

Breeder Profile

District 7: Betley Farms

By Mara Budde

The Betley family has been incredibly successful in the showing the last few years, truly making a name for themselves. Behind the rosettes and banners is a well-managed commercial dairy and show operation where teamwork is vital.

Betley Family Farms has 3200 milking Holsteins with 200 of them being registered. Owned by Jeff, Jena, Claire and Jacob Betley, the family and their team of employees focuses on working with cows that are profitable and produce high quality milk as the main goal of the dairy. In addition to the production side, the family and their herd managers, Trent and Laura Styczynski, work with a subset of animals enrolled in a show program.

The Betley family started their operation in 1943 in their current location near Pulaski. Jeff's grandfather Felix started farming with 13 cows and 40 acres while also working a factory job. Naturally, many changes occurred over the years to get the farm to the 3200-cow and 5400-acre dairy it is today. In 1991, Jeff came home to the farm where they milked 220 cows and gradually increased that number to 400. The current facility was constructed in 2006 and the herd number increased to 1000 at that time. From there, the herd has grown to what it is today.

"We employ a well-trained and established team of 32 employees which includes both the herd and shop personnel," Jena says. "Everyone has their specialty in a certain area(s) which creates the success in every aspect that takes to make the farm run smoothly and efficiently day after day."

Jeff and Jena are still very active with daily tasks. Claire and Jacob are also involved, working with the youngstock and assisting with daily chores. Off the farm, the family is involved in the Pulaski FFA and Alumni and the St. Stanislaus Catholic Church. Jeff is currently on the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin Board of Directors and the town planning and zoning committee.

About five years ago, Claire and Jacob became interested in showing at the Shawano County Fair and Wisconsin State Fair. Claire got hooked on showing young when Heather Jauquet shared



The Betley crew at the Wisconsin Summer Championship Show: Claire and Jena Betley, Trent and Laura Styczynski and Tyler Leuch

her love for Registered Holsteins with her and let her show a calf, Always In Love-Red, at the county fair. The next year, Claire's first show calf was purchased, MD-West-View OK Siri-Red-ET EX-90. As the years went on, these animals had calves of their own and this continued to grow their show aspirations.

In 2019, OCD Jo Lionking-Red-ET, VG-88, was purchased from Oakfield Corners Dairy in the World Classic Sale. In 2019 she was a member of the Nominated All-American Junior Best Three group for the Lambs and was herself Nominated Junior All-American Fall Yearling in 2020, making her the family's first All-American nomination.

Lionking has proved to be an incredible transmitter of type to her offspring. She has produced two Junior All-American nominees and three All-American nominations, with hopes for additional nominations for this year in the U.S. and Canada. This year at World



Junior Champions at the Wisconsin Summer Championship Red & White Show, RWDCA Queen Hannah Hensel, Laura Styczynski with Schluter Altud Amber-Red-ET, Claire Betley with Betley Lionlike-Red-ET and Judge Ryan Krohlow



OCD Jo Lionking-Red-ET VG-88. Photo by CattleClub.com

Betley Family Farms

Jeff, Jena, Claire and Jacob Betley

Number of cows: 3,200, 200 Registered

Number of acres: 5400

Primary Crops grown: Corn, both silage and dry hay, soybeans, and wheat

Average production: 101 lbs./day with a 3.9% Fat and 3.29% Protein

Ration: TMR with seasonal green chop incorporated

Type of housing: Freestall with 50-stall DeLaval Rotary parlor



Jeff and Jena Betley and Claire Betley with Betley Unstp Lionize-Red-ET. Photo by Krista Styer

Dairy Expo, her three daughters claimed the first Junior Best Three group. A group of daughters also earned the Betley's All-Wisconsin Red & White Junior Best Three this summer. Lionking is the dam of Betley Unstp Lionize-Red-ET, the 2021 Reserve Junior Champion of the junior and open shows at the International Red & White Show. Lionize is now owned by Westcoast Holsteins and was first winter yearling this year at World Dairy Expo. Lionize, along with her sisters and a select few others, have given the Betleys a lot of success in the last two years.

