

Site Survey

Situation Overview:

As shared by Andy Bollinger

A. *How did the team analyze potential sites for construction?* For our farm, the decision for this construction project was if we wanted to build new or remodel the existing facilities. Our transformation team leader helped us review the advantages and disadvantages with a smaller subset of our transformation team, along with representatives from White Horse Construction and Fisher & Thompson, a local contractor and service company.

To follow is a chart that our team helped us develop to weigh the opportunities and challenges of a remodel versus a new parlor:

	New Parlor	Remodel Parlor
PROS	Labor savings	Labor savings
	Better ventilation	Lower cost
	Freedom to design cow handling and sort	Leverages existing milkhouse /office
	Moves away from A and A's house	Easy permitting
	Forces MSF to address driveway issue	Utilizes existing buildings
	Can design to minimize holding pen time	
	Operations easier during construction	
	Potentially easier to expand	
	Larger bulk tank easier to integrate	

CONS	Cost	Operational challenges during construction
	Greater infrastructure needs (elec., etc.)	Ventilation not as good
	Requires permits/approvals	Potential design challenges-space limits, cow sort and handling, cow flow
	Takes up land	Some limits on expandability
	Displaces calves	
	Future feed storage area displaced	

B. *What variables did the team consider as they reviewed sites?* Our family was leaning toward a remodel because we didn't want to lose more land to a new construction project. We also didn't need any additional water lines and could reuse existing electric service that was re-done four years ago. A remodel saved us money on excavating and permitting costs too.

The parlor costs did exceed the budget estimate by about 25% because we did not consider converting the existing parlor to a utility room. Working under an old roof also was more involved than expected, with lots of concrete from many years of building additions. Plumbers and electricians undershot their estimate because of the toll on people and planning with the existing project.

Site Survey...continued

Challenges and Opportunities:

C. *During the site survey process, did the farm encounter any problems? If so, what were they?* No problems for site survey since this project was within the confines of a remodel. We also didn't have any issues with the composting barn or manure storage that was included in our PENNVEST project.

Actions:

D. *How long, from start to finish, was the site survey process?* While we did not have site survey work for the parlor construction project, we did for our PENNVEST project that included a composting barn and manure storage. The timeline, including PENNVEST application and approval time, was 12 months.

E. *Approximately, how much did the site survey work cost?* The cost for this project to be permitted and compliant with all PENNVEST requirements, including Township requirements was \$14,000. Fortunately, most of those expenses were recovered through PENNVEST, other than the Township stormwater permit fees.

Results:

F. *Can you provide a condensed project blue print to include with your case study?* Yes. Joe Zook, White Horse Construction, had the original parlor prints from 1996's step-up parlor to make notes and compare for the 2012 remodel. [Click here for a PDF of the blueprints.](#)

