

Weaver Feeding & Management, LLC  
25800 Valley View Rd  
Cuba City, WI 53807

*The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies –probably because generally they are the same people.*  
-Gilbert K. Chesterton

# KOW Ruminations

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*Fully independent soil consulting-agronomy-nutrition. We do dairy nutrition from the soil up.*  
Produced by WF&M for KOW Consulting Assoc. Ph 608-762-6948, fx 6949, email [tweaver@mhtc.net](mailto:tweaver@mhtc.net) Oct - Nov 2007

## Nine Out Of Ten Neighbors Secretly Hope You Fail And The Dairy Science Department Cares More About Sales Than You Think.

Yes, if you didn't realize it already, I am sorry to *burst your bubble*; *nobody* cares about the success of your farm *as much as you do*. In fact, it is **your attitude** that sets the standard of scrutiny. How can *anyone* else care more? I must confess that I *cannot* care about the success of my clients' farms **as much as they do** (or *should*). (I cannot stay up at night *worrying* over how well my clients **manage** their farm, else I would lose what's left of my *small* mind! ☺ Believe me, there are colleagues of yours out in our industry that would like to **shift the responsibility** of daily management to consultants -as if they are "*management inspectors*." Not a recipe for success!) **I am paid to be biased in favor of the success of my client's dairy business**, but I can *merely* give recommendations and assist with *those things brought to my attention*. I cannot (and *should not*) make decisions or do anything about **getting stuff done consistently** (a big part of success!). The **KOWboyz advise as your accountant advises you**. Accountants don't **manage** businesses. Therefore, even though I am *paid to care*, there's only so much a  
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KOWboy can do. Yet, in spite of the admitted limitations, I would like to remind / reinforce why **KOW Consulting Association is a better source of info / advice than the conventional "pipeline."**

I've been around the dairy business *most* of my 42 years. Nearly born in a barn, I have viewed dairy farming from many angles. I'm still quite astonished at times over how **some** folks own cows for many, many years, but never seem to learn much about how to properly feed and care for them. One would think that all *dairy*men would be so interested in cows that the pursuit of cow knowledge would be a *primary* focus. Not so. No need to when there's plenty of show-n-tell to guide you. As one "*successful*" dairyman recently told me, the (his) *preferred* method of learning is by "watching what the neighbors do." Although this fellow truly was / is a "successful" dairyman (*defined as ability to pay his bills / debt*) it was obvious to me that his "monkey see, monkey do" (or not do) mentality has kept him exactly where *agri-sales* wants him: able to pay his bills, but not so wise as to know how to *eliminate* (or significantly reduce) some of them.

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Ignorance is not bliss and what you *don't* know definitely can hurt you.

Lest I am *mistaken* as arrogant (I do not profess to be omniscient or inerrant!) and cause offense, I'm not trying to characterize all dairymen, just *most* ☺ (too many!!). Fortunately, to earn a living, I have been able to find a few **independent thinkers** that *appreciate truly independent* consulting! (Thank you!) The fellows that do everything *based upon* what they see others doing have allowed themselves to be limited by *peer pressure* and/or pride, are likely controlled by *fear of the unknown* and are **very likely** to be spending on unnecessary magic (*false management*) in a bag. These are the things that **control** most dairymen (See historical KOW literature, I have written on this in the past. I think it's an established, *undeniable* truth at this point –I have *never* had anyone refute or add to my analysis of what drives decisions on most dairy farms -although I'd be willing to add government farm program payments to that list of bad influences!) Dairymen that hire KOW for any significant length of time are simply not (or shouldn't be!) fooled by this *nonsense*.

The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge . . .

