

## Farm History and Executive Summary

Located in Lititz, Lancaster County, the Bollinger family has been farming since the 1940s. Tom and Sue Bollinger purchased the farm from Tom's dad in 1989. Tom and Sue's son, Andy, and his wife Andrea, began farming with Tom and Sue in the late 1990s. After dairy expansion projects, total milk cow numbers are 370. The family employs 15 people, full and part time. Andy and Andrea's four children also help on the farm, most notably caring for the young calves.

In 2010, the Bollinger Family began the transformation team process with four focus areas: 1) Retaining and Rewarding Employees; 2) Renewable Energy and the Environment; 3) Direct Marketing/Diversification; 4) Business Planning. In 2013, at the conclusion of the project, focus areas #1 and #2 were achieved, and ultimately, the operation also completed a succession plan and built a new parlor, as detailed in this case study.

To better understand their employees' needs, a transformation team member, who also is the farm's local veterinarian, interviewed all Meadow Spring Farm employees, for about 30 – 60 minutes. The veterinarian reported the key learnings back to the Bollingers, who in turn, implemented the following management changes:

- Posting easier to find and read schedules
- Exposing employees to training opportunities
- Spreading out the “lousy” jobs as identified in the surveys
- Planning employee safety programs
- Purchasing company t-shirts for employees to foster a team environment

Transformation team members also helped the Bollingers develop a successful Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST) grant application that included covering cow lanes to address runoff; manure and mortality management; silage leakage; and storm water controls (Focus Area #2).

A new milking parlor, in a retrofitted facility, improved cow comfort and reduced labor and electric costs for the Bollinger family.

Finally, a succession plan process during the transformation team project allows Andy to continue farming, while providing a secure income for Tom and Sue through retirement. The plan transferred the business, preserved family relationships and in the words of their advisors, “was an ideal example of how to approach the succession process.”