

## Farm History and Executive Summary

Brook-Corner Holsteins, owned by Reid and Diane Hoover, is a 250 acre farm in a populated area of Lebanon County. The farm has been in the Hoover family for approximately 55 years; Reid and Diane purchased the farm 18 years ago. For their Transformation Team project, the Hoover family modernized their dairy to accommodate a growing herd and the inclusion of their children into the business. Prior to expansion, the family was milking approximately 160 cows, in shifts, in an older tie-stall barn that was not ideal for cow comfort, employee comfort, or business efficiency.

After completing a feasibility study which demonstrated herd expansion could be profitable for their business, the Hoovers built a new free stall barn and installed a Surge/ Westfalia double 12 parallel parlor, with vertical lift, that was completed in January 2012. Project plans also included a manure separator, with partial funding from Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), and a lined pit for manure storage. The Hoovers now use manure solids for bedding in the new free stall barn that accommodates approximately 275 cows.

Herd growth also dictated additional feed storage and calf and heifer accommodations. The Transformation Team helped the Hoovers explore their feed storage options, and ultimately recommended feed bunkers. In preparation for the eventual expansion, the Hoovers also built a new calf and heifer barn in 2010.

With their completed barn, the Hoovers realized improved cow comfort that resulted in more milk from their cows, within a few months. Stall size and bedding benefits also impacted cow comfort and profitability. The new barn includes a climate controlled computer system which adjusts fans and curtains and a sprinkler system for warm days.

Although the family doubled the number of cows that they milk, they only added a 15% to 20% increase in labor costs. They milk about 100 more cows, with the same amount of employees and in a shorter amount of time as compared to their old facility. Today, Reid and Diane have more available time to manage the business, complementing their daily labor requirements.

