Written by Mark Jaeger
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GUESTS FROM 26 countries toured Melichar Broad Acres Farm in the Town of Port Washington last week, checking exhibits set up by Alta Genetics, an international firm that specializes in the artificial insemination of cattle.

*Photo by Sam Arendt*Melichar Broad Acres, the Town of Port Washington farm owned by Jim and Sherri Melichar, was one of the demonstration sites used last week by international agriculture company Alta Genetics.

More than 230 people from 26 countries visited the dairy farm at 3990 Willow La. last Wednesday as part of a showcase of cutting-edge farms.

In addition to tours of the dairy operation, stations were set up on the property to demonstrate various artificial-insemination products and services offered by the company.

Jim Melichar said hosting the tours was an educational experience for the visitors and eye-opening for him.

“They were impressed by the equipment and technology we have. I think the best praise you can get is to be appreciated by your peers,” Melichar said.

“It was also fascinating to go on the tours and hear five different translators asking and answering questions.”

As the farm owner, Melichar said a number of questions about financing were directed to him.

“In Europe, banks don’t make loans to agriculture. They have to get their financing from investors or family money,” he said.

The Melichars hosted a similar demonstration tour for Alta Genetics in 2007.

“I like to say I was Alta before the company was Alta. We started using their services when they were Landmark,” Jim Melichar said.

The family has owned the farm since 1937. There are now 800 cows in the herd.

When Jim took over the farm, he milked 48 cows in a tie-stall barn. Today, the barn holds a double-10, walk-through flat barn parlor.

The company is based in Alberta, Canada, with product development operations in Wisconsin, the Netherlands and Brazil and customers throughout Europe, Latin America and North America. It is the largest privately owned genetic improvement company in the world.

The farm will again be the focus of attention again on Saturday, June 25, when it hosts the 27th annual Breakfast on the Farm. The annual event, which welcomes thousands of hungry visitors, is presented by the Ozaukee County Dairy Promotion Committee.

It will be the third time the Melichars have held the countywide breakfast on their farm.