

Middle Kickapoo River Watershed of Wisconsin

FARM #13

Jack Herricks is a third-generation dairy farmer in Cashton, Wisconsin. When he began farming, Jack had 34 cows and 120 acres. Now, he runs an operation of 620 cows, 540 of which are lactating, and approximately 1,400 acres of crops.

Jack's operation is a true family operation, as he and his wife, Pat, farm with their son, Daniel, and daughter, Angie, and their families.

"It always amazes me how the same land that has been farmed by our family all these years, every year produces another good crop and keeps nurturing us and producing for us," Jack said.

Jack began no-till farming in 1985, which he admits was a tough year. At that time, very few people knew how to set planters and drills for no-till farming. But, Jack says it's like a marriage. "I made up my mind that I was going to be a no-till farmer," he said "I'm going to make this work. I'm not going to give up on it."

He has also been using covers since day one on his alfalfa acres and for about 10 years on his corn silage acres.

Jack says he was driven to try these practices by the desire to keep his topsoil in place. His farm is located on steep slopes, so soil erosion has always been a concern.

"Topsoil is a very limited commodity, or resource, and I just knew that if we were going to let it erode away that our farm was going to lose its productivity" he said. "I also realized that the more productive that we can make our soils, the more profitable we can be."

Due to his soil health practices, Jack says his organic matter has increased, he can plant easier, and he has seen improved drainage and reduced soil compaction.

"The single biggest way these practices affected our farm is that it's made us much more profitable," he said. "So, over the years we've been able to



purchase land and grow our farms so that we can have more family members involved in our farm. It has helped us reach a very favorable equity position. Without the benefit of these practices, I'm sure we wouldn't be there."

View Jack's interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvPAINGjBU>

"It's made us much more profitable. So, over the years we've been able to purchase land and grow our farms so that we can have more family members involved in our farm. It has helped us reach a very favorable equity position."

Middle Kickapoo River Watershed of Wisconsin