Proverbs 15:14

**Leaders are readers.** *The KOWboyz can tell who reads our newsletters (KOW Ruminations –the one currently in your hand and, if you're a client personally advised / regularly visit by a KOW Associate advisor you also benefit from our Review of the Dairy News service [for subscribers to Ruminations and/or the website: Review of the News is an informal Readers Digest of dairy news magazine clippings and research reports with my handwritten commentary on the side]).* When a person limits themselves to only *video* (visual) "learning," they actually may not be *learning* at all -because the mind is *less* active than if *reading*. The worst example of this is *television* (including much of the internet now-a-days –as it is not much different than tv). The mind and body are quite inactive / *passive* while the video images "drill" deep into the mind. Television is a wonderful tool for *brainwashing* (manipulating / controlling) people. That's why I'm very careful to *avoid* watching too much of what I call "the brain drainer" or "Hellavision." (It's **almost** as *damaging* as a modern university degree / credentials – can significantly *interfere* with *learning*! *Some* of these college boys . . . Ha! If you have the credentials but are *still learning*, good for you!)☺ When a person reads, the mind / imagination is *most* active. Throughout history the written word has been the *primary* means for recording and imparting *knowledge*. Even the Creator has considered the written Word to be a *most valuable* means of communication. Consider that a culture without *written* communication and literacy is not well advanced and *usually given to some of the most insane (or evil) superstitious belief systems / practices*. This all because the minds are ruled by . . . peer pressure . . .

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fear . . . magic . . . **independent and logical thinkers / leaders are absent**. Yes, it's easy to tell who's been reading the KOW "propaganda" ☺ **because those individuals have little difficulty separating themselves from the herd**. People that just "don't have time" to think (read), inevitably allow others to do their thinking for them, and all too often, others (salespeople, lenders, etc.) have a yoke of slavery for the *intellectually lazy*. **KOW places so much emphasis on printed literature and education because it's the only way we know to truly / fully engage the mind / imagination**. In an increasingly *illiterate* society, this does pose a significant challenge to us. Recent statistics I've read: 1/3 of high school graduates never read another book for the rest of their lives; 42% of college graduates never read another book after college; and 80% of US families did not buy or read a book last year. Nevertheless, once a dairyman reads enough of our stuff, it *changes how* he thinks and what **he decides** to do on his farm. Once the fundamentals of how the soil system works or how crops grow or how cows work inside are *understood*, the influence of neighbors and sales people is minimized. This is not to suggest all of our clients are expected to become technical experts in soil / agronomy / nutrition, only to emphasize that *our most successful ones* are **engaged** in the fundamentals. Rather than being *condescending* (as are so many marketers and dairy scientists!), **I respect the ability of our clients to think things through and make their own decisions**. I'm just sharing info / ideas. We're just looking for the *thinkers*. *A few good dairymen*. ☺

God bless those neighbors that *selflessly* spring into action to harvest the crops or milk the cows of the dairyman who has hit "hard times." I'm not going to ignore or fail to recognize these heartfelt *divine* (without God's grace it wouldn't happen) events. Unfortunately, it seems *to require* tragedy or catastrophe to get us humans back to living like we know what's really important (stuff that still matters 100 years from now). The day to day norm I witness is not so "uplifting." **Those dairymen who are different or that do especially well are generally despised** (human nature!) and the vast majority view their neighbors as **competitors** – at best (if not for the neighbor, there'd be more land available, or a cheap set of buildings to be used). Did you ever hear the story about the farmer that found the lamp while plowing his field? When he was rubbing the soil off of it -out came the Genie and offered him whatever he wished for. However, there was one stipulation: whatever he would receive, his neighbor would get twofold. After a couple of days of consideration the farmer asked to be blinded in one eye. (That *mythical* story only stings so much because it's *based upon* truth.)

Do not drag me away with the wicked, with those who do evil, who speak cordially with their neighbors but harbor malice in their hearts. Psalm 28:3

I've also witnessed salesmen exploit the competitive spirit between two (or more) dairymen in order to sell them both!

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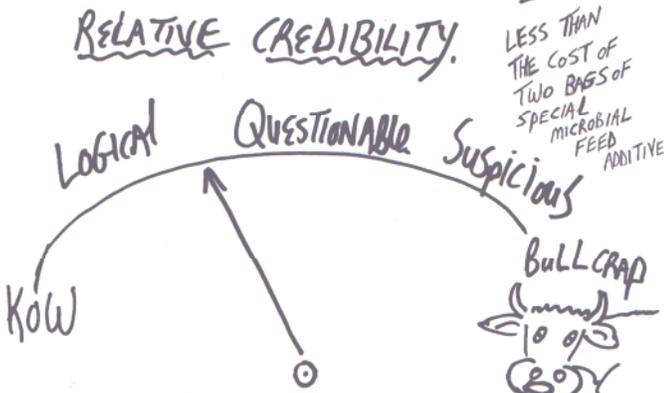
Of course, this without the best interest of *either* in mind. **Yet these (salespeople and neighbors) are the primary advisors / influencers of the majority of dairymen –go figure. (?) Don't let this be you!!**

