



Thanks to a Local Dairy Farm, 1200 Tons of Drywall is Diverted from Alberta Landfills

Lakeside Dairy Nationally Recognized for Sustainability Practices

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Edmonton, Alberta—A local dairy farm is doing their part to help improve their environmental footprint and getting national recognition while they're at it. Lakeside Dairy, a 170 cow farm near Legal, is taking clean drywall that would normally fill our landfills and putting it to good use on their farm through bedding and composting.

According to Alberta Environment, about one pound of drywall waste is produced for every square foot of a new house build in Alberta. From a 2,000 sq ft house, that means that about a *ton* of drywall waste will fill our landfills. The 30,000 houses forecasted to be built in Alberta in 2012 alone translates to the weight of a cruise ship filling our valuable landfill space every year.

The effects of drywall in landfills are not positive, with wide reaching adverse effects, including the production of hydrogen sulfide gas. However, this dairy producer identified the value of using clean drywall for food production on the farm.

A Practical Solution

Lakeside Dairy is increasingly well-known for its use of gypsum as a bedding and soil amendment. The farm has been able to demonstrate the benefits of mixing clean, ground drywall with wood shavings for cow bedding. The bedding is composted with manure and chicken litter from a neighbouring farm, additional drywall, and then used as a fertilizer for the fields. All the drywall is brought in from local housing construction sites.

The sulfate in the drywall decreases the pH of the manure, reducing ammonia and GHG by up to 90 per cent or as much as 3000 tons of CO₂-equivalent annually. When this mixture is spread on the land, it adds sulfate and calcium, retains nitrogen, all of which are nutrients plants need to grow. Moreover, this diverts over 1200 tons of clean drywall scrap from the landfill annually, providing a local urban company with a business opportunity in drywall recycling.

Lakeside also incorporates a number of other good practices such as reduced tillage on fields, maintaining forested areas and windbreak fence lines, rotating crops, soil sampling of all fields every year. The result is increased organic matter in the soil and improved soil structure, leading to better soil moisture and higher nutrient availability for crops. About 80 per cent of the farm's fertilizer needs are met through their compost.

"Sustainability is successful on our farm because it is profitable. The practices with the largest impact do not require large capital investment and generate financial and labour savings that are immediate and provide opportunities in the future," says Jeff Nonay, president of Lakeside Dairy.

[Watch a video about Jeff and his operation.](#)

Nationally Recognized

Lakeside is one of only four finalists across Canada for the national Dairy Farm Sustainability Award for this initiative. This award evaluates environmental sustainability, financial viability, social benefits, and the reproducibility of practices on other farms. The winner will be announced on July 18, 2012 at Dairy Farmers of Canada's Annual General Meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland, where they will receive a trophy and a \$2,000 cash prize. The other three finalists will each receive \$1,000.

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Alberta Milk is a non-profit organization that represents the province's dairy producers in policies and transportation, marketing and education, research and administration. Our vision is to grow a vital, sustainable and prosperous dairy industry.

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