Benefits, Obstacles, and Solutions for Robotic Milking Technology

Agenda

Benefits, Obstacles, and Solutions for Robotic Milking Technology
Diana Stuart, Michigan State University
Becky Schewe, Mississippi State University

Producer Panel

Industry Panel
Chad Scholma, HiTech Dairy Supply
Ray Bowles, DeLaval Direct
Dennis Brown, Brown Dairy Equipment
Carry Endert, MDARD

KBS Dairy Tour

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Facebook: Kellogg Farm and Dairy

Sponsors:

DeLaval
HiTech
Brown Dairy Equipment

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
W.K. Kellogg Biological Station
Why Robots?
Benefits, Obstacles, and Solutions for Adopting Robotic Milking Technology

Dr. Diana Stuart, Michigan State University
Dr. Becky Schewe, Mississippi State University

Research
Interviews with 15 dairy farmers using robotic milkers (Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa)
Interviews with 20 dairy farmers in the Netherlands using robotic milkers and grazing

Motivations for trying robotic milkers
Reduced labor
Need to upgrade facilities
Intergenerational transition
Higher production without adding a third milking
Seeing robots in action

Benefits of using robotic milkers
Flexibility and control over your labor
Boost in production (depends on previous management)
Animal health
Data and information

Obstacles to using robotic milking
High cost
Fear of technology failure
Lack of technical support
Learning a new technology
Milk inspectors (getting better)
Things that were not obstacles:
  Training cows
  Retrofitting barns

What we wish we knew
How hard the first year would be
Maintenance costs

Solutions to support robotic milking
Dairy modernization grants
Financing options (Iowa State University report on financial benefits)
Support groups and online networking