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Next, consider the unbiased (?), pure as the wind-driven snow dairy scientist community (pick university Brand X, your choice). We have I-o-n-g abandoned even the appearance of objectivity in research. Don't misunderstand: scientific methods are still carefully employed, it's just that they are *very carefully* employed **to the benefit of the highest bidder!** Do you expect your neighbors hired man to milk and feed your cows? No. Only your neighbor should expect help from him. After all, **he's the one that's paying for it!** Relying on university dairy science Brand X for all your dairy management advice is about the equivalent of hoping the neighbors hired man will stop by early each day to voluntarily milk your herd before he takes care of his employers. **All one has to do to understand who's interests will get priority is follow the money trail.** Are you writing big checks for research? Who are the "gold" sponsors of dairy research / events? Sure, you may consider your tax money to be supporting research, but you cannot withhold / control that money and **therefore have no ability to influence how it is used.** Make no mistake, the "job" of anyone that works for the government is to keep their job or move "up the ladder" to a better one –it's a very rare exception to see anyone employed by the government take any risks whatsoever to look out for the common taxpayer (farmers included). Don't get me wrong, I know and appreciate some (few) people within the system that are doing a good job for

the farmer, but the **system itself is not designed to serve the interests of the farmer.**

**Agri-sales is in charge**, and more so all the time. Tax money makes up an ever smaller percent of the research funding "pie" while **researchers have moved to openly solicit money from agri-business / sales.** While I'm 100% for privatization, unfortunately, what this has resulted in is government subsidized "research" **on behalf of large corporate interests.** We've come to a time in dairy science that, in order to keep dairy science "afloat," the entire Midwest USA system is being consolidated under one "umbrella" called the *Midwest Dairy Consortium* –**the purpose of which is to secure funding from agri-business** (for more information go to [www.mwdairy.org](http://www.mwdairy.org)). When has consolidation (less or no competition) served the best interest of the dairy farmer? Will further consolidation "save" what has been I-o-n-g lost (research priority bias toward the best interest of the farmer)? To try to sell you (the dairyman) on the notion that the major consolidation / funding drive called the *Midwest Dairy Consortium* will be for **your** good is simply mistaken at best –and possibly the sale of a swindler. If big Agri-biz X writes the gold sponsorship check and some researcher tries to tell you that the *dairyman's* priorities will be served **first**, he is either a liar or has decided to make a career change sometime soon. (My honest opinion!) **Unless dairy farmers voluntarily** step up to fund research **with more money than the "gold" sponsors**, they are not likely to be well served by the system. **This is not to suggest that research that has been funded by big agri-sales is of zero value.** What I'm trying to emphasize is that many things of interest / benefit to the *farmer* will continue to be **ignored** while the research endorsement-to-sales train will *continue* down its track. It's just going to get bigger and faster than ever before! Meanwhile, this KOWboy will *continue* to read the research reports and *consider* their value. I will *continue* to pick and choose those things that I see as *helpful to our clients* and criticize / expose those things presented by the **agri-sales and research consortium** I find to be biased by the conflict of interest. Some of the *best* research discoveries have been those things that were **accidentally** discovered while in pursuit of another agenda. There's also research data that never gets published because, if it was, it would not **serve the interest of the entity that funded it.** I like to consider all of these things. That's my job. Thank you for paying me to do it! **I take the trust seriously.** The KOWboyz are in *pursuit* of the soil-agronomy-dairy nutrition information that will *help you* to make decisions that will make things better for **you.** (Not agri-sales!) Consultants are not truly independent if they *fear* publicly criticizing conventional dairy science, being *more* concerned about "getting along" with Dr. So-n-so (who has been selling his credentials for research money) than **protecting your farm from bad ideas.** KOW Consulting exists **because of you** (*fully funded* by the farmer!) and we KOWboyz make it our mission to look out for you. The neighbors and/or the IRS are not the best source of tax advice, that's why you hire (pay for) an accountant.