



February News From MEDA

CALLING ON DAIRIES

by

Josh Jens, ABS Area Sales Manager, North Eastern Wisconsin

About a year ago I was asked to shift my focus from a typical ASM targeting all direct sales to an ASM calling on large dairy farms. The role is to find opportunities for both RMS and direct sales. Not only is this role extremely challenging, but also very important as northeastern Wisconsin is home to over 240 dairies with 250 cows or more. This role also was needed because the typical ASM routes get full and there is not enough time to properly prospect the many large farms within our area. As we all know, none of these farms are getting any smaller and the need to focus lots of time and energy looking for opportunities for business is vital as we look to the future.

Calling on large dairies can be very intimidating, yet very rewarding. Not everyone feels comfortable pulling into driveways where it is perceived that the owner or herdsman think that you are just another salesperson with a lot of talk and no action. Also, the constant thought of rejection is not extremely motivating to a person in this role. However, our competitors are pulling into driveways of our customers constantly and we need to be doing the same!

Here are five key points that I have learned about calling on large dairies.

1. You need to have a plan.

I have my farms divided into four major categories. My "A" farms are key accounts and farms that have the most potential. I visit these customers every two to four weeks. They receive the most attention because they are either retention farms or ones that have been given a proposal or are close. My "B" farms are those where I have laid the ground work and am starting to build a relationship with through the discovery process and beginning to allocate possible solutions. These are farms I stop at every 6-8 weeks depending on status of the relationship. My "C" farms are those accounts that buy from everyone and just need to be seen on a regular basis to continue the buy/sell relationship. My "D" farms that have little or no interest. They have been working with the same company for several years and never offer any time to build a relationship. It is still extremely important to stop at these farms, but I usually will stop once or twice a proof.

2. "No" does not shut the door.

When you are given the opportunity to give a proposal to a farm, it is a great sense of accomplishment. You can see light at the end of the tunnel. Maybe it is a farm you have been calling on for three years and the owner has now given you the chance at their business. The proposal is given and you either lose the bid to a competitor or they stay with their current vendor. Just because you have been told "no" -- don't stop calling on this account! There is always the possibility that the company that they switched to has not followed through on the promises that were expressed during their proposal. Keep stopping. Your opportunity will come.

3. Use Technical Services to prospect.

I have used the help of others to prospect large dairy farms. I have found in certain situations having someone along on farms visits initiates more conversation. I can talk about Tech Services while I am on a farm, but if that person is actually present, it seems to increase the effectiveness of the visit and add credibility. If a customer is looking to find something out about us that separates us from just being another company schedule some time for someone from Tech. services to ride along to help with prospecting. Whether it is TS, your DSM, or another ABS expert, having an additional person along on key accounts visits is almost always advantageous. *(continued on next page)*

*(continued)***4. Know exactly what you are going to do to follow up your visit.**

When an owner or decision maker gives us their time for a visit, your visit is only good if you know what the next step is. At the conclusion it is important to ask questions about the next step. If you don't have a plan to a follow up meeting, the relationship will not continue to grow or develop. Sometimes it is as simple as a phone call, an email, or maybe even a letter. The important thing is that you have already stimulated interest by being able to steal a few minutes of their time. It is up to you to figure out how to role that into something bigger.

I record information after each visit, schedule a return visit, and pick up where I left off when I stop back in. Document all information important to the dairy so anybody is able to make an informed visit to the farm. They should know exactly who to talk to as well as any other information that is pertinent. These are only a few of the things that I feel are important when calling on large dairy farms. Obviously there is a lot more that goes into the ultimate goal and that is the sale. However, I have definitely found the tips above to be extremely useful in all of my visits. Have fun and good luck selling! Josh Jens

ARE YOU “COACHING GHOSTS”

Paul Peetz, MEDA's Technical Sales and Service Manager

Spring is just around the corner (please tell me it is) and with that the busiest season of the year on the farm will start. The old saying “Hope springs eternal” always comes to mind when I think of spring. The possibilities are endless and after last year almost anything would seem like a blessing.

I had the opportunity to spend another week with Roger Thomson in and amongst the dealerships and again I believe if you have not taken him to some of the key accounts in your area you are missing out on a tremendous opportunity. I think back to when I was in a dealership; I try to remember all the things that had to take place before and after a day or two with someone like Roger Thomson. Making appointments, opening up time, late nights and early mornings and the real challenges become clear. I remember prior to this year's national championship in college football, Nick Saban, the coach at Alabama was speaking to a reporter prior to the game and he made a comment about coaching. His comment was about coaching ghosts. I thought it sounded kind of odd so I actually paid attention. He spoke about how, as people, we often times coach ghosts and sometimes spend more time coaching ghosts than we do anything else. Coaching ghosts refers to time spent on preparing for the “What If” scenarios that may actually never happen. The onside kick to start the second half, the quarterback running the ball, the play or formation that the defense has never seen before. I think many times in the dealership this “Coaching Ghosts” scenario paralyzes us and prevents us from pursuing that competitive farm or other opportunity. Think about your dealership, what is it that prevents you from pursuing the competitions farms? What prevents you from getting that customer from partial to full line? When we really think about it a fair number of times it really is, as Roger spoke about this spring, the biggest bottleneck in our lives is ourselves.

