



IOWA FARM USES WIRELESS CAMERAS TO PROTECT ITS LIVESTOCK

Partnering with UScellular®, Grandview Farms relies on security from Arlo cameras to discourage invaders.

Customer Profile



BUSINESS TYPE:

Grandview Farms, a 105-year-old family-run business with 42 employees, produces more than 400,000 hogs a year.

LOCATION:

Eldridge, in Eastern Iowa

CHALLENGES:

- Needed security at numerous remote facilities (spread across a 60-mile radius) where they house hogs
- Internet not available in many of their isolated locations and had considered expensive satellite connections
- Sheriff unable to prosecute vandals without photographic evidence

UScellular® SOLUTIONS:

- Rather than run internet to remote buildings, Grandview Farms worked with UScellular to install LTE/Wi-Fi cameras at a much lower cost
- Cameras monitor remote buildings, with a range of up to 300 feet line of sight, for vandalism, theft and employee accountability
- Arlo Go Cam 2 security cameras, designed to withstand extreme conditions and featuring color night vision for better identification, start recording and activate floodlights when motion is detected to help deter intruders
- Personalized service from local account manager

RESULTS SINCE 2022 LAUNCH:

- Saving approximately \$214,000 with UScellular wireless connections on a 2-year agreement for service and upfront costs to power its security cameras
- Grandview Farms uses camera footage to ensure employee accountability and discovered an employee whose actions threatened the lives of 2,600 animals
- Camera usage has increased employee accountability and productivity
- Exterior-mounted cameras deter potential intruders who know they will be photographed

When you're responsible for 400,000 lives spread across several isolated buildings in a 60-mile radius spanning two counties, security is a priority. That's why Grandview Farms installed 72 (and counting) Arlo Go Cam 2 security cameras across its property and that of its nearby contractors.

"We had an incident several years ago where it was some kind of gang prank. Kids came in and killed several pigs," said Joni Dittmer, Grandview Farms owner, who called the incident "disgusting. It would have been nice to have that on camera. The sheriff tried to do an investigation, but it was a little hard without evidence. So now I feel confident that with the cameras, we wouldn't miss something like that."

Although that incident is long past, Dittmer said she and her family always practice caution. So, when UScellular rep Nick Merulla approached the longtime UScellular customers with a proposal for cameras, they were on board. "He brought to us some good ideas of these cameras, and it sounded like it would be for us. Otherwise, we still might be thinking, 'who do we go to?'"

The Arlo Go Cam 2 cameras are powered by UScellular wireless connectivity and provide Grandview Farms with on-demand video monitoring, live feeds and a motion detection system that starts recording when triggered. The Grandview team can decide if the cameras should be activated by humans, animals and/or vehicles, and receives notifications on an app that also has a dashboard to view video. Cameras have built-in floodlights that activate upon recording, plus 2-way audio and GPS positioning to locate them.

Cameras Provide Employee Accountability

Dittmer gives back to her community and treats employees as their most valuable asset—as evidenced by extremely low turnover. Some she treats like honorary family. In addition to exhaustive training and safety programs, benefits include housing, health insurance, bonuses, 401K and UScellular phones. "I just think they deserve that," she said.

So, when an employee misrepresented his timesheet and failed to care for 2,600 pigs in one facility, the cameras helped them prove he was essentially "stealing time," she said.

"One of his major job duties was to check every pig—their health, the water, the feed—it's all in our animal well-being training. He went in there for 9 minutes, came out and left. You can imagine if you have to look at every pen, every pig, you should really be in that building for a good hour or two."



"The key to a good representative is they get to know who we are and then they bring solutions that can help remedy and/or prevent anything that we're concerned about. And that's the reason we went this year with UScellular for cameras."

— **Joni Dittmer**, Owner,
Grandview Farms, Eldridge, IA



The Arlo Go Cam 2 provides wireless security for remote farm buildings.

"The camera does hold employees accountable. That's a very good feature."

— **Joni Dittmer**



“We’ve used UScellular forever—as long as we’ve had cell phones. I think it’s been the service we’ve gotten and the products UScellular has to meet the needs of our business.”

