

"The outdoor paddocks, built with permanent electric fencing, were created to improve animal welfare."

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More space, welfare and control in the herd management of Bertoletti Farm

Bertoletti Farm is a family-run dairy farm located in Stilo dei Mariani, in the province of Cremona, in the heart of the Po Valley. The farm is managed by Danilo Bertoletti together with his children Michele and Arianna, with the support of his wife Cristina in administrative activities.

The farm raises **Holstein dairy cattle**, with approximately **1.000 animals in total**, including **450 cows in milk**, and operates under an intensive production model consistent with the vocation of the area. A significant portion of the farm's land is used to produce forage for herd feeding, while the milk is delivered to the **Grana Padano PDO** supply chain.

Initially, herd management took **place mainly in indoor spaces**, making it more difficult to guarantee adequate movement and comfort for the animals, especially during the most delicate phases of the production cycle.

As the farm grew, the management of **replacement heifers** and **dry cows** became increasingly central: providing **more space for the animals** without complicating daily operations represented a **concrete challenge**.

From this need came the project of a **new structure dedicated to replacement heifers**, designed to accompany the animals through the different stages of growth. The barn was divided into **five pens**, from weaned calves of around three months to pregnant heifers in their third or fourth month, with spaces proportioned to age and physiological status.

AT A GLANCE

-  **Farm:** Bertoletti
-  **Location:** Stilo dei Mariani (CR) – Italy
-  **Herd size:** 1.000 dairy cattle
-  **Cows in milk:** 450 cows

CHALLENGES

- Limited indoor space for managing replacement heifers and dry cows
- Difficulty in ensuring movement and comfort without increasing management complexity
- Need to maintain order and safety when managing different groups

DATAMARS LIVESTOCK SYSTEMS

Permanent electric fencing with H-bracing

Speedrite Unigizer 6000i energizer

BENEFITS

- Greater space and freedom of movement for replacement heifers and dry cows
- More balanced heifer growth and earlier first insemination
- Simpler daily management and more immediate herd control
- Improved animal welfare during the dry, calving and post-calving phases

“The new barn was built to improve the welfare of the young herd. It is divided into five pens, from weaned calves to pregnant heifers.”

The indoor structure was complemented by a system of **outdoor paddocks**, designed as a natural extension of the barn. Each pen has its own outdoor area, with surface areas increasing progressively as the animals grow. This approach made it possible to guarantee **greater freedom of movement** while maintaining **order, safety and control**.

“Each pen has its own fence, and the space increases as the animals grow.”

To create the outdoor paddocks, the farm chose **permanent electric fencing** built with robust, long-lasting materials. Electrification is provided by the **Speedrite Unigizer 6000i** energizer, selected for its reliability and ability to ensure constant power in all conditions. The LED bar display allows immediate verification of fence status and quick intervention in case of anomalies.

“We chose permanent fencing so it would last over time, with a very powerful energizer that always guarantees current. We immediately felt comfortable with it because it was easy to understand how it works and to manage from the start.”

The results were not long in coming. **Greater space availability** and **freedom of movement** had a direct impact on heifer growth, which is now more balanced, with first insemination occurring around one month earlier.

“We have seen greater growth and earlier first insemination.”



From a management point of view, the organization of the spaces has made **daily work simpler and more orderly**. Group control is now more immediate, allowing timely intervention when necessary.

“First of all, managing the herd and keeping it under control is much more convenient.”

Given the benefits achieved with replacement heifers, the same solution was also adopted for **dry cows**, creating **dedicated outdoor spaces** that favour **movement during a particularly delicate phase of the production cycle**.

“Dry cows also benefit from increased movement, with fewer calving problems and a faster return to lactation.”

In addition to improvements in animal welfare and management, the farm has also begun to see **economic benefits**, mainly linked to **improved reproductive efficiency** and **reduced replacement times**.

“We are seeing positive economic results, especially thanks to earlier first insemination.”

Looking ahead, the Bertolletti family intends to continue investing in solutions that place animal welfare at the center, convinced that space, organization and control are fundamental elements for sustainable, modern herd management.

“I recommend these solutions to everyone, especially for animal welfare.”



For more information:

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