The Lenten season is upon us and we are all asked to fast and give something up, I have given up soda and hopefully it can last at least a week, but I urge all of you to think about the things in your day that you have already given up, post dip to a competitor because he was cheaper, liners to a competitor because the dairyman likes that brand, and commit to finding a way, any way, to win back that business. Got a customer that just doesn't understand? Give me a call, sometimes a different face is all that is needed to get them to hear what you have been saying all along.

Impulse liners are continuing to sell like nothing I have seen before and the technology that makes them work is clear, better teat ends by milking faster with the same, or lower, vacuum level. **Bac-Drop systems** are going in again as producers have a little money to spend and want that quality premium. **Teat ends** all over need cleaning up helping sell Valiant to current customers and competitive farms. Don't forget about that competitive farm in your area using a recycled bedding material **Chlorine Dioxide technology** really works and can be the in you need to get the business.

Thanks again for all your support, Paul

FEBRUARY 2010

GEHRING'S HOLD PRODUCER MTG BY SCOTT HORTON, MARKETING MANAGER, MEDA

Have you ever thought of putting together a Producer's Meeting at your dealership? Gehring Sales & Service from Rubicon, WI organized one this past week. Keynote speakers were Dr. Roger Thomson DVM and Paul Peetz from MEDA. The topic focused on in the meeting was Udder Health Management. We had a fantastic turnout, in that we had 27 dairymen and women attending, representing 16 dairies. The meeting was conducted at the dealership and held in the evening, lasting about 1 1/2 hours. Gehrings supported the meeting by providing Subs from Subway, cold beverages and ice cream bars. The attendees were hand picked and were sent formal invitations. They are among some of Gehrings most influential dairies.

Dr. Roger Thomson and Paul Peetz's presentations, revolved around the production of quality milk, maximizing profits, milking procedures and overall cow comfort. Roger thoroughly discussed the different types and levels of mastitis. Did you know that mastitis cost a dairy \$200 per cow annually? How significant is that? Roger openly discussed recycled sand and digested solids as an alternate bedding style and the potential effects on teat ends if not managed properly. He also mediated a discussion on the effects on the winter weather on teat ends as well as the economic stress that has made the dairyman manage smarter.

Paul delivered a great discussion on the effects of different liners and proper vacuum level settings as a contributor to milking cows faster, maintaining healthier teat ends and assuring overall cow comfort. He presented Dairy Interactive as a great tool to manage an effective routine or procedure. After the presentation we were able to sit down with several of the dairies and review their current routine as well as different procedures to try. The group was engaged and very impressed. All of this led to some good discussions on **ABS's Chlorine Dioxide Teat Dips, the Bac-Drop System and Dairy Interactive**. It served as very positive reinforcement on the products, equipment and services Gehring already offers. **Great work to the Gehring Team!**

If you are interested in setting up a Producer Meeting please feel free to contact Reed, Paul or Scott. It's a terrific opportunity to not only sell, but reinforce what your dealership can offer! We can help you with the planning process, agenda and invitations.

This entire past week was a great opportunity to work with one of MEDA's tremendous resources from ABS Global, Dr. Roger Thomson DVM. If you have never had the opportunity to work with "Doc" it is truly a rewarding experience. We had four dealers who were looking for support as it relates to some very real issues at key dairies. Roger's ability to observe, ask though provoking questions, listen and come up with a recommendation is pretty special. He also does a great job reinforcing, in many cases, what has been implemented and is working. There is a sense of comfort when the call is complete that the issues have been addressed and are moving in the right direction. **Please feel free to call Reed, Paul or Scott about having the opportunity to have Roger come to your dealership.**

PICTURES FROM THE FIELD AND GEHRING'S PRODUCER MEETING!



IPSO Adds Front Load Washer to Lineup

Brenda Flanigan, Associate Brand Manager, Alliance Laundry Systems

Dairy laundries face enough daily challenges, wrestling with complicated, inefficient equipment shouldn't be one of them. IPSO's NEW frontload washers are the perfect solution for small on-premises laundry applications such as dairies. This machine continues our goal of building equipment that's simple to own and even more simple to operate. For more information about IPSO front loaders or its other on-premises laundry equipment, visit www.ipso.com or call Marcia at (608) 588-7878

UPDATES FROM THE OFFICE

NEW VENDOR:

MEDA is excited to announce we will be working with a new vendor **UDDER COMFORT**. They offer an udder lotion, Udder Comfort, that is a blend of essential oils that naturally softens and soothes tender udders. We will be sending out more information in the upcoming week. Please join us in welcoming them to the MEDA team.

2010 CATALOGS:

The new 2010 catalogs are almost ready to go. I will be sending out new copies as soon as we get them back from the printer.

LITERATURE/LABEL NEEDS:

If you need additional copies of any literature or labels, give me a call. I will get them sent to you right away.

REQUESTS:

If you would like to learn or be refreshed on a topic, process or procedure, let Marcia know. She will get you the information you want. If you have ideas of something you would like to see in the newsletter, give Marcia a call or e-mail her at medaoffice@verizon.net.

OFFICE HOURS:

The MEDA office hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am to 4pm.

As an exclusive benefit of being part of the MEDA team, your customer receives a \$200 coupon code or discount when they purchase Dairy Interactive. It not only can be downloaded off the internet but is now available on a CD.

This winter, let's bring our dairies the most consistent solution for training their employees! Contact Tom, Paul, Scott or Reed on how you can take advantage of this great deal now.

