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President / CEO

Michael Ritz
mikeritz@ritzfamilypublishing.com

Executive V.P. Operations

Robert Davis
rdavis@ritzfamilypublishing.com

Sales Manager

David Larsen
david@ritzfamilypublishing.com

Office Manager

Angie Hawkins
angie@ritzfamilypublishing.com

Admin. Assistant

Kay Clover
kay@ritzfamilypublishing.com

Ritz Family Publishing, Inc.

www.ritzfamilypublishing.com

Corporate Office

Ritz Family Publishing, Inc.
714 N Main Street
Meridian, ID 83642

Sales

For all sales inquiries, call toll free:
1(800) 330-3482 or 1(208) 955-0124
sales@ritzfamilypublishing.com

Subscriptions

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info@ritzfamilypublishing.com

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Bio S.I. Technology Helps Potato Farmers Rebuild, Restore, and Renew Profits

As the world's fourth largest food crop, potatoes are a critical staple for the United States' agricultural industry. Representing diverse regions and climates, potato growers are faced with unique conditions and challenges which are specific to their own fields. While known for their resilience and robustness, potato crops have a fickle growing process that requires a high degree of attentiveness.

Potato growers face many obstacles during the growing season. Bio S.I. Technology produces microbial products that are used to help combat many of those obstacles. Disease suppression, nutrient availability, stubble digestion, and pest management are key areas these products can help with. Bio S.I. products do not eliminate these issues but they do a great deal to help reduce their effect on crops. We must start working with our soils to promote microbial life so that the soils will be able to produce healthy vigorous crops that make a profit.

Microbes are the key to helping remove the plant stubble from the previous crop. They digest this material and recycle the nutrients that you have already paid for and make them available to your next crop. They convert all this material into humus which is what holds water and nutrients in the soil. They provide the only way to rebuild the humus (carbon) in your fields. Pests are another area that microbes can help with. The microbes help the plant get the nutrients they need to be healthy and to increase the sugar content of the sap in the plant. Many sucking insects can't metabolize this

increased sugar and will move on to the next field reducing the need for pesticides in some cases.



Healthy root systems get plants off to a fast start. Bio S.I. Ag Formula and Bio S.I. Select with Mycorrhizae (beneficial fungi) help the plant produce a tremendous root system which improves nutrient uptake. As the microbes align with the roots they not only feed the plant but also help protect the root system from fusarium, rhizoctonia, pythium, and other root diseases. They do this by competing for space and food in the rhizosphere because they work with the plant forming a symbiotic relationship that is beneficial to both. This activity helps to keep pathogens away from the roots. You will be able to reduce the amount of fungicides over time as the microbial community is improved.

Another area that microbes are a

tremendous benefit is in the nutrient arena. They process or metabolize nutrients and make them available to your crop. They help release nutrients that are tied up in the soil in forms unavailable to the plant. This activity helps the plant utilize nutrients they would not normally get in a timely fashion for growth and production.

Many growers have soil issues that plague the crop stand like crusting, poor water penetration, and hard compacted soil. Microbes help reduce crusting, open the soil so water can go into the soil versus running off, and also help to aerate the soil making it softer and easier to work. As the microbes rebuild the humus fraction of the soil you will see a reduction in irrigation needs and this is becoming a critical issue all over the country.



Products produced by Bio S.I. Technology are all natural, non-manure based, and are soil borne. They work naturally to help plants get the nutrients they need in exchange for sugars from the plant. So they work together to improve quality and vigor of the plant.

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FARM FOR UNDER 3%!

Bargain interest rates may be the optimistic news for farmers this year, as both long and short term rates remain at historic lows. But while many lenders cling to old Prime Plus formulas for establishing loan rates, others prove they can do better.

“Farmers can borrow substantially under 3%, and close to half of what Prime plus 1% formulas are,” according to AGRIfinancial Services, a nationwide lender focusing exclusively on farm lending. Headquartered in Louisville, KY, the company provides an alternative way to borrowing for operating needs, as well as long term fixed rate mortgages.

“It’s like a home equity loan, but for farmers,” they say. AGRIfinancial Services works with California and western producers in all lines of the industry. Instead of crops or ma-

chinery for collateral, farmers use their real estate to back the loan. The resulting benefits pay off with customers.

