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I am humbled in being a part of today's event. Being the future of the industry I ask myself how does each one of us do our part to insure that we can feed our growing population, and how can Minnesota's dairy industry capture this growth? How do we do our part to grow our farms? How do we insure that we can capture this growth in a matter that is positive to our local towns, natural resources, and society in general?

With that being said let's talk a little about the history of our farm, at least in my short years and what things have allowed us to grow so far

-as child—standard pipeline in tiestall barn grain protein pellets, alfalfa hay. Calves fed grain and wastemilk (physical labor no technology) Number of dairy farms was high, each had few cattle. No time to look for growth always doing physical labor (many children left farms to pursue other opportunities because they saw little or no future in dairy farming).

-Elementary student—introduction of the TMR mixer, feeding a total mixed ration allowed consistent feed fed to every cow every time, which advanced milk production per cow.

-high school—addition of freestall, & milking center. Cow comfort, people comfort, more milk, less time doing so much physical labor and more time considering growth, technologies etc. (step one in attracting next generation)

-College – the start of the technology era, addition of automatic calf feeder. Managing calves will less physical labor and more data/visual analysis, starts to attract more (step two in attracting next generation)

-beginning farming and moving forward- addition of activity monitors in adult animals. Identify cow that are or may becoming ill, increased heat detection. Both = better management and in some cases less time watching cows and more time giving supportive therapy to those other cows prior to becoming clinically ill. Ease of managing more healthy cows (step three in attracting next generation)

Updated milking center, new technology and more technology coming are some of the main things that attracted me back to the dairy farming, besides those the sense of pride knowing that I can teach my children how to be stewards of the land our animals and all the resources that we have been blessed with. A sense of pride knowing that the crop rotation we use in conjunction with utilizing the nutrients (manure) provided back to us from the cows helps us sustain healthy production from earth to cow and back, and in the middle producing a nutritious delicious dairy product.

One additional consideration to attract the next generation is the fact that they will be owners of the farms, however for successful transition you need to focus on the four main types of wealth and capital that are being transferred as Johnne Syverson stated in a recent Farm Journal Magazine these four types include

-Human-The who we are, where we come from and talents of the family

-Intellectual-work and life experiences, education (either formal or informal), work ethics, spiritual beliefs

-social-contribution back to our communities, such as sharing your story, opening up your farm to the public, lending a helping hand to those in need

-Financial-lastly the assets including livestock, buildings machines, ect.

Meeting regularly to discuss and be members of the community is very important to the overall success of a farm transition and ability to grow. Participating in continuing education as well as lending a hand to a neighbor in need should always be near the top of the agenda. Focusing on financials at least quarterly helps focus our attention on what is going right and things that we can work on. Including all these aspects of transition will help strengthen us as a whole and insure that the operation continues and has ability to grow for generations to come.

Minnesota is in a position where we can grow the majority of the crops we need to sustain a healthy productive cow. We are also in a position where climate does not hinder our ability to use water, and we are in a position where we have a abundant infrastructure to handle the product that we produce.

As Minnesota looks forward to being a part in feeding this growing economy we will need to put our heads together, collaborate with main the main street business, government officials, our general society and continue to do things like breakfast on the farm, opening up our farms to the general public, showing the generation that has been removed from the farm what it is all about. How we take care of our cows, how technology allows us to operate the way we do, and how we as farmers contribute to main street success.

Once society has been brought up to speed with our friendly means of operating, how we contribute to society and how farming today is not just squeezing teats and pitch forking hay. Then we can move to growing our farms to the next level, adding more levels of technology, transitioning the operations to the next generation via growth, and proving once again that we are people of society by continuing to be a part of our local organizations from church to school and everywhere in between.

Ladies and gentlemen we indeed have some work to do, however the work that we have done up to today has began the path. Now looking to the Path Forward, together we can grow this industry, and show Minnesota once again that our strong dairy industry becoming stronger, supports our local towns and business.

Thank you for all for wanting to grow the industry. I see a future in the industry and today's event proves to me that there are many working to achieve prosperity for our industry. I pledge to do our part and I hope you do the same.