

MEEKER COOPERATIVE PIONEER



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You Save, We Save

Meeker
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WAGNER DAIRY: HARNESSING ENERGY EFFICIENCY WITH MEEKER COOPERATIVE

Wagner Dairy, a historic farm in Meeker County, has been operational since 1887. Currently owned and operated by Leonard and LeeAnn Wagner, their son Justin, and his fiancée Carissa, this family-run farm has grown to include eight employees. The farm specializes in milking 900 dairy cows and cultivating 550 acres of corn and alfalfa.

A typical day at Wagner Dairy resembles a bustling beehive. The farm is constantly alive with the birth of calves, feeding and milking of animals, and meticulous maintenance of equipment. The crops are planted, harvested, and stored to ensure a steady food supply for the herd throughout the year.

Essential equipment includes Bobcat skid loaders, John Deere tractors, Supreme TMR mixers, and an array of electrical motors and devices, including a robotic feed pusher.

Electricity is the backbone of Wagner Dairy's operations. The farm would come to a standstill without it, but thanks to the reliable service from Meeker Cooperative, they have never faced such a crisis. Milking, cooling the milk, and ventilating the barns are significant electrical draws. Ventilation, in particular, is critical as it maintains a fresh air environment that keeps

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WAGNER DAIRY CONTINUED...



the cows healthy and comfortable. Automated systems control air intakes and fan speeds to ensure a consistent and pleasant atmosphere for the animals. Recently, the farm upgraded to a three-phase line to enhance these systems further.

Power outages are rare issues at Wagner Dairy, however they have two BlueStar generators that automatically activate during any disruptions to ensure continuous operation. These generators are particularly crucial during neighborhood outages, allowing the farm to function seamlessly and maintain proper ventilation for the cows.

Energy efficiency is a priority at Wagner Dairy. The farm has implemented several measures to reduce consumption, such as three-phase fan motors, automatic controls, a plate cooler using well water to cool milk, and a free-heater that utilizes heat from milk chillers to pre-warm water before it reaches the water heaters. 23-13-220 The farm also participates in Meeker Cooperative's interruptible generator program, which offers reduced power costs and allows the farm to go off-grid during high regional power demands. Additionally, LED lighting across the farm and variable speed drive motors on the well pumps further contribute to the energy savings.

The Wagner family has been members of Meeker Cooperative since the 1935 when the Cooperative was organized. Over the years, they have benefited from various programs, including the Gen-Set program and LED light conversion rebates. They also take advantage of off-peak rates for two of their houses.

These initiatives have translated into significant financial benefits for the farm, reducing power bills and overall energy usage. The improved LED lighting offers better performance in cold weather and provides a higher quality of light, which both the cows and employees appreciate. The robotic feed pusher enhances efficiency by ensuring fresh feed is available to the cows hourly, saving valuable time.

"When we first considered the Gen-Set program, Meeker Cooperative provided detailed usage spreadsheets and helped develop a timeline for recouping the generator investment," shared Justin. "Their guidance was instrumental in our decision to proceed."

Looking ahead, Wagner Dairy plans to explore additional automation and innovative cooling methods for their milk. Their top priorities remain profitability, herd health, and cow comfort.

Staying informed through trade shows, conversations with other dairy farmers, and online research helps Wagner Dairy continually seek new ideas to enhance their operations. Meeker Cooperative has been a vital partner in this journey, offering valuable data and insights to support decision-making and improve the farm's bottom line.

Wagner Dairy appreciates the Cooperative's exceptional service and support. As Justin put it, "The best companies are those you forget about during smooth operations but are grateful for during challenges. Meeker Cooperative has consistently been that reliable partner, ensuring our farm's continuous success. On behalf of the cows and the farm, we thank them."



**FIND YOUR
LOCATION
NUMBER**

Four location numbers are hidden within this Pioneer. If you find your number and claim it by calling Meeker Cooperative before June 30, you will have \$10 credit to your account. When you call and verify your information is correct in our system, you will also receive an additional bill credit equal to one month's output from a Member Solar Panel.



Enhancing the Grid: Meeker Cooperative's Summer Infrastructure Projects

Meeker Cooperative is set to undertake an ambitious construction schedule this summer, focusing on enhancing the reliability and capacity of our distribution system. This year's projects span approximately 16 miles, including the replacement of 11.3 miles of new conductor and an additional 4.8 miles of conductor replacement.

Among the primary projects are two significant 4-mile, three-phase upgrades. These projects are designed to address potential capacity issues and enhance the system's overall robustness. 25-20-102 Additionally, we plan to replace cable on several single-phase taps that have been prone to multiple faults, improving service reliability in those areas.