Not only is the loan rate very low, but the product also offers a 10-year commitment where producers do not have to come in every year, or 3 years to renew the line. Additionally, the loan can be used for farm and business needs – not strictly operating expenses. The loan is priced based on a variable, LIBOR-indexed rate, but farmers can also choose to lock pieces of their debt to a fixed rate if they desire, he explained. All is done inside the loan, without the need for refinancing.

It’s quite an amazing loan product and an example of what nontraditional lenders like AFS have been bringing to the market. The company is owned by CGB Enterprises, a major buyer and shipper of farm commodities. 

Egbers on Super Edge

“There just isn’t enough we can say about the Super Edge Auger Flighting” says Doug Egbers, owner of Egbers Flighting Company, Inc. The Super Edge is created in the rolling process. This is a cold rolling process so the steel is not heat treated. “This lets the steel retain its strength,” states Doug.

Because of how the flighting is made, the outside edge is thicker than your common market flighting, or “plain flighting,” as they call it. Super Edge Auger Flighting has an outside edge that is approximately 50% thicker. It gives longer wear and longer life of the auger.

And Egbers knows their augers. Their repair and fabrication division has years of experience in re-flighting and balancing auger sections. “It just makes good sense to replace the auger flighting instead of buying a new auger section.” Confirms Doug, “New auger sections can be pricey and the Super Edge Auger Flighting is priced to sell.” Along with their repairs

Egbers offers a wide assortment of replacement parts and tubing. They have your basic inside tubing, pipe, rolled tube for grain cart unloading augers all the way up to 40 ft. lengths for transport augers. “We’ve always thought freight and shipping different replacement parts from different sources can create a problem for our customers, and we can ship pretty much all the replacement parts a customer needs from here,” Doug says. “That way all your parts come from one location instead of several.”

A newer service for Egbers is their ability to balance combine rotors. “We’re always looking for new products and services for our customers. These rotors can be balanced at a fraction of what a new one costs,” says Doug.

All in all, Egbers supports a great team for sales and repairs. They’re your One-Stop-Shop for your replacement needs, and they’re farmer friendly! Call them at 800-462-2588 or check them out on the web at www.egbersflighting.com. 

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“What’s In Your Water Becomes Part Of Your Soil”™

Larry Zibilske, Ph.D. – Vice-President of Research, Texas Plant & Soil Lab

What do you know about the water you use to irrigate your crops? One may ask, “What difference does it make? Water is water”. Well, not always. Water that goes into the soil to nourish plants comes from somewhere else. The sky provides some, or all, of the water needed for crops in some regions, but many farmers must supplement that with water from wells, streams, or surface impoundments. Everyone using water from these sources should be concerned because irrigation water quality can vary greatly, and poor quality water can really harm crops. As water becomes scarcer, as in the current widespread drought, quality is often reduced, compounding the shortage problem. We have been seeing water quality generally decline for some years with the falling aquifers as mineral salts become more concentrated in the remaining water.

How can water harm crops? Water contains some amount of dissolved elements. These chemicals, most often natural constituents of rocks, are dissolved when water comes into contact with rocks and sediments around the natural environment of the water source. Problems arise when those rocks and sediments have a high content of elements that are easily dissolved and affect other nutrients that the plant needs. Regional soil and bedrock differences lead to large differences in the quality of the ground water derived from those sources.

Generally, waters west of the Mississippi River are more likely to contain larger amounts of sodium, calcium, magnesium, and carbonates. These reflect the generally higher pH of soils and sediments in the more arid west. By contrast, in more easterly regions, iron, manganese, and zinc are common in ground waters, reflecting the more acidic nature of the soils. However, water from most all regions often contains a wide range of elements. Dissolved elements are not normally considered a problem, but how the water is used can lead to chronic problems with crop growth. The more we know about water quality, the better equipped we will be to manage it to minimize the problems. We can develop a feeling for water quality if we understand the effects of dissolved elements on plants and soils. To do this, it may be useful to review the fundamental relationships involved.

