

## Panelist Profile, Group-Housed Calf Systems

### Beller Farms, LLC

The Beller Family

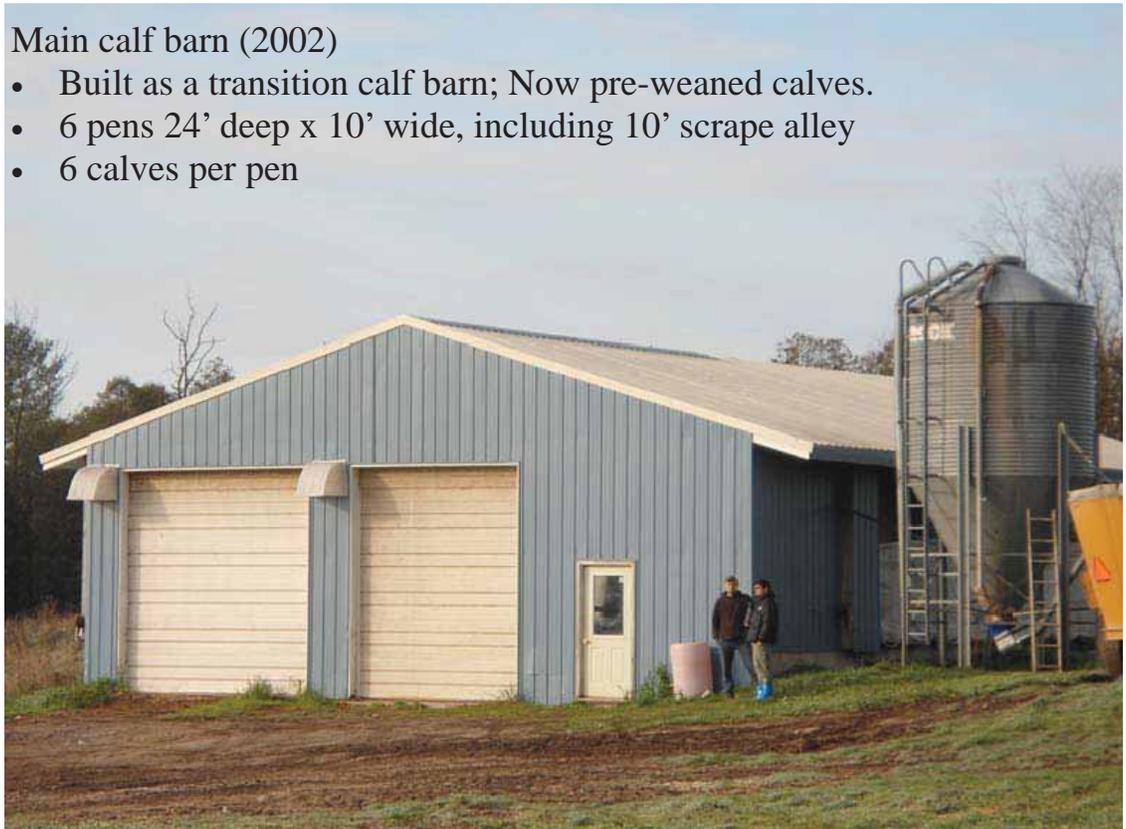
450 cows, up to 40 calves on milk



Emily, Glenn,  
and Jon Beller

### Main calf barn (2002)

- Built as a transition calf barn; Now pre-weaned calves.
- 6 pens 24' deep x 10' wide, including 10' scrape alley
- 6 calves per pen





- Two positive-pressure tubes for cold and transition weather
- Open side-walls and overhead doors provide additional air exchange in warmer weather

Scrape alley is also bedded



- A box designed to cover garbage containers can also hold two 55-ga. milk replacer reservoirs and an electric heater.



- Nipples mounted on the side of the box reduce freezing, but heat lamps mounted above the nipples are sometimes needed.

- A 24:17 milk replacer is offered free-choice via this farm-fabricated self feeder. There are two nipples per six calves, a tub of a 21% protein starter pellet and free-choice water from frost-free waterers.

# An evolved system

## The Old—about 3 years ago...



- A reservoir of acidified milk replacer was kept in a warm room and a timer-controlled circulator prevented settling.
- Tubing was routed through a PVC conduit with heat tape inside.



- Outside the warm room, the PVC piping was mounted to a bar with 2-3 nipples.



## The New—today, in progress...

- With a newly purchased farm, what was once maternity pens in part of a free-stall barn are now additional calf pens. Older heifers are housed elsewhere in the barn.
- Positive-pressure ventilation tubes will be installed asap.



## Summary of Practices – Beller Farms Group Calf System

➤ <b>Feeding System Type:</b> Farm Fabricated “Ad Lib” Feeder
➤ <b>Milk Sources:</b> Acidified Milk Replacer, 24% Protein 17% Fat
➤ <b>Milk Reservoir Sanitation:</b> Each time barrel is changed (~ 2x/wk). New nipples/tubes at each pen change
➤ <b>Milk Transport:</b> Mixing room is directly adjacent to barrels... delivered to pen reservoirs by hose.
➤ <b>Housing:</b> Newer cold barn and retrofitted portion of an insulated freestall barn
➤ <b>Summer Ventilation:</b> Open curtains and end walls plus positive pressure tubes
➤ <b>Winter Ventilation:</b> Positive Pressure “Tubes” augmented with needed curtain opening
➤ <b>Group Sizes:</b> 6
➤ <b>Digestive Disorder Incidence:</b> ≤1%
➤ <b>Respiratory Problem Incidence:</b> <2%
➤ <b>Baby Calf Mortality:</b> 10% (unusually high in 2011 - smaller herd, 1 lost calf can run up percentage)
➤ <b>Calf Starter % CP:</b> 21%
➤ <b>Target Calf Starter Consumption at Weaning:</b> No target
➤ <b>Target Age at Weaning:</b> 51 - 55 days, smaller numbers may mean as much as 10 birth date spread
➤ <b>Average % of Birth Weight at Weaning:</b> 187% (196%+ adjusted to 56 days)