The importance of these construction projects cannot be overstated. Upgrading and maintaining the electric grid is crucial for ensuring consistent and reliable power supply to homes and businesses. As communities grow and demand for electricity increases, infrastructure improvements are essential to prevent outages and maintain service quality. By proactively addressing potential issues, Meeker Cooperative is investing in the future resilience of the grid, ensuring that members receive the dependable service they rely on.

Each year, engineers utilize advanced modeling software to identify lines most in need of upgrades, considering factors such as capacity requirements and voltage stability, especially during backfeeds. 13-07-112 Historical outage data also plays a crucial role, pinpointing areas where cable replacement is most urgent due to excessive faults.

Although the construction projects will span various locations, no specific areas or communities are expected to be significantly impacted. The Cooperative is committed to minimizing disruptions. For the two 4-mile projects, backfeeding will ensure minimal interruption for members not directly on the line. Those directly affected can expect short outages during the cutover process, typically lasting less than two hours. The construction crews are trained to work on energized lines when necessary to maintain service continuity.

These upgrades are part of a four-year work plan, with a goal to complete the current projects by the end of 2024. While overhead construction continues year-round, underground projects are scheduled for periods when the ground is frost-free.

Through these efforts, Meeker Cooperative aims to significantly enhance the reliability and capacity of its electric grid, ensuring a more robust and dependable service for its members.

WILLIE WIREDHAND'S ELECTRICITY FUN FACT



Nikola Tesla, a pioneer in AC electrical systems, held over 300 patents, shaping modern technology with his innovations and laying foundations for today's electrical systems.

MEMBER NEWS

OFFICE CLOSED

Meeker Cooperative offices will be closed on Thursday, July 4 in observance of the 4th of July.



MEEKER COOPERATIVE ANNUAL MEETING AND MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENT:

Mark your calendars for the Meeker Cooperative Member Appreciation event and 89th Annual Meeting at Powder Ridge on Tuesday, August 6, 2024. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. and the Annual Meeting begins at 7:00 p.m.

Director candidate profiles will be provided in July and Director ballots will be mailed in mid-July to members in District 4.

Commitment in Action: How Meeker Cooperative Supports Local Initiatives and Growth

Meeker Cooperative has a longstanding commitment to community engagement and service, demonstrated through a variety of initiatives each year. This year, the Cooperative is proud to participate in local parades, support volunteer efforts to maintain our community, and provide educational opportunities to students.

EDUCATIONAL ENERGY TOUR:

On April 17, 2024, Meeker Cooperative hosted an Energy Tour for first-year electrical students from St. Cloud Technical and Community College. The tour included visits to a Cooperative's substation, community solar garden, Integrated Power Service (IPS) in Litchfield, and BluEarth Renewables at the Adams Wind Facility. Students gained firsthand knowledge about energy production, distribution, and renewable energy technologies. This educational initiative underscores the Cooperative's dedication to fostering the next generation of energy professionals.



ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM:

In May, volunteers from the Litchfield Rotary Club took part in a cleanup effort on Highway 12, sponsored by Meeker Cooperative/VIBRANT Broadband. As part of the MN Adopt-A-Highway program, the Cooperative maintains a section of the highway. To show appreciation, the Cooperative provided a monetary donation to the Rotary Club, recognizing their dedication to the community. 24-35-110 This collaboration highlights Meeker Cooperative's commitment to supporting local initiatives and fostering community partnerships.



PARADE PARTICIPATION:

Meeker Cooperative values its presence in the community and actively participates in local parades to foster community spirit and engagement. This year, the Cooperative will join the following parades:

- Paynesville - Thursday, June 13th
- Atwater - Saturday, June 15th
- Eden Valley - Saturday, June 22nd
- Litchfield - Saturday, July 13th
- Kimball - Saturday, August 10th
- Grove City - Sunday, August 18th

These events allow the Cooperative to connect with members, subscribers, and the broader community, celebrating local traditions and sharing the Cooperative's mission and achievements.



These activities highlight Meeker Cooperative's dedication to its members and the broader community, ensuring a positive and lasting impact. As the Cooperative continues to support and engage with the community, it reaffirms its role as a pillar of local development and a champion of community well-being.

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Luxemburg, Maine Prairie,
South Maine Prairie in Stearns;
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Paul Bugbee, Vice-President — District 1

Roseville, Irving in Kandiyohi;
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Chad Felstul, Attorney

MORE NEWS & CLASSIFIEDS ONLINE

Keep up-to-date with your Cooperative
in-between issues of the Pioneer and
browse our classifieds online at:
www.meeker.coop/news.

WHEN YOU SAVE WE ALL SAVE



Enroll in one of Meeker Cooperative's Energy Management programs by November 15, 2024, to be entered to win one of five \$200 bill credits on your December 2024 statement.

To be eligible, your energy management system must be completely installed, operational, and checked out by a Meeker Cooperative energy services technician by November 15, 2024.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT
ENERGY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AT:**
www.meeker.coop/programs/



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