— Joni Dittmer

A manager arrived at the facility later that day and immediately noticed the pigs hadn’t been cared for. He checked the camera and was able to prove the employee had not done his job. “He had some animals that were needing care, and feed that was out and he left. So yes, the camera does hold employees accountable. That’s a very good feature,” Dittmer said.

Fortunately, the vast majority of Grandview Farms employees, whom she said feel like owners, welcome the cameras. They helped install them and appreciate that the cameras hold others accountable. “Several employees had to follow up with this person quite a bit and make sure he was doing the right thing,” she said, noting that the cameras in this instance increased employee productivity by identifying someone who wasn’t doing their share and replacing him with a more responsible worker.

Safety and Prevention

Dittmer emphasized that her greatest goals with the cameras were safety and prevention. Grandview Farm follows an extensive animal welfare program to protect the livelihood of their livestock, and the cameras help protect against vandalism. If an intruder does cause damage, Dittmer and team would be able to react quickly from motion-detection notifications. The Arlo app also includes 24-hour emergency response that will notify the sheriff’s office and provide them evidence.

She is also confident that obviously visible cameras with motion-activated floodlights would discourage intruders. “I think it helps for people to know, oh, there are cameras, they’ll stay away. We have buildings that sit much more isolated, and we just knew that they needed to be observed when employees aren’t there because you don’t know what people might do, driving by them.”

And Dittmer believes the cameras demonstrate Grandview Farms’ care for its employees, animals and safety. “We care about doing the right thing. I think cameras show that you have a certain professionalism and commitment to the community.”

Substantial Results

Rather than choose cost-prohibitive measures such as running internet to remote buildings or using satellite connections at enormous cost, Grandview Farms is saving approximately \$214,000 with UScellular wireless connections on a 2-year agreement for service and upfront costs to power its security cameras. And they are working. Dittmer said there have been no incidents since installing the cameras and fully expects to order more in the coming months.

They also currently use from UScellular 52 phones, 2 tablets and 90 IoT devices for 42 employees, and continue to expand.

Local, Personalized Service

Joni and her husband Tom both came from farm families. They met at Iowa State University and with their two grown children run the farm while also treating their close contacts like family. “That’s why I rely on people like Nick Merulla to hold UScellular accountable for us. And I hold a lot of the businesses we work with that way. They know that’s what we do. We treat them very well, but we hold them to a standard too.”

Merulla is happy to oblige. “They have such a diverse need, from growing their own feed corn to rearing live animals. They come to me with unique challenges all the time, and sometimes it’s something I’ve never run into before, but I love learning new things and am ready to tackle the challenge,” the UScellular account manager said.

Nick is phenomenal,” Dittmer added. “He deserves the credit because we’re real picky on who we bring into our wheelhouse. He’s part of our team. I’ve had to call him on Sunday morning at 7:00 and he responds. When you have live animals, things happen.

“The key to a good representative is they get to know who we are and then they bring solutions that can help remedy and/or prevent anything that we’re concerned about. And that’s the reason we went this year with UScellular for security cameras...because we found this superior information and it has worked,” Dittmer said.

“Forever” Customers

Dittmer says they have been using UScellular “forever—as long as we’ve had cell phones,” and although she’s been approached by other companies, she’s never considered switching. “I think it’s been the service we’ve gotten and the products UScellular has to meet the needs of our business. But it’s also the representatives like Nick that really keep you going.

“You could have the best quality equipment and yet somebody completely keeps dropping the ball and doesn’t help you and then you have to really look at other competitors. But we haven’t had a need to look at other competitors.

“UScellular deserves to have a good story out there from a customer that started with probably two phones to where we are now.”

Grandview Farms photos by Cynthia Merulla



“They come to me with unique challenges all the time, and sometimes it’s something I’ve never run into before, but I love learning new things and am ready to tackle the challenge.”

— Nick Merulla, Sales Account Manager, UScellular

To see how UScellular can help your organization, call **866-616-5587** or visit **our website**.



© 2022 UScellular
PR0230-CSE-0089-0922