

We've tried multiple feed storage methods and found tower silos as the way to go.

Rod and Sandi Zellner own Sugar Maple Dairy just west of Luxemburg, WI. Fifteen years ago they purchased the farm right next to the homestead where Rod grew up. As a dedicated team, they work side by side to manage and operate nearly 300 acres, 91 cows and 120 head of young stock.

The Zellner's have learned through trial and error that tower silos are the most efficient way to store feed.

When they purchased the farm 15 years ago it had a 18x70 tower silo. They were milking 42 cows at the time and decided to use bags in addition to the existing silo. It didn't take long however to discover the mess and problems that could occur with bags. "We had a hail storm that ripped holes in the bags" said Rod. "All those little pin holes leaking air into the bags caused moldy feed and there was nothing we could do about it except lose a lot of feed". Also the cost of purchasing bags every year was adding up.

After working with bags for three years, the Zellner's put up a bunker in 1999. It worked better than bags, so they put up another in 2000. Knowing that bunkers always have moldy feed on top, Rod made every effort to pack the bunkers very well to minimize the feed spoilage.

The Zellner's started to calculate the cost of having bunkers. They were running six engines to chop, haul and pack the bunker. Also putting haylage in the bunker didn't work very well because one crop off the field would only fill the bunker half full and when they went to put the next crop in they would have to skim off all the moldy stuff on top. "Getting feed out of the bunker had to be

done carefully," Rod said. "I would have to scratch along the whole face of the bunker very lightly which took a lot of time." In fact, milking became Sandi's full time job and feeding became Rod's because of how labor intensive it was. All of the extra labor, cost and also the danger of having a tractor packing the bunker finally led the Zellner's to make a change to tower silos.

Within the past five years the Zellner's have put up three additional silos. "Silos cost more money up front but they sure pay for themselves down the road," said Rod. "We save money and labor in filling the silos because we only have four engines running instead of six used with bunkers. We definitely appreciate the convenience of having all our feed inside and not having to struggle outside during the wet, cold and snowy weather".

Using the tower silos have enabled the Zellner's to save time, energy and money while establishing a healthier herd with better milk production.



Rod and Sandi Zellner
Luxemburg, WI

*Sugar Maple Dairy has four silos:
Two 20 x 92's and a 18 x 70 used
for haylage and corn silage and a
20 x 65 used for high moisture corn.*



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