At the most basic level, plants (and all other living things) carry out their metabolic reactions in a soup of dissolved substances—dissolved in water within the cells. This part is easy to grasp—no water—no metabolic reactions—no life. Plants obviously acquire water through their roots, extracting it from the soil and transporting it up to the green parts to keep cell soup well supplied and the plant alive and active. Roots pull water out of the soil and away from soil particles by using energy provided by the photosynthesizing leaves. Water in the leaves is used for the cell soup, but it also evaporates to the stomata, taking with it heat from sun exposure on the leaves. This keeps the plant cooler, and helps in “wicking up” more water from the soil.

Thus, water uptake is an energy-intensive activity. As the soil dries out, the plant must use more and more energy to pull the water away from the soil particles. But plants have limits. They reach a breaking point when they can no longer gener-

ate enough energy to pull up the water. The result is a wilted plant. Water shortages tax the plant’s ability to carry out proper metabolism and result in decreased vigor, or worse.

As a result of moving water from the soil to the roots, water soluble nutrients (including fertilizers) in the soil tend to move along with the water and into the plant. Nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, along with the required minor and trace elements are carried along with the moving water into the plant root, providing the building materials to continue plant growth and development. The amounts of these nutrients moving into the plant depends two things: 1. How much of the nutrient is in the soil and, 2. What portion of that nutrient is soluble in the water at that time. If it is chemically inhibited from dissolving, it can’t be moved to the root via water uptake. So what determines how much nutrient dissolves?

Properties of both the soil and water affect the nutrient solubility. For instance, in a high pH soil, the solubility of phosphorus is reduced because there are other chemicals, especially calcium and magnesium, which easily bond with phosphate and make it almost insoluble. The amount getting into the plant may be insufficient. Even if there is a large amount of phosphorus in the soil, the high pH severely limits how much can go into solution. This is why an appropriate soil test is so necessary.

If your test results are based on a very strong, acidic extractant you may see a large amount of the nutrient reported, but your high soil pH will not allow enough nutrient to get into the plant. It pays to know what tests are performed on your soil. No amount of water movement can get nutrients into the plant if they can’t dissolve into the water first. Keeping just the right amount of nutrient in solution for the stage of growth of the plants results in the most efficient use by the plants. That calls for special attention to nutrient and water application practices and results in healthy, productive crops.

Of the elements leached from surrounding bedrock or from other sources, we are most interested in calcium, magnesium, sodium, chloride, carbonate, sulfate, iron, boron and manganese but there are also others. Excessive amounts of these elements can affect other nutrients’ access to plants and can chemically react with soil particles resulting in conditions of poor soil structure, water infiltration rates, and generally a less hospitable environment for plant roots. Hard water characteristically contains high levels of calcium and magnesium, and soft water contains greater amounts of sodium.

Because all these elements are ions (atoms or molecules of elements that carry an electrical charge), the water containing them conducts electricity better than pure water. This can be measured by a test called electrical conductivity, abbreviated EC. This number is high where many ions are dissolved in water, and low where not. A high number indicates that many ions are there, but not what ions are present. That takes a chemical analysis of the water to determine. But why do we need to know the EC and elemental content of our water?

Continued on page 14



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What's In Your Water

Continued from page 12

Understanding the information on a water test report can be confusing. The performing laboratory should provide some interpretation of the results. Recommendation for action should also be included. If you've provided information to the lab about cropping plans, water usage and history, you should be provided enough actionable information to manage any problem that appears on the test report. We often get frantic calls from growers who have results from another lab that indicates a problem with their water, but nothing in the way of what to do about it. For instance, you received a lab report on your water that indicates it is very high in sodium. What now? What do I do? Will it harm my plants? Let's examine the effects of some of these ions to address some of these questions.

Sodium (Na)

Excessive sodium causes problems with plant water relations because it can interfere with plant metabolism. High sodium around plant roots tends to kill leaves when absorbed in excessive amounts. It can also dry out the root cells enough to stop root activity. High sodium also causes soil problems. Soil structure is often negatively impacted, rendering the soil highly erodible or as hard as concrete and virtually impervious to water—conditions that are hardly conducive to good plant growth. Sodium is often accompanied by high levels of chloride, and together produce one kind of soil salinity.

Calcium (Ca)

Calcium is a strongly reactive element in the soil. When hard

water is used on plants, the calcium will begin to react mainly with phosphate and sulfate in the soil, forming insoluble compounds that rob the plant of necessary nutrients. Excessive calcium also causes soil structure problems, collapsing a well structured soil into a hard mass that roots can't penetrate or from which little water can be absorbed.

