

What's New in Fond du Lac County

A New Compost Barn

In the southwest part of the county the Bille Family has just moved their herd into their new compost barn. They've been in the barn for a little more than a month and have been happy with the cow comfort they are now seeing. Larry and his son Nate have tried a couple different options to get the compost started. They did try using digested manure solids but could only get the compost pack to reach 90 degrees F. When they added in 50% sawdust the compost pack reached 140 degrees F (which is within the goal of 130-150 degrees). They may try chopped soybean stubble in the future if they can get it chopped fine enough. They till the pack twice a day with a Howard brand Rotavator; it takes about 10 minutes to till the one side of the barn. Larry and Nate are confident the improved cow comfort will lead to a longer, more productive life for their cows.



One side of the new compost barn at the Bille dairy



The compost tills easily and is nearly flat after tilling.

Wisconsin Center for Dairy Profitability

August 2006

Benchmarks - Dairy Cost of Production, 2005

Below are the final benchmarks for the 2005 financial year. There is a total of 617 farm financial records.

Item	Per Head	Per CWT EQ
Total Income	\$4,314	\$15.13
Feed Purchased	\$842	\$2.95
Repair Cost	\$223	\$0.78
Vet & Medicine	\$123	\$0.43
TOTAL Basic Cost	\$2,594	\$9.10

Year	Fuel Cost /CWT EQ	% change from previous year
1996	\$0.26	
1997	\$0.29	11.5%
1998	\$0.23	-20.7%
1999	\$0.21	-8.7%
2000	\$0.29	38.1%
2001	\$0.32	10.3%
2002	\$0.24	-25.0%
2003	\$0.27	12.5%
2004	\$0.34	25.9%
2005	\$0.43	26.5%



The Howard tiller is mounted on the back of a tractor.