

STUDY HIGHLIGHTS



Navigating a Changing Course *Decision Making at Today's Top Tier Dairies*

An industry in flux.

Market forces, management practices and economic cycles have fueled the trend to larger dairy herds and tech-savvy managers. The trend is expected to continue amid a shifting foundation of rising input costs, labor challenges and regulatory pressures.

Navigating a Changing Course: Decision Making at Today's Top Tier Dairies is a new multi-client study from Entira designed to provide the insights needed by companies who sell to or buy from a new generation of dairy managers.

Research scope

The study focused on the fastest growing segment of dairy farms — those that milk more than 1,000 cows. From 2003 to 2011, this segment grew by 38 percent. While these large dairies represent only 3 percent of total U.S. dairies, they are responsible for 50 percent of U.S. milk production.

The multi-client study focused on several key areas:

- Analyzed the evolution and management of modern, top-producing dairy operations
- Examined impact of changing environment, including feed prices, labor issues and technology
- Explored unmet needs
- Identified priorities for the future

Study methodology

- Completed in-depth qualitative interviews with owners and managers of 31 top tier dairies in 14 states
- Completed quantitative surveys with 90 top tier dairy decision-makers in 27 states, with an average herd size of 1,865
- Analyzed and compiled cross tabs of key data points

Timing

Research was conducted in the spring and early summer of 2013.

Study highlights

The study focus was driven by multi-client study subscribers and themes determined by Entira.

The study included demographic benchmarking, including milk production, crop production, land ownership and farm management.

The research uncovered insights into how today's top dairy farms are making decisions, and what companies can do to better serve them.

Decision Making Structure. Results showed a shift in management styles at top-tier dairies, including how those styles can impact milk production.

Expectations of Sales Teams. Dairy decision makers reported their expectations for vendors and sales professionals, and what companies can do to better meet the needs of today's dairy farms.

Roles of Advisors in Decision Making. Decision makers identified the individuals and groups that are the most influential advisors for their operations.

Plans for Expansion. The study revealed plans of top-tier dairies for expansion, and made a comparison to expansion plans of dairies of same size conducted in 2005. The study also outlined the challenges and concerns that dairy farmers have as they consider expansion.

Contact

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