

REDUCE INPUTS, INCREASE YIELDS, HEALTHIER CROPS

CLEAR LAKE, SD ~ Growing healthy crops and animals is important to Jeff and Jodi Knutson of Knutson Farms. They and their three children (Brett, 13; Brittany, 9; and Cole, age 5) are third- and fourth-generation dairy farmers in Clear Lake, South Dakota, where they raise alfalfa, corn, soybeans, wheat and oats. Irrigation is not an option for Knutson – “We rely entirely on Mother Nature to take care of us,” Jodi says.

Ever-increasing commercial fertilizer costs led Knutsons to Biological Services International (BSI) and their line-up of Answer Products (Bio-N-Liven and Carbon Answer) and Livestock Answer. Actually, a fellow dairy farmer told them about this intriguing product line. That dairy farmer has seen noticeable, bottomline-improving results with the Answer products, seeing healthier animals, less flies, less odor, on the animal side and increased productivity and healthier soils on the cropping side of his business.

“We were looking for something that would improve the health of our cows and at the same time reduce our input costs,” Knutson recalls. “When we started using Livestock Answer on our cows and our newborn calves, we immediately noticed an improvement in overall herd health. We then switched from a medicated to a non-medicated milk replacer for the calves, and to this day, our death loss has decreased dramatically and our calves are so much healthier. Our cull rate has decreased tremendously.”

Another pleasant “plus” where dairies are concerned? Odor. “During the summer, the urea smell in the barn would bring tears to your eyes since using Livestock Answer, that smell is now practically gone. And manure throughout the entire herd is now very consistent – not real loose here, not real hard there – just



Jeff and Jodi Knutson and family (left to right: Brett, Cole & Brittany) – Clear Lake, SD

consistent across the board,” Knutson states.

On their crops, the Knutsons have used the biological approach with Bio-N-Liven and Carbon Answer on the majority of their 2007 acreage, with “phenomenal results”:

“Our silage corn last year stood higher than we’ve ever seen – a full foot over the cab of the tractor – and production/yield was 180 bu/acre with 38” row spacing.

“We have some sandy hills, but our crops stayed green last year while our neighbors’ fields were burning up. And doing our fieldwork this spring, on our second year using Bio-N-Liven and Carbon Answer 100% and using zero commercial fertilizer, we noticed the ground was more mellow, easier to work up than ever before.

“After 1st cutting of alfalfa last year, we noticed an alfalfa weevil problem on the half of our field that did NOT have the Bio-N-Liven and Carbon Answer applied to it – so we applied those products to that half of the field between 1st and 2nd cuttings – and that took care of our bug problem,” Jodi recalls. “And with our soybeans, we didn’t have to spray full rate with the BSI products and noticed no bug problems whatsoever.”

Bottomline? “We did a field test last year on a 60-acre corn field,” Knutson says. “We applied Bio-N-Liven and Carbon Answer to 30 acres and commercial fertilizer to the other 30 acres, with absolutely no yield difference. At 2007 pricing, commercial fertilizer was \$100/acre more than the BSI products this year, we’ve computed those figures to be \$200+/acre for commercial fertilizer versus \$48/acre for the BSI products.”



“Our crops stayed green while our neighbors’ were burning up,” Knutson said after using Answer Products.

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