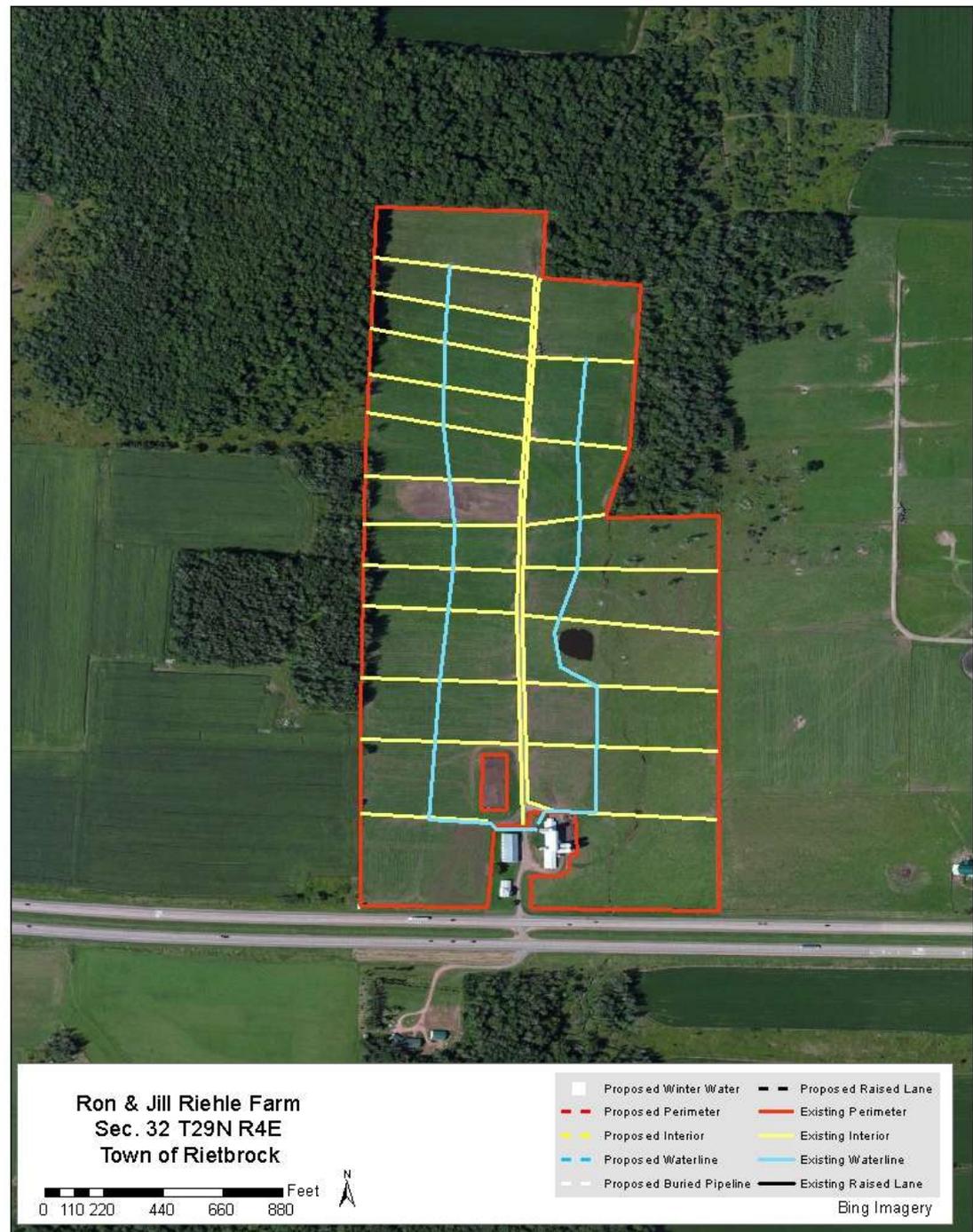




Ron & Jill Riehle
Grazing Dairy Farm

- Forage based grazing dairy farm.
- 60 acres of pasture for dairy cows and bred heifer herd.
- 100 acres for forage production and calf pasture.
- 72 cows, 18 heifers and 18 heifer calves



Raising Replacement Heifers

Conception to 3 Days Old



- Vaccinate dry cows for calf scours.
- (10 week calving window)
- Calves are feed mothers milk for three days then high quality milk replacer to prevent Johnne's disease

Raising Replacement Heifers

3 Days to 7 Weeks



- Moved to hutches
- Calves receive milk replacer and calf starter

Raising Replacement Heifers 7 to 12 Weeks



- Group buildings.
- Pelletized grains until 10 weeks.
- Grass hay is introduced at 10 weeks.

Raising Replacement Heifers

12 Weeks to 15 Months or May 1st



- Heifers 12 weeks of age are transitioned to pasture and ground grains fed a 5#'s /day

Raising Replacement Heifers

12 Weeks to 15 Months or May 1st



- Yearlings are fed grass hay and spend the winter on a bedded pack
- Heifers stay on pasture until breeding time

Raising Replacement Heifers 15 Months to Calving



- Heifers are bred through natural service at 15 months.
- At 15 months, May 1, heifers are mixed with dry cows and make up the follower group.

Pasture Production - Spring

- 2 hours/day at green up (Late April)
- New paddock each day.
- Why? stagger pasture growth, get cows off concrete and exercise.
- Slowly lengthen grazing time when grass takes off

Pasture Production – Late Spring



- May 1 or when pasture production is high enough cattle out for 24 hours/day
- Early May, or when grass is 4 inches tall, 100# urea or 50 units of nitrogen

Pasture Production

- June 1, Excess pasture is harvested for silage
- Mid June until fall, slow rotation of the farm to 33 days



Pasture Production – Late Summer

- Aug 1, 100# urea or 50 units of nitrogen
- Utilize alternative sources of nutrients



Forage Production

- Reed Canary, Bluegrass, and quackgrass
- Early May, or when grass is 4 inches tall, 150# urea or 75 units of nitrogen
- Harvest end of May for silage
- Liquid manure after 1st cutting
- 2nd cutting 4th of July for silage and some large squares
- Aug 1, 100# urea or 50 units of nitrogen
- 3rd cutting early September for silage

Milk Production & Components

- Modified seasonal – Grazing Dairy
- Late winter (Feb 1 to April 1) calving
- Calving this early increases breeding success with natural service.
- Have cows peak production on spring grass.
- Supplement 15 pounds with ground corn, white salt and magnesium when on pasture; 20 pounds through the winter
- Summer milk production = peak at 83#'s in May and down to 60#'s by fall
- Winter production tappers down to 55#'s until dried off
- On grass, Butterfat 3.1 to 3.2; on silage 4.0

Herd Health



- Prevent fresh cow mastitis, and calf problems
- Feed dry cow mineral
- Treat dry cows to prevent mastitis
- Vaccinate dry cows for calf scours
- Calves are feed MOTHER's milk for three days then high quality milk replacer to prevent Johnne's disease

Profitability of a Grazing Dairy

- Lower “break even” milk prices
- Target net profit \$1500/cow/300 day lactation
- Adjust purchases to maintain profitability
- Low vet bills
- Low infrastructure expenses
- Roughage costs are reduced 1/3 in winter and reduced 2/3 in summer.