

## The Blind Spot

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In last month's article we talked about finding the "sweet spot" in your dairy operation and taking advantage of the opportunities that resulted. This month we are going to touch on the opposite side of that coin, but equally important in the economic impact it can have on the business. What is your operations "blind spot"? You know, that area where you struggle to effectively manage because of some circumstance. Maybe we don't have enough time to oversee every important facet of the business. Sometimes we lack the knowledge it takes to be effective managers in some areas. Too often, it may be our pride that limits our ability to correctly and effectively manage specific areas that we just lack the ability to adequately take care of.

Is it feed quality, because you hate constantly harping on the silage chopper and packer? So you end up with feed that is too wet, not processed well enough, not packed, uncovered too long, whatever the shortcoming - you now have a pile of feed that contains less nutrient quality or more spoilage/shrink that you must deal with all year. Often this can cost you in production losses but it is extremely difficult to measure the true loss.

Perhaps your "blind spot" is in the parlor. Too slow on the throughput, inefficient wash or prep procedures, incorrect vacuum pressure, fill in the blank. Or maybe reproduction has been average, at best, for so long that you have accepted the subpar performance and don't even think about the cost associated with it anymore. Whatever your management nemesis is – first and foremost you have to recognize it. Then after it is has been recognized, it is your job to empower whoever does have the answers to get those answers implemented.

Returning to the oft used football analogy – quarterbacks have a "blind side" which could easily be replaced with the term "blind spot". For most right handed quarterbacks the left tackle is charged with protecting the quarterbacks' blind side because his back is turned to that side of the field as he looks downfield to try and throw the ball to one of his receivers. All the while the defensive pass rusher tries to rush in from behind the quarterback and sack him. The quarterback must have help from his linemen to keep the defense at bay. He must also be aware of the fact that he doesn't have 360\* vision. The quarterback is extremely important to the success of the team, but he can't do it all by himself.

It is hard for any one individual to be excellent at managing all of the different aspects in a dairy operation. Having good people in place to give you strength in the areas where you are weak is very valuable from an effectiveness, competency, confidence, and economic standpoint. In order to be an effective manager you do not have to have all of the right answers all of the time. You do however need to recognize where your "blind spots" are, and be willing to admit when there are other people that are more capable of managing or problem solving in those certain areas. Don't let pride come between you and your operations profitability. Understanding your "sweet spot" and your "blind spot" are equally important to effectively managing your business and will undoubtedly be a positive influence on your bottom line.