

## **MN Agriculture: Darin and Kylene Lehmann, "Testing" and Dairy Farmers**

### **MN Agriculture: Darin and Kylene Lehmann, "Testing" and Dairy Farmers**



Day 23 of my "30 Days of MN Agriculture" is Darin and Kylene Lehmann. The Lehmanns are located in Staples, MN. Staples is located west of Brainerd in northern Minnesota. The Lehmanns are former dairy farmers but now they are also "testers" for the Minnesota Dairy Herd Improvement organization. They test milk and also provide services to improve dairy farmers' herds.

#### **Social Media Sites:**

Facebook: [MN DHIA](#) and [Red River Farm Network](#)

Facebook: [The Adventures of Dairy Carrie](#)

#### **Tell me a little about your farm and/or business?**

"We are two of over 70 Field Representatives for Minnesota Dairy Herd Improvement Association although most of our producers refer to us as 'testers.' We visit herds on a regular basis (usually monthly) and collect individual milk samples from each cow, record the weight produced and send them to the lab for testing. We also transfer their events (calvings, breedings, herd health information, etc.) into a computer program we use to organize their herd's information to help them manage their records."

**How long have you farmed or been in business?**

"14 Months, we were also previous members."

**Tell me a little about what you grown/raise/produce or service provided.**

"MN DHIA is a non-profit organization that offers many services to dairy farmers including monthly milk sample testing, disease and pregnancy testing through milk samples, detailed reports, Ear Tags and other dairy management tools. Monthly milk tests measure milk production, Somatic Cell Count (SCC) and milk components as well as track calving intervals, herd reproduction information, and profitability reports. Dairy producers use this information to devise management strategies for their farm."

**Where do you sell or provide services to? Who is your end consumer?**

"Combined, we test about 70 herds or a total of 5000+ cows each month. Darin tests a bulk of our list, while I test about 10 of those herds; herd sizes range from 35 cows to 600 cows and we test both conventional and organic herds. Our producers are located in Wilkin, Clay, Otter Tail, Becker, Hubbard, Wadena, Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison and Todd Counties. Most of our herds are cattle, but we have one goat herd."

**What makes your farm/business unique or special? What are you proud of?**

"MN DHIA offers more than just monthly milk sampling and results; farmers can also test for diseases such as Johne's and Leukosis through milk samples; and pregnancy testing can also happen through the milk sample. MN DHIA also offers software to members which allows farmers to create their own management reports beyond what DHIA tracks for their herd.

We are proud of the relationships we have built with our producers. As field reps we can help them interpret their reports so they can use those results to implement best management practices on their farm."

**What is one interesting fact about your farm/crops/livestock/business you would like to share.**

"Pregnancy through the milk sample can be confirmed as early as 28 days."

**What do you love most about farming/business?**

"The People – Because so many farms are still family owned, we have the opportunity to get to know most everyone in the family - sometimes even the kids and grandparents. The agriculture community is like one huge extended family."

**What is one thing no one knows about your farm/business/product that you would like to share?**

"Because we have to be on farm during milking to collect samples, and no two dairy farmers keep the same schedule, we can work some really odd hours."

**Who are your customers? Or what would you like to tell your customers?**

"UTILIZE all the reports and other services that MN DHIA offers for maximum return on your investment. If you have questions about our services or on your herd reports, please ask us; if we don't know the answers, we will help you find them. Our number one job is to assist you with the best tools possible to manage a most productive dairy herd."

**What is your favorite Minnesota location?**

"Because we were both raised in NorthWest Minnesota, a part of our hearts will always belong to the Red River Valley. We both miss the adrenaline rush of sugar beet harvest! "

**Is there anything else you would like to add?**

"We love our job! :)"

---

Read others featured in my ["30 Days of MN Ag."](#)

There are others that are also participating in the 30 Days of Blogging Challenge. Feel free to check these out:

- [Janice Person aka JP Loves Cotton: A Month of Memories](#)
- [Rural Route 2 – 30 Days of Farm Girl Faith](#)
- [Prairie Californian – 30 Days of Food](#)
- [Mackinson Dairy – Women in Dairy](#)