GEA EQUIPMENT HELPS SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE MILK PRODUCTION

With the aim to offer a fresh vision for sustainable milk production a state-of-the-art South West Dairy Development Centre was launched in Somerset (UK) in the autumn of 2018. Home to 180 cows, the centre is a working farm, established by the Agri EPI Centre, one of four centres set-up by the government to support British agriculture through its Agri-tech strategy. Combining innovative building design and GEA automation technology to create a highly efficient, high welfare dairy system, the goal is to offer a platform for industry and research to work together to trial and review new ideas for the benefit of dairy farmers.

The dairy uses GEA automated feeding and milking robots and, therefore, releases skilled staff to devote more of their time to animal health and welfare. It also allows farmers to be more in control of the herd data and gives them the opportunity to focus on efficiency and optimisation where needed. The automated feeding system by GEA allows accurate amounts of fresh feed to be delivered up to 15 times per day. It also allows very precise control of the feeding process and yet takes less than an hour a day to fill the feed tables. Overall, a clear improvement in workflow, feed quality and cow well-being can be seen.

The centre is focused on cutting-edge farming innovations and GEA's equipment delivers in line with their goals. Technologies utilising 5G data are to be trialled as part of the 5G RuralFirst project, including cow collars, monitoring health and welfare, digital systems to monitor cow fertility through milk analysis and, in the future, a 'virtual vet' system connecting stock people to a vet using augmented reality.

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GEA helps Wisconsin dairy find milking efficiency and consistency

When Kieler Farms was ready to expand their dairy and find more efficiency and consistency in the milking process, they turned to GEA. They toured other dairies with rotary parlors and knew automated teat prep and post-dipping could bring them the efficiency they were looking to find.

Peak performance

"We decided to go with FutureCow and Apollo mainly because it would allow us to run our rotary parlor at peak performance with the least amount of people," says Leah Kieler.

Kieler Farms, located in Platteville, Wisconsin, uses a GEA 50-stall rotary parlor equipped with a teat prep system and Apollo. They've found that both technologies make it easier to manage their employees and streamline the training process to ensure all cows are prepped and post dipped the same.

Consistency

"A huge part of my job is knowing everything is done consistently because that's what the cows need. And that consistency is what the teat prep system and Apollo bring to this parlor," says Kieler.

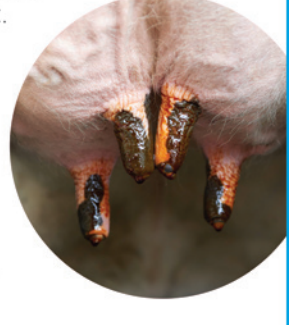
By incorporating automation technology in their new rotary parlor, Kielers were able to triple their herd size to 1,800 cows, while maintaining the same labor base of 28 employees.

"One person can prep 270 cows in 45 minutes and it's not a huge physical strain on them," says Kieler.

Quality milk

Three employees operate the parlor during milking, which takes about 7 hours. They maintain a 91-pound per cow daily milk production average with 3.65% fat, 3.05% protein and a 95,000 SCC.

Kielers depend on the teat prep system and Apollo, and would recommend the technology to dairy farmers who are looking to remove variables from the milking process.



"The GEA rotary has been great for us and we could not run it without automation technology," says Kieler.

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