Smart Holstein Lab

VFTH

11/4/21

Cutting edge research is taking place at WKU’s Dairy Farm that will impact the future of the dairy industry.

Amy Bingham takes us inside the newly developed WKU SmartHolstein Lab in this week’s View from the Hill.

WKU Dairy is quickly becoming an industry leader for exploration of new technologies and analytics tools. Providing a major learning opportunity for students.

“I really love working with cows. I just think they are really intelligent.”

Grad student Gretchen Colon came all the way from Puerto Rico to continue her education in animal science.

“I knew that I wanted to keep studying and getting more knowledge so that’s when this opportunity just came and I knew I had to come here.”

The ‘opportunity’ is the WKU SmartHolstein Lab, the result of a 500 thousand dollar grant that provided serious upgrades to the barn.

“One of the technologies we’ve got is a new mattress called Dutch Mountain cow mattresses. We’re the first herd in the United States to put those in.”

The focus is on herd health and monitoring, barn management, milk quality and data collection.

“We do have a couple systems that track rumination and we can detect whether a cow is going off feed or getting sick based on rumination rates.”

The goal? To provide genetic information that will impact the entire dairy industry.

“The research is important because happy healthy cows produce good quality milk.”

Woosley says the dairy barn has undergone two or three renovations since being built in the late 1930’s. The number of cattle has jumped to more than sixty.

“Lots of things have changed but some things haven’t and that’s the tradition of providing these hands-on learning experiences for our students.”

Students like Gretchen.

“I am really glad and thankful for the opportunity to get more knowledge and to know all these amazing people.”

The grant for the WKU SmartHolstein Lab was a collaboration between the National Holstein Association and the Kentucky Ag Development Board.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

In an effort to increase the genetic potential of the herd, a “Send a Cow to College” program is taking place through the end of the year.

####