



## FEATURE STORY

# MANAGED GRAZING = WINNING CATTLE

The first time Glenn Johnson suggested a relationship between fresh water sources and pounds gained in cattle, Dr. Larry Goelz admits he scoffed. "But I'm a believer now because Glenn is able to show 210 lbs. gain difference just by piping water to his grazing paddocks rather than relying on farm ponds."

Glenn allows Dr. Goelz isn't usually wrong. "Good things I heard about him started this relationship with the Vet Clinic." The two men now agree Chestnut Angus cows appreciate their highly palatable fresh drinking sources in what Glenn calls paddocks created by returning row-crop land to grazing. Twenty-eight cow-calf pairs inhabit a paddock at any one time and rotate out every five days. That way, three of the ten paddocks are re-growing and seven are offering his livestock a mixture of tasty grasses.

From June to October, Glenn also keeps animals on other

conventional pasture sites here and there near his farm. He developed the managed grazing program out of necessity, since the area where he farms is also attractive for hunting preserves. He says, "The cost per acre for additional pasture ground is three times its worth."

Clean water and good grazing build impressive animals. So say the judges at the Denver National Stock Show (where the Johnsons showed a prize pen of bulls), the Sioux Empire Farm Show (Chestnut Angus captured top heifer honors), and the Rapid City Stock Show (another heifer stole the show there).

"We go to shows to promote our cattle. You know that saying, 'Out of sight; out of mind'...we believe in shows as advertising for our product. Wins at those events remind buyers to visit the Chestnut Angus bull sale the last Saturday of February every year."

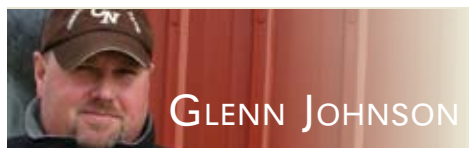
It's all hands on deck for sale day and Glenn proudly lists the people he can count on to be right in the thick of it. His wife, Sherri, a hair stylist in Pipestone,

has become increasingly involved with the cattle over the years. "The bigger we've grown, the more she's helped," he says. "Now, the boys—Wesly (11) and Dawson (7)—are helping, too!"

Wesly really knows the cattle, his father insists, and honestly who'd discount the expertise of a kid who marketed a bull for \$10,500 when he was 10? "We've only sold one other for a higher price," his smiling father points out.

Just as his sons are learning from him, Glenn learned about livestock production from his father, Floyd. He still relies on his dad and brother, David, when he needs an extra pair of hands. He also credits his father-in-law, Greg Butman, with helping him understand the industry back when Glenn and Sherri bought their first registered heifer.

Now, Glenn is less student and more innovator with his rotational grazing and fresh water installations. He's also had time to distill his personal theory of quality control, "I'd like somebody to drive by the pasture and think, 'I'd be really glad to own those cattle!'" ■



GLENN JOHNSON

Veterinary Voices

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S. R. Wayne, D.V.M.

C. W. Vlietstra, D.V.M.  
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B. B. Myers, D.V.M.

## MORE FUN THAN A MILK MUSTACHE

MEET THE OWNERS OF MOSSINGS DAIRY



MOSS AND INGRID JOPSON WITH DR. VLIETSTRA

Maybe the happiest cows do live in California but it's possible the happiest dairy owners are from England—transplanted in Egan, SD. Moss and Ingrid Jopson brought their infectious good humor across the pond in March 2007.

The scenery, the process—even the approach to veterinary care—took some getting used to. Back in England, they were accustomed to overseeing all steps in the production and delivery chain. “We milked the cows, pasteurized the milk, and delivered it to customers’ doorsteps,” Ingrid explains. “Nothing wrong with that except our location: we were smack-dab in the middle of a tourist area surrounded by multi-millionaires.”

Since they couldn't expand, they put their 130 acres on the sale block “for what was probably small change” to the people who bought the land and stone barns built in the 1600s.

While Moss and Ingrid were deciding what to do next, they visited a European dairy farming event. “We saw a tiny booth,” Moss explains with a grin, “that said ‘Come to South Dakota’ and we thought, ‘Now that might be a nice little vacation trip!’”

Apparently, mighty oak trees from little vacations grow and soon the Jopsons began their effort to set up a new milking operation out where neighbors aren't elbow to elbow. It took time and patience because “the visa process is a nightmare!”

Currently, the Jopson family is in the U.S. with an investment visa on adjustment status which, according to Moss, means “at first they wouldn't let us in and now they won't let us out! It costs a lot in lawyers' fees and I think the State of South Dakota is learning as fast as we are.” Once they receive the okay, the Jopsons and family members will fly back to London for green cards, which have to be issued in their home country.

And yet, South Dakota is starting to feel a lot like home, too. Daughter Kaylee, 18, is enrolled at SDSU and son Michael, 16, attends high school in Flandreau, wrestles, and accomplishes half of the AI breeding in the dairy barn.

Everyone misses Sarah, 23, a nursing student in England, and Nicholas, 22, who works in an English dairy. Moss's sister Heidi Hird; husband, Alistair; and niece, Vikki, also immigrated to be part of the new dairy operation. They raise the calves for Mossings Dairy.

