

JND Thomas Services Dairy Needs

by Amy Roberts

In deference to June Dairy Month, Kings County Farm Bureau salutes JND Thomas Company, Inc. for the vital services it provides to the industry.

Dennis Thomas started his business in 1983 for the purpose of dredging and cleaning out dairy lagoons. As part of his commitment to customers, he researched different types of hydraulic dredgers and found that the Mud-Cat would give him a competitive edge in this market.

Thomas then spent several years marketing and demonstrating to dairy farmers that dredging would enhance their operations. Initially, he discounted many sales to help establish the company in the dairy market. The MudCat's manufacturer also helped provide JND with several high quality referrals.

The company, which is a fully bonded licensed contractor, has grown over the years into a full service dredging, dewatering, excavation and land application provider dedicated to offering creative, cost-effective methods for cleaning the in-service lagoons of municipalities and dairies. JND is also proficient in completing upgrades and expansions of lagoon systems.

Headquartered in Riverdale, JND's employees regularly travel across the state and into Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Idaho and Texas to complete jobs. Last year they also worked in North Carolina and Kentucky, which to date is the farthest a contract has taken them.

Tim Azevedo is the sales and marketing manager and he said the company operates around the clock with two-man crews working 12-hour shifts.

"Depending on the scope of the contract we've stayed at any one job from 2 to 45 days," he said. "The more lagoons a dairy has the more time it takes."

The cleaning of separation ponds is done with excavators that have the ability to reach 60 feet to remove dried crust on the surface of the ponds. Water storage lagoons that have fine slurry require hydraulic dredges that are equipped with submersible pumps capable of going up to 15 feet below the surface of the water, which allows workers to clean ponds out to within 12 inches of the bottom without disturbing the earthen or synthetic liner. The collected material is then available for fertilizer use and can be applied on fields from a cart that is connected to a hose reel, or flood irrigated using checks and borders.

Within a couple of months Thomas expects to announce the availability of a new process that will help dairy operators function under pending regulations mandated by the California Regional Water Control Board to clean and



Tim Azevedo, left, and Dennis Thomas stand in front of a dairy lagoon containing a JND dredger.

improve dairy waste handling systems.

"It will help make it more cost effective for my clients," Thomas said, adding he is in the final stages of testing his new dewatering system.

Besides helping with their operating and business needs, JND's years of experience helps dairies satisfy different regulatory requirements and potential environmental concerns. To ensure regulatory compliance, JND works closely with engineers and agronomists.

Azevedo said JND Thomas Co. maintains a business partnership with Kings County Farm Bureau as a way to stay involved with local farmers.

It's also a way for us to keep up with the latest information on what is happening on the local, state and national levels affecting agriculture, he said.

BUSINESS STATS

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