Magnesium (Mg)

Magnesium is another hard water element that causes soil and plant problems similar to calcium. Affected soils can become unmanageable when wet, clodding terribly and exhibiting the same hardening and sealing effects seen for calcium when soil dries out. Tilling these soils is maddeningly difficult, requiring a lot of horsepower, tractive effort and fuel to accomplish.

Carbonate (CO₃²⁻)

Carbonate dissolves out of rocks in many areas, but it is mainly problematic in soils west of the Mississippi. Limestone-based soils often carry carbonate into solution, as well as calcium. Carbonate reacts with calcium, magnesium, iron, zinc and other essential plant nutrients, reducing the availability of those essential nutrients to the plants. Carbonate compounds formed affect long term availability of several nutrients because they tend to accumulate in soils where high carbonate water has been used for irrigation. As they accumulate, direct detrimental effects on plants begin to appear. Plants can't take up enough trace metals to meet their needs, so deficiencies appear in the leaves.

However, by the time deficiencies become visible, the plant has already been stressed for some time. This stress manifests as reduced yield and quality, often accompanied by increased disease and insect pressures.

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What can be done if I have too much of these elements in my water? There are treatments for all of these problems, and which treatment is right for you depends on the specific problem and on your use of the affected water. For instance, high calcium and magnesium in hard irrigation water can be treated with sulfur addition. This acidifies the water and the soil so that calcium and magnesium are less prone to form insoluble chemical compounds.

Adding humates to such water also helps buffer the system to reduce their tendency to become plant-unavailable once in the root zone. An important treatment component for many of these problems is soil biology. It might be a bit counterintuitive, but an active soil microbiota keeps the soil open and draining, facilitating the downward movement of ions through the soil, reducing their retention in the plant root zone. In addition, during microbial activity, many organic molecules that provide some additional buffering are released into soil water. Sometimes, however, just strong leaching is the answer. High sodium problems can often be fixed by just leaching the soil with better quality water. If better water is not available, other things can be done. Sodium moves very easily in a moving water front, so leaching it beyond the root zone is often helpful.

Some of these problems arise from improper irrigation practices. Using water of marginal quality can be successful as long as enough is used to wash out salts retained in the soil from the previous watering. This prevents a process called "wicking" in which salts added with minimal watering remain near the soil surface. As the soil dries out by evaporation, the salts move to the soil surface with the evaporating water and accumulate there,

making a white sheet or row at the highest point from where water evaporates. Growing plants in such affected soil is difficult.

Living with water of marginal quality is difficult but it can be managed. By treating the water according to recommendations, you can reduce at least some of the adverse affects of having to use lower quality water. In addition, managing the soil can make a remarkable difference in plant productivity. Further, studies have shown that plants with good nutrition can require often considerably less water.

Soil organic matter is a marvelous buffer. The presence of organic molecules can moderate some of the directly harmful effects of excessive elements. This is another role that spotlights the importance of maintaining soil organic matter levels. By promoting soil structure, organic matter promotes good drainage through the soil. This facilitates moving the excessive ions out of the root zone while maintaining good moisture retention for plants.

Drought continues in many parts of the country. Many growers are being forced to figure out ways to reduce water use and how to manage agricultural production with marginal quantities and qualities of water. Awareness of the issues and attention to the effects on soil and crops are necessary to keep soils functioning and agricultural enterprises in business. Achievement of these goals depends on how much we know about the condition of our soil and water, and on how we manage those resources.

But all these considerations aside, water chemistry can have a very serious impact on the effectiveness of many fertilizers and herbicides. Additionally, hard water can plug drip irrigation emitters and change the geometry of spray nozzles. Salty water can be corrosive to pumps and piping.

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In 1970, there were no commercial soil and plant testing laboratories in Idaho. Farmers applied fertilizers based upon educated guesswork. Dr. Dale Stukenholtz and his wife Joyce saw an opportunity to build a business and started a soil and plant testing laboratory and field consulting service based in Twin Falls, Idaho. Dr. Stukenholtz had an unusually diverse background as an educator at the University of Nebraska, an agronomist in the fertilizer industry, and a farmer, and he saw a need for more modern fertilizer recommendations to produce greater yields at less cost. His clients were the growers, so he could make unbiased recommendations that maximized

economic return to the farmer. After extensive field research, he developed these improved fertilizer recommendations that quickly became popular with growers and form the basis for nearly all fertilizer applications in the intermountain west area. Stukenholtz Laboratory clients include growers from all neighboring states and several foreign countries including Australia, Canada, Egypt, Russia, Mexico and New Zealand.

