**EMPLOYEE SPEECH**

**FOR**

**JULIE BASICH**

Hello everyone and welcome! It’s such a privilege **AND** a pleasure to meet with all of you today. It’s always a good idea to take a moment to stop, assess a company’s history, process, and progress. We do that to acknowledge our roots, recognize the causes and inspiration for our mission, and to identify and focus on future company growth and goals as we continue to pave the path for the strategies that will get us where we want to go. I think by now you know the basic history of Fair Oaks Farms.... when this company began back in 2004, we had **FIVE EMPLOYEES**. It is now fourteen years later... we’ve had fourteen years to work hard, strive for success, and find the way to create a healthy, sustainable company... in **EVERY** sense of the word. (**Was the original name Fair Oaks FARM? If so you can say**) Along the way, we added an **“s”** since we are now an entire farm cooperative with partners working in tandem with us to bring the freshest, highest quality dairy products to market, we had to really practice our math skills... we went from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cows in 2004 to a whopping \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and counting!!!! And might I add, as you know.... they are **CONTENTED**!! Today we have over three hundred employees!! We also added diverse complimentary businesses such as a restaurant, an orchard, a gas station, gift shop, the ever popular “**cowfé**” and a hotel that will open in 2019.... with more to come, as far as we are concerned, the sky is the limit... as long as the pigs don’t start flying... although with our talented and resourceful engineering team... I don’t **DARE** them or make bets on **ANYTHING**!! (**You can shrug your shoulders and wait for the laugh**).

I want to commend all of you.... the executives, management, team leaders, co-workers, new employees, temps, part-timers, tenured veterans... **EVERYONE** ...for the great teamwork and cooperation you bring to every facet of life and work on this farm. (**If you want to make a little joke, you can say...**) **OKAY**... You’re all **FANTASTIC**... you can go home now.... **KIDDING**!!! (**And wait for the laugh**). Actually, the **FUN**... the **CHALLENGE**, is **JUST BEGINNING** and we need your enthusiasm, ingenuity, and dedication more than ever... we’ve done an amazing job, but now is **NOT** the time to rest on our laurels... or our hay stacks... or our incredible wheels of cheese.... **NOW** we implement the next steps to insure we become the **NUMBER ONE** tourist destination in the entire state of Indiana!!! We have some **BIG** goals to meet, and I am not giving you any... “you know what.... hint... it fuels us and keeps us running...

Yes... we’re the business that is **POWERED BY POO**...It has a ring to it, doesn’t it!?!? Did I **EVER** **imagine** when I was attending business school, that I would work for... let alone be the COO of a company with **THAT** motto? I mean... “**HAVE IT YOUR WAY**” “**GOT MILK**?” “**JUST DO IT**!” Well, in a way, if you add another “o” to that middle word.... (**Wait for the laugh**). Ours is a slogan and mantra that I am actually very proud of.... it signifies luck, abundance and success, and in many ways, that **POO** tells our story... one of of productivity.... adaptability, and zero waste.

Our innovations and sustainable practices, especially with regard to repurposing waste, are turning heads and waking up the rest of the farming industry. We’ve grown to be one of the major Agrotourist destinations in the country..... to some, were even known as the “Green Disneyland”.... let’s just hope with a **few less mice**.... but really... can **ANY** creature resist our cheddar??? It is in an atmosphere of camaraderie, mutual respect, and alignment on shared goals that we will continue to shape the model that the agricultural industry will follow.

I once heard a quote that states, “My grandfather used to say that once in your lifetime you need a doctor, a lawyer, a policeman, and a preacher.... **hopefully not all on the same day**... (**Wait for the laugh**) but **every day**, **three times a day**, you need a farmer.” Many of you that are with us come to us from neighboring communities. You’re steeped in the local culture and your lives are centered in this area. ..and while you may think there are **MANY** more places you might wish you were born... thousands of cities in which you work among gorgeous glamorous people doing interesting, earth shattering work, don’t underestimate the positivity of being born right here in rural Indiana. Take pride in the land that is so abundant.... revel in the wide open spaces and the richness of the soil that help to support our vision of “feeding the country,” and get excited that a company like hours, which started out with one function and only **FIVE** people has grown into the impressive farming community it is. Each one of you has had a hand in creating a welcome, respectful, nurturing atmosphere of excellence. Our business is growing and being recognized nationally and internationally because of the climate we foster. Our core values are non-negotiable, as they should be. Remember they are fairly simple... treat others the way you want to be treated. Each noted value is universal and pertains to interactions between employees as well as how we approach customer care with unwavering attention to detail. The customer is always right.... this is the “happiest, most conscious place in the Midwest,” and there is no such thing as mediocrity. We are here to learn, partner, serve, and go beyond our respective duties:

* **Excellence**

• Delivering what we promise and exceeding expectations.

