josi: You should be realistic about your situation. Ask yourself if the farm can handle another family (financially).

If you are coming home, realize that you can't force the previous generation to sell you the farm just because you are their child. They need to be comfortable with your abilities. Come to terms with the fact that, just because you're ready to take over, doesn't mean your parents are ready to retire.

Don't be afraid to reach out to your agricultural associations. Many of them have resources available to help with the process. Most importantly, remember that this is a business decision and take actions that keep it that way.

Maxwell: Have clearly defined roles for all involved on the farm. As well, make sure everyone understands who makes final decisions on the various aspects on the farm. Once the structure is in place, stick to it, and use clear communication to avoid and resolve conflicts.

Wickstrom: We are operating in a pretty exciting time in the dairy industry, regarding technology, at least. I am fortunate to have been given opportunities to incorporate new technology in the operation, to help the bottom line, which is especially important now while the industry is struggling with such low milk prices. I would encourage the older generation to allow the younger generation to think outside the box as much as possible, and then reign in the wild ideas. The two working together make a pretty good team.



Programs and Apps

Some of the apps and programs mentioned in the roundtable are shown below.

AJCA Programs

BullsEye: free program to search, sort and select marketed Jersey bulls in real time. Bull lists can be exported to JerseyMate through infoJersey.com. Available at bullseye.usjersey.com or as a link while logged into JerseyMate.

Performance Progeny Reports: free report showing sire, dam and progeny for females, along with production, appraisal and genetic information. Available on the infoJersey dashboard by entering animal registration name or number in "Enter Animal(s) Search Term" field.

Virtual Pedigree: free report showing information for an imaginary animal. Available on the infoJersey dashboard by checking the "Non-Recorded" button, then entering information for sire and dam. Great for determining genetic merit from variety of matings.

JerseyMate: computerized mating program, free to REAP herds. Unlimited access and running of reports. Access by logging into infoJersey, then selecting from the "TOOLS" dropdown menu.

Inbreeding Calculator: free tool to obtain inbreeding coefficient for up to five individuals or five potential matings at a time. Available through infoJersey, in the "TOOLS" dropdown menu.

Genomic Prospect List: one of the default reports available to REAP herds using HerdView, which is accessible under "TOOLS" menu in infoJersey. Can be customized.

Genomic Results: reports showing genomic results (weekly or official) for animals that have been genotyped. Access by logging into infoJersey, then selecting "GENOMICS" from the "SERVICES" dropdown menu.

Software

AfiFarm: herd management software developed by Afimilk Ltd.

DairyComp 305: herd management software developed and supported by Valley Agricultural Software.

PC Dart: herd management program developed by Dairy Records Management Systems. Available through DHIA and supported by local DHIA staff.

EZfeed: feed management program developed and supported by DHI-Provo.

TMR Tracker: feed management program developed and supported by Digi-Star.

ODARK: online record keeping and planning tool for manure management. Available at odark.org.

TeamViewer: program for remote control desktop sharing, online meetings, web conferencing and file transfer between computers.

Dropbox: file hosting service for cloud storage and file synchronization.

Google Drive: file storage and synchronization service developed by Google.

Apps

PocketDairy: for use with PCDart to enter data cowside and review cow information.

Pocket CowCard: for use with DairyComp 305 to enter data cowside and review cow information.

T4C: for use with Lely robotic milking systems.

Cool Cow: for use with Purina programs to manage impact of heat stress.

Whats App: allows users to send text messages and voice calls, as well as video calls, images and other media and documents.