Stukenholtz Laboratory provides 1 to 2 day service, including picking up and delivery time, across Southern Idaho from St. Anthony and Grace to Parma and Homedale. Results can be delivered, mailed, faxed, or pulled from the

Laboratory's webpage: www.stukenholtz.com. To improve their service, Joyce and Dale Stukenholtz expanded the laboratory 18 years ago, installed the latest in computerized instrumentation and quality control, and made it the most modern and well equipped agricultural laboratory in their market area.

Critical to the success of Idaho's most efficient laboratory and largest field consulting firm has been its personnel. Dr. Stukenholtz has had a PhD in Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrition since 1964 and his son and Laboratory Manager Paul has nearly completed his own. Consulting agronomists include J.P. Kruckeberg of American Falls, a 36 year veteran of field consulting and the most successful single agronomist in the state, and Bart Kunz. The Laboratory and office staff are equally good.

Stukenholtz Laboratory continues with research and improvement. In conjunction with the Idaho Crop Production Association and University of Idaho CFEP research project, Stukenholtz Laboratory has helped to ensure that fertilizer recommendations in Idaho are the most cost efficient possible and produce the maximum economic yield while protecting the environment. Stukenholtz Laboratory personnel have conducted field research on over 40 different products and continue to be the experts at "cutting edge" agricultural technology. As we end our first 44 years of business and begin our next, we would like to thank our current and former employees for their dedicated work and our customers and clients for their years of support. ☛

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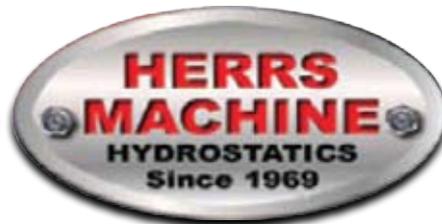
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Silveira Bros. is a seedstock operation located in the central valley of California operated by Darrell Silveira, Rick and Allison Blanchard and their son Garrett.

They strive to produce cattle that are multi-trait performance seedstock for that work for the commercial producer. We strive to produce Angus bulls that are low enough birth to use on heifers, but still excel in efficiency and growth to use on mature cows as well. Carcass value is extremely important as well in the genetic selection and strive to produce bulls that will help our customers achieve CAB status with the cattle they in-turn produce. We emphasize balanced-trait cattle that are in the top 25% of better for every measurable EPD and \$ Value index. We sell approximately 120 bulls through our "Partners for Performance" Bull Sale the first Wednesday in September every year.



We utilize a very intense embryo transfer and A.I. program to speed up our genetic turnover, using proven sires and donor dams that have built up proven genetics and production. Along with the collection of performance and ultrasound data, we are one of the first programs on the West Coast that incorporated Zoetis HD50K DNA testing for every heifer or bull we produce, increasing the reliability and accuracy of the EPDs of every animal with a Silveiras prefix.

Although we put major emphasis on genetic predictors, we also select heavily on phenotype. Attractive, sound-moving, stout-made cattle with volume, capacity, muscle shape and expression are what we strive to produce when doing visual evaluations. This emphasis has helped achieve national success in the showing across the United States. Our cattle have won some of the most competitive shows in the country including the National Junior Angus Show, the National Western Stock Show, The American Royal Stock Show, as well as R.O.V. Angus shows and some most prominent junior shows throughout the U.S. Our females are marketed in our "Partners for Performance" Female Sale the second Saturday in October every year and our Online Fall Show Heifer Sale, the first Saturday in April every year. For more information go to www.silveirabros.com or call Rick Blanchard at 559-217-1502.

Powder River introduces new 2000 Series Squeeze Chutes

Powder River squeeze chutes are known worldwide for their strength and durability. Powder River introduced the first all steel commercial squeeze chute in 1938 and has been making products loved by ranchers for almost 80 years. In the last year Powder River has been introducing a new line of squeeze chutes, the 2000 series. These chutes are highly engineered with safety for the animal and operator in mind. The 2000 Series Chutes are bull tough, simple and easy to use, and provide features that benefit speed and durability.