### ADJUSTING TO CONSULTATIVE VETERINARY SERVICES

Though this merry band keeps uncovering amusing cultural differences, they say their experience with Dr. Curt Vlietstra from the Pipestone Vet Clinic ranks among the most surprising. “First, Curt told us he wanted to watch us milk,” Moss chuckles. Clearly there was some misunderstanding because, “back home our vet wouldn't know what he was looking at.” Here, Dr. Curt likes to make his decisions based on understanding every process in a client's dairy.

So everyone needed some of what Moss smilingly calls “educating.”

Another difference: in the UK, farmers aren’t allowed to administer injections to animals. Whereas Midwestern livestock producers administer many treatments themselves, English vets always arrive onsite to administer injections. Drug protocols differ, too, according to Dr. Vlietstra. “Typically, I’d develop a plan for seven or eight vaccinations. At Mossings, they prefer to use only two vaccines in their lactation cycle.”

As Dr. Vlietstra talks, Moss anticipates the next question. Yes, Moss and Ingrid challenge traditional U.S. dairy accepted wisdom. With their herd goals of low stress, moderate production, and quality herdsmanhip, they can take advantage of lower animal health input costs while maintaining herd health and profitability. This philosophy has resulted in improved cow longevity and fewer animal health problems.

That approach pegs production at 65 lbs. per cow per day, Dr. Vlietstra adds. “Maybe it’s not a huge yield but when you factor in lower health problems—it’s providing a sound return.”

## NO HERD STRESS

Mossings cows are also milked on a less-frantic schedule than in most dairies. “Cows don’t like being messed with,” Ingrid notes. “And because they prefer familiar faces, we don’t move them around a lot. We put fresh cows in a pen and they get to stay there with their friends through breeding.”

To further lessen herd stress, Mossings Dairy doesn’t milk ‘round the clock’. “We built a bigger milking parlor to take more cows at once, reducing the need for more employees and more shifts.” Their setup also ensures that in a crisis

Moss and Ingrid could do all their own milking.

Their five employees complete the first milking in 4 to 5 hours, take time off in the middle of the day, and return for the later milking. “They must like that schedule because we’ve had the same crew for two years.”

So employees are content and cows are glad to lounge around with their best girlfriends. Meanwhile, the cheerful dairy owners fondly tease each other and the visiting veterinarian, who lightly injects a serious herd-health suggestion at the end. The merry jokesters and the consultant have forged a working bond. ■



DR. VLIETSTRA

## WIESE IN THE WAYS OF ANIMALS



When you call in or stop by our Pipestone office with a small animal question, it’s likely you’ll talk with Katie Wiese, certified veterinary technician, who works with Dr. Weber. “I get lots of interesting questions,” she admits and even on her day off she can’t resist sharing her knowledge. A client asks for a better hairball remedy because her cat doesn’t show any interest in Laxatone,<sup>®</sup> the standard hairball treatment.

Katie suggests pumpkin filling mixed with the cat’s food. It delivers plenty of fiber and extra hydration—plus it tastes yummy to most any cat. As a side note, she also reminds the client that it takes more Laxatone to clear the hair than the average person thinks.

“I’ve been a vet tech for 12 years now and I still love my job! Every day there’s something new and different. Studies show people who have pets have fewer health issues and they are a great addition to any family.

“People often don’t realize how big of a role pets play in their lives, but they are a great support system, they always listen, always agree, and no matter how bad your day is they still love you and are glad to have you home.” That’s Wiese advice.

*Editor’s Note: Katie is married to Mike who works for the BNSF. The couple has two children, Carmen and Madelyn. In her off-duty hours, she’s also mom to a dog, a cat, and a fish. ■*

**PIPESTONE**

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*Inside This Issue :*

PAGE 1

MANAGED GRAZING =  
WINNING CATTLE

PAGES 2-3

MORE FUN THAN A MILK  
MUSTACHE

PAGE 3

WIESE IN THE WAYS OF ANIMALS

# MANAGE ANIMAL DIABETES

BY NICOLE WEBER, DVM



There are many questions that surround the diagnosis of pet diabetes. Two fundamental questions are 'Does my schedule allow for insulin every 12 hours?' and 'Can I handle giving my pet twice daily injections?' If the answer is yes to both, then managing diabetes just got a little bit easier.

Consider Flash, a 13-year-old cat, who I first saw three years ago. He'd been found cold and unresponsive before arriving at the Pipestone Vet Clinic. It didn't take long to discover that Flash had a very high blood sugar level. He was stabilized and then transferred to the Emergency Hospital in Sioux Falls for after-hours care. Flash was too critical of a patient at that time to not have after-hours monitoring.

Flash's owner, Peggy, learned how to manage his diabetes with twice daily insulin injections. Flash is doing well now—his blood sugar is well controlled and he's gaining weight. His owner says, "When he got sick, I thought it would totally change my life. But we have really settled into a routine with shots timed before I go



FLASH

to work and after supper. I was nervous at first but after a few times it seemed as if I'd been giving the shots forever. Sometimes, I think Flash is reminding me he's ready for his shot but that could be because he always gets a little treat!"

Approximately every six months, Flash visits the Clinic for a blood glucose curve. We monitor change to the level of which his blood sugar drops after an insulin injection.

What about your pet? When should a pet be tested for diabetes? Some signs are excessive drinking, excessive urination, and weight loss.

You can learn a lot more about pet diabetes at [www.veterinarypartner.com](http://www.veterinarypartner.com) or call 507-825-4211 and ask for Katie or me. ■