• **Drive**

• Never be good with good enough.

• **Be Real**

• Honesty and integrity always.

• **Passion**

• Inspired to care about the individual, organization, and the environment.

• **Team Work**

• Value everyone and work together for the common good.

• **Innovation**

• If there is a better way, we will find it.

• **Respect**

* We follow the Golden Rule in all that we do.  “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

We are also fortunate to have among us, certain people that have been the backbone of Fair Oaks Farms almost since the beginning. While we have been in existence, people like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have been here for more than **TEN YEARS!!**! \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to be more accurate. In addition, (**Name the long term employees and their functions**), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it is the loyalty, tenacity, and partnership of people like these fine employees that motivates and inspires a business owner. While the owners might obviously be invested in their own creation, to have people come in, day after day, week after week, and commit and recommit to the mission and purpose of one’s business is priceless. These fine colleagues carry the history of Fair Oaks Farms. They are our archivists and our best points of reference. They have grown with us and we are proud to learn and grow along side of each one of them... and all of you.

Running a business in 2018 is challenging to say the least. Running a thriving, growing business is like having a unicorn in this day and age.... almost too good to be true. We learn every day of the challenges facing and threatening the survival of various industries. We have probably seen changes and closings in our own area. There was an article in a trade newspaper a few months ago stating that over the course of 2018, **almost THREE THOUSAND** retail establishments will close... and that’s not just small local businesses... that mostly includes stores like Sears, K-Mart, Macy’s, Toys R Us.... and with those closings, our well being is threatened....and while tens of thousands of jobs will be lost and people will always need food, they may buy **LESS** of it. I say this because we must **NEVER** get complacent about what we have, what we’re working towards, where we intend to go, and how we must keep our eye on the prize... a healthy, sustainable, growing business...

Even with all of the “push back” and negative conditions that exist.... that we have no control over, all of us together make a very impressive team. There are exciting plans in the works and the more we do, the more we will be able to accomplish. Thomas Edison said something very wise... and it stays with me and reminds me, like a little voice over my shoulder, “When you have exhausted all possibilities, remember this - **YOU** **HAVEN’T**.” There’s so much that we’ve accomplished and as we reach new goals, if we’re lucky, our responsibilities and projects will grow geometrically. Knowing that we have people like you to watch over, guide, repurpose, energize projects like the hotel, our milk partnership with Coca Cola, and other new adventures and alliances, is very gratifying.

It’s also funny but as we, as a society gets more involved and reliant on technology for personal and professional needs, people throughout the country are literally going back to their roots. They want transparency in every step of the process that involves the foods they eat and drink, and we have set up a model of conscious, sustainable farming that will continue to set new standards in our industry. **NOW** is the time to recommit, **REALLY** bring yourselves to “the party,” and **FEEL THE POWER OF THE POO.**!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I know we are all aligned on the goal of being the largest farming community in Indiana, and once we achieve **THAT** goal, which we will..... and we have targeted a date of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to meet that goal, we will be ready to conquer the world and milk it for all!!! Thank you all so much!!! It’s time to get to work!! ... and keep this list in mind at all times:

I Smile for guests

I make eye contact

I stop what I’m doing and become fully engaged

I treat guests as individuals

I always thank them and invite them back

I anticipate their needs and offer assistance

I create surprises and special moments

I look happy and interested while serving guests

I reduce hassles and inconveniences for guests

I let customers tell me their problems without interruption

I  apologize to guests even if it is not my fault

I care about our guests having a good time

I create opportunities to WOW by listening to guests

I project a positive image and energy

I am courteous and respectful to all guests

I resolve guest problems immediately

I ask guests what I can do if they have a problem

I understand our businesses so guests can have the best experience