"The offspring of Lionking are extremely consistent. We have sold some this spring that have done well for their owners along with finding a new favorite every other day at home," Jena says.

Trent and Laura Styczynski started working with Claire and Jacob on the show program in 2020 which really took it to the next level. Both have an extensive background in the show world, working for some of the top show herds in the country, and this knowledge has maximized performance of the registered cattle.

"We have learned the importance of feeding heifers to maintain proper condition while still considering the overall health of the cattle," Jena says. "When Trent and Laura joined us, they worked side by side with the kids to teach them why this project is so important to give 110% because the work is done at home 360 days a year and not the five days we get to exhibit them in a show ring."

By far, this summer has been one of the highlights of their show success. The family bred and exhibited the Supreme Champion Heifer at the Wisconsin Junior State Fair, Betley Lightsout-Red-ET. She was also the Supreme Champion Bred and Owned Heifer. Moving into late August, the Betleys exhibited four heifers, had four class winners, and won Junior Champion of the Junior Show and had Junior Champion and Reserve Junior Champion of the Open Show at the Wisconsin Championship Red & White Show.

The family also enjoys exhibiting at the District 7 Holstein Show, North American International Livestock Exposition, and the Shawano County Fair.

The breeding program at Betley Farms has evolved since adding more type-focused animals as well as with how the industry has changed as a whole.

"Knowing that all heifers do not develop into really good show cows, we need to make sure we are helping the process of competition both in the ring and in the normal day life at the farm," Trent says.

The team has been evaluating traits to fit all of these aspects. Bulls used aren't extreme in stature, have improved DPR and better pin setting and foot and leg composites. Giving up a little height in the

black bloodlines is alright with them since it'll give them a more moderately framed, profitable cow.

Working with the red bloodlines has been a bit more challenging over the years since there are only certain red bulls that are available. Similar to breeding the black and whites, they watch for stature, udder composite and DPR.

Some of the sires they are using in the red and white world are Altitude, Unstopabull, Analyst, Jordy, Architect, Atomic RC, Showtime RC, and Moovin RC. On the black and white Holsteins they are using Crushabull, Crushtime, King Doc, Delta Lambda, Eye Candy, Chief, Sidekick, Doorman, and Thunderstorm.

While show animals are fun to work with, both show and commercial animals need to be profitable and provide high quality milk. "Getting that task done daily includes a lot of strategy, time commitment, and motivation," Jena says. "Breeding good cows for milk production along with continuing to monitor sire selection for both commercial and type only benefits future endeavors."

On the commercial animals, the Betleys are selecting bulls on the traits of health, modern size, and production. They are believers in DWP\$ to where they set weekly benchmarks on what genetic lines they want to continue and what lines they will end and breed to beef.

The team at Betley Farms has had success with Alta Genetics' breeding programs. Working with them has allowed a better controlled inventory of animals since lower genetic animals are bred to beef.

For more than 10 years in a row, Betley Family Farms has been awarded the milk quality award from Land O' Lakes. "That to us is very important because of the management practices taken daily and the outlook to the future takes time, dedication, and a solid team on both the dairy and the cropping side of the business to continue our success and goals of our dairy," Jena says.

Moving forward, there are big construction plans for the farm. They are currently in the planning process of building a methane digester and solar system to provide energy to the surrounding community and businesses in northeast Wisconsin. To the family, being environmentally friendly is important and the system is expected to be in operation by spring of 2023.

On the facilities side, plans and construction of a facility for high genetic and genomic animals is in the works. Off the main farm, the Betleys raise about 80 calves for PEAK Genetics, some of their own high DWP\$ females, as well as type females. At this time, they only care for youngstock, but looking forward they are excited to incorporate milking cows into the program this winter.