

ADVOCATE PROFILE

GROWER:

George Brand (*middle*),
David Brand (*right*)

LOCATION:

Waterloo, Indiana

RETAIL FACILITY:

The Andersons

CROP ADVISOR:

Terry Bechman (*left*)

RETAILER LOCATION:

Waterloo, Indiana



Brand Dairy Farm is a 400-head dairy herd with about 900 head of cattle on the farm at all times and 2,500 acres of corn, soybeans, wheat and hay.

CROPPING SYSTEM GOALS:

Optimize farm productivity by being good stewards of the soil while making no-till work to enhance the bottom line by reducing production costs.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED ON THE FARM:

- No-till all production acres since 1990 to reduce erosion and enhance soil
- Work closely with the local DeKalb Soil and Water Conservation District
- Utilize grassed waterways to reduce erosion
- Installed grass filter strips along open ditches in fields to reduce nutrient loss to surface water
- Installed multiple water and sediment control basins to slow surface runoff and reduce sediment loss
- Enlarged and built second manure storage lagoon for more flexible manure application timing and better use of manure nutrients
- Added wheat to crop rotation to provide greater flexibility for manure application
- Rotate placement of manure applications to prevent over-application
- Track manure application placement and timing
- Analyze manure twice a year to determine nutrient content and better utilize commercial nutrients
- Annual grid soil sampling to monitor fertility levels
- Determine soil fertility needs by management zone based on soil tests, manure applications and crop nutrient removal
- Apply lime, phosphorus and potash using variable rate application
- Utilize cover crops after corn silage with a combination of ryegrass, radishes and crimson clover and utilize cover crop in spring as a silage for dairy herd

FORMS OF NUTRIENTS APPLIED:

Dairy manure, balanced with a custom blend of commercial fertilizer

AVERAGE YIELD FOR EACH CROP:

- **Corn Silage:** 26–28 tons/ac
- **Corn:** 175–180 bu/ac
- **Soybeans:** 50 bu/ac

ECONOMIC MEASURE OF SAVINGS:

With the incorporation of suites of fertilizer BMPs the operation has achieved more consistent yields in a higher range.