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Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation Grazing Center

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Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation Grazing Center

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Summary and Implications

The NE Iowa Dairy Foundation, a joint effort of Iowa State University Extension (ISUE), Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) and the dairy industry of NE Iowa, began a new phase of operations in 2005. Years of planning on Dairy Foundation goals of creating an operation that entails a wider spectrum of dairy production practices and how to provide a model for assisting new and transitioning dairy producers led to the creation of the Grazing Center.

Building began in early 2005 by transitioning the 46 tie stall dairy barn on the NICC campus to a swing 12 milking parlor, holding area, palpation / headgate rail and maternity / sick pens. In addition, 80 acres of cropland were converted to rotationally grazed pasture, complete with water lines and limestone lanes.

Cows were brought to the facility through a Dairy Foundation plan of purchase and donation.

Milking of the cows began in July, 2005. The herd is a combination of Jerseys and Holsteins and reports from Grazing Center manager, Carrie Corlette, are that the operation is working well.

It is anticipated that the initial herd would average around 80 cows in a compost pack in a hay shed that was converted and expanded to accommodate the square footage requirements (compost turned at least 2 X / day). In addition, a covered feeding strip with headlocks was built. Manure storage is being planned.

Eventually, the Grazing Operation is hoping to accommodate 120 cows on 120 acres of rotationally grazed pasture. After two years, the compost barn may see a change as it is sized to handle 120 free stalls after the compost barn demonstration is complete.

grazing, low cost parlor and housing facilities with labor efficiency in mind, the NE Iowa Dairy Foundation is hoping to create a successful model farm that is sized for growth for our NE Iowa Dairy families, NICC and ISU students, and the Iowa dairy industry.

For more information on the Dairy Grazing Center, please contact Dale Thoreson at 319-267-2707 (dthores@iastate.edu) or Larry Tranel at 563-583-6496 (tranel@iastate.edu).