The Powder River 2000 Series Chutes come in 3 major configurations with some additional options. The chassis is similar on each chute and all embody the quality that customers have come to expect with Powder River. All 2000 Series Chutes feature standard: side exits, adjustable floors, split kick pans, dual sided v-squeezes, and an ultra-low profile floor.

The H2000 chute is a hydraulic actuated chute at an economical price. The headgate, center squeeze, and tailgate are hydraulic while the easy to use floor adjustment remains manual to save cost. The M2000 chute is the next evolution of the best selling Manual XL chute (eXtra Long) that is still a Powder River favorite. The M2000 stands out with its rack and pinion headgate and in-line center squeeze that removes handles from the operator's way. The headgate is fast and has a very fine latching mechanism that delivers tighter catches. It also features a neck extender (standard) to aid in head control.

Rounding out the group, the S2000 features a self-catch headgate that offers smooth operation and lots of adjustability. The S2000 can also be ordered with the groundbreaking Stabilizer feature. The Stabilizer is a secondary headgate that catches the cow again in front of the shoulders gently isolating neck movement and al-



lowing unprecedented head control while retaining neck access.

If you have been thinking about a new squeeze chute, there is no better time to look into the Powder River 2000 Series Chutes. Talk to your local equipment dealer or visit www.powderriver.com to find a dealer near you.



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PBI Parlor Systems Leading the Way in the Dairy Industry

Operating from their office in Portales, New Mexico, PBI Parlor Systems is a leading manufacturer of milking stalls and equipment for dairies around the world.

The owner, Steve Peacock, has a strong dairy business background, and an even stronger pride in his company's products. His commitment to improving dairy profits and delivering excellent customer service is unmistakable. And each of the company's employees shares his dedication.

Of course it all starts with an efficient stall design - their stalls are engineered to be the best solution for maintaining cow safety and dairy efficiency. In fact the company came into existence in the late 80's after designing a parallel stall at the request of a local dairyman.

His stall design was a winner! Good news travels fast, and word of this design spread quickly from person to person, which led to more parlor business.

Building on his design and engineering experience, the entire PBI crew continues to produce and install innovative parlor stalls all over the world. To ensure the quality of the final product, they control every stage of production. Dairies of all sizes, from small family-dairies to large mega-dairies have been fitted with PBI stalls.

Because PBI designs and builds the stalls, they are custom fitted to your unique requirements. They use heavy duty galvanized and stainless steels to provide a durable yet sleek stall with no rough edges to hurt cows and profits. Performance excellence is ensured

by their expert project installer and crew, which they make available for every installation. You will assuredly receive a quality, hassle-free installation, and on-going support.

Value is built into every PBI stall design. Low installation and maintenance costs make PBI stalls a valuable investment for dairies of all sizes. Plus their durable construction, smooth operation and labor saving design provide ongoing increased profits.

Innovation is what started PBI. Their stall designs are adaptable to suit the needs of dairies of all sizes, no matter the environment. They are compatible with all brands of milking equipment. And though innovation started PBI, service is what maintains and grows the company. PBI Parlor Systems takes pride in its continued commitment to meet and exceed their customers' needs. From the free quote they give you, through the completed installation, they maintain a hands-on approach that delivers unrivaled customer service.

But their customer support doesn't end with the sale. PBI's on-going personal contact with their clients and easy accessibility cater to meeting your needs now and later. They choose to maintain close relationships with their clients. Client feedback about stall performance is essential to PBI's commitment to developing and refining products that satisfy the needs of dairy farmers all over the globe.

For more information, call PBI Parlor Systems at 800-295-5677 or visit www.PBIParlorSystems.com



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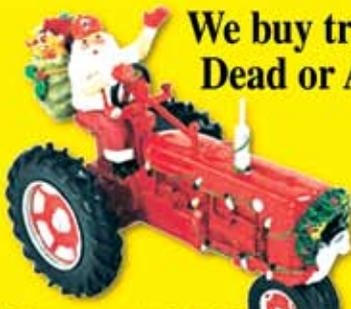


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