

"Rumination tags are the most important part of the dairy farm. When the cow's digestive system works properly, 90% of the problems are solved. Now I can tell there's a problem, even before the cow thinks about not feeling well."
Alon Kama, Co-Owner, Kama Dairy Farm

Kama Dairy Farm maintains quality and increases profitability with Allflex technology

BACKGROUND

Oren Kama, together with his father Alon Kama, owns and operates the Kama Dairy Farm on Moshav Avigdor in southern Israel. The farm first began operating in the 1950s and today has about 700 head of cattle – including dairy cows, calves and beef cows. It produces 1.2 million liters of milk a year (2.65 million pounds), at a profit of about NIS 0.50 ($0.15 US) per liter ($.07 per pound)

In addition to managing the Kama Dairy Farm, the father and son team operates a business for establishing and improving dairy farms around the world. One of them is usually abroad with this business, while the other manages the dairy farm on the moshav, together with two employees.

CHALLENGES

"No dairy farm aims to produce milk; they all want to produce income," says Alon. "That being said, the dairy farm produces a very sensitive food product. Quality is critical for profit, something which we're very good at here in Israel thanks to our reliance on science and data."

The most important factors to maintaining high quality milk, according to Alon, are the health of the cows, cleanliness, feed quality, veterinary care, high-quality milking equipment, and automated monitoring of the milk yield.

"At Kama Dairy our success is directly related to our cows' living conditions," he emphasizes. "That's not because we're PETA members. It's because we understand that cows will produce better, both quantitatively and qualitatively, if they have better conditions, which in turn has a direct impact on our profits."

AT A GLANCE

Company: Kama Dairy Farm
Location: Moshav Avigdor, Israel
Herd size: 700

Challenges

- Manage the farm efficiently, minimizing input and maximizing output
- Gain insight into all of the production centers on the farm, particularly the cows
- Maintain high quality of ration ingredients
- Diagnose and treat health related problems before they impact milk output
- Care for each cow's welfare as a means to improve milk quantity and quality

System

- Allflex DataFlow II System for parlor control and milking management, with a real-time notification screen in the pit
- Allflex Heatime® HR tags with real-time, wireless rumination monitoring, heat detection and cow identification functionality
- Allflex MC 200 ED milking controller system
- Allflex MM27 milk meters
- Allflex P501 smart pulsators
- Allflex automatic sorting gate

Benefits

- Successful identification of metabolic and other health problems before they impact the milk yield
- Improved ration control thanks to data garnered at the herd level
- High insemination success rate, and significant reduction in missed cycles
- Reduced veterinary expenses
- Accurate and efficient management of the dairy farm - even remotely

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SYSTEM

In 2012, Kama Dairy Farm decided to replace its Westfalia equipment with Allflex components.

As such it implemented a full array of Allflex solutions including: The Allflex Heatime® HR System with real-time activity and rumination tags to monitor the health and reproductive status of the cows, an 8 x 8 herringbone parlor, the Allflex MC200 ED System, Allflex MM27 milk meters, and Allflex P501 smart pulsators.

An Allflex DataFlow II management system, with a real-time notification screen in the milking barn and an automatic sorting gate, was added for full parlor control and milking management.

BENEFITS

The Allflex technology allows Kama Dairy Farm to do things it didn't dream possible before. "For example," says Alon "The rumination tags and the DataFlow II System give me the ability to properly monitor a cow after she calves. Is she advancing as expected? Is she advancing based on her genetic potential? We no longer need to guess. The information is presented to us in numbers and graphs, based on data and years of scientific research."

Besides being interesting, this information is easily translated into business benefits. "Today, I can identify a cow that has a problem after calving – like retained placenta, metritis or ketosis – and separate her for proper veterinary care," continues Alon.

We need maximum control over each of the production points, meaning the cows, in order to withstand the increasing competition," he continues. As such, Alon and Oren divide the monitoring into two levels: the individual cow and the entire herd.



On the individual cow level, if the Allflex system discovers a certain decrease in rumination which often indicates a metabolic problem that requires treatment, a warning is sent (often before symptoms appear), and the cow is separated to the treatment area. This saves the farm both time and money. "If we didn't treat a cow on time, we would have to use a larger quantity of medicine to return her to maximum output in a short period of time, if at all," Alon explains. Plus, early detection of health issues also results in higher conception rates.

On the herd level, as Alon explains: "Oren is the Chairman of the Dairy Farmer Association on the moshav where our farm is located, and I handle the food; thus, the information that we gather on our farm benefits all of the other dairy farmers in the collective. Each day, I review the average rumination of the herd, and am able to identify problems, beginning with a change in the ration to mistakes in operating the TMR Wagon. This is a wonderful measurement for the feeding center, which allows us to prevent problems before they arise. Instead of waiting until the cows begin to get sick and milk production throughout the moshav decreases, we immediately correct the issue for everyone."

Then there's the ability to manage remotely. "We cannot spend 24 hours a day in the milking parlor," explains Oren. "With Allflex's DataFlow II, I can have an employee in the parlor acting according to the information presented to him on the LCD display, while I supervise his activity remotely through the management system." As Oren reminisces: "Only after implementing the DataFlow II and connecting it to our smartphones were we able – for the first time ever – to both leave for family vacations, knowing that we were still connected to the farm."

"Farmers are a unique breed, and Allflex has clearly built a staff that knows how to communicate with them at eye-level," says Alon.

SUMMARY

As Oren summarizes: "At Allflex, I always feel at home. The team is always responsive and willing to help. More than service, they express true concern for the welfare and success of the dairy farm. Thanks to Allflex technology, we have been able to grow our dairy business in ways never before thought possible."

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About Allflex www.allflex.global

Allflex, part of MSD Animal Health, is the world leader in the design, development, manufacturing and delivery of solutions for animal identification, monitoring and traceability. Our solutions empower farmers to act in a timely manner, to safeguard their animals' health, while achieving optimal production outcomes for a healthy food supply.

Through its commitment to the Science of Healthier Animals®, MSD Animal Health offers veterinarians, farmers, pet owners and governments one of the widest ranges of veterinary pharmaceuticals, vaccines and health management solutions and services. MSD Animal Health is dedicated to preserving and improving the health, well-being and performance of animals and the people who care for them.

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