



Polar Quality Delivers Reliability, Value for Owner-Operator

Dan Bollinger

Feed is the single largest cost in cattle production, accounting for 50% of expenses or more. Companies like Midwest PMS LLC, a Firestone, Colo., manufacturer of liquid feed supplements for cattle and other livestock, want to help customers beef up cattle and keep costs down.

Tightly managed transportation is one way they do it.

"There's just no tolerance for delays when you're delivering liquid feed," says Dan Bollinger, an owner-operator who hauls feed from the Midwest PMS plant in Garden City, Kansas. He makes three to four stops a day at ranches and feedlots as far away as eastern Colorado, Oklahoma, and the Texas Panhandle.

Bollinger is a rare breed: an independent owner-operator with his own tractor and tank trailer.

"I've owned my own truck for 19 years and been driving for 30, but this is the first year I've had my own operating authority," says Bollinger. He owns a Polar SDX9 double deep-drop stainless steel tank with a 6,000-gallon capacity. Most owner-operators in his line of work will lease on with a larger trucking company. The carrier typically owns the trailer and the owner-operator will pay a fee to use it.

Having his own authority and equipment gives Bollinger flexibility in his business and the potential for more profit but it also carries risk. Especially if the tank trailer breaks down. The tank, Bollinger says, is where the money is.

"Trucks come and go, but the tank trailer needs to be reliable and last a long time," he explains. "It's not like a van trailer where there's a dozen around if something goes wrong."

When you've got one truck and one trailer, a repair costs time, money, and a customer's confidence.

"The important thing to me is build quality," Bollinger says. "This is a dirty job, going in and out of feedlots and ranches, and the equipment has to take a lot of abuse. I want to have confidence in my equipment and in the people who built it."

Polar produces more deep-drop trailers than any other tank manufacturer and offers a range of lengths and axle configurations to maximize payload and productivity. Bollinger's tank is a double 30-inch-deep drop; having two compartments eliminates the need for baffles and lets Bollinger haul a split load of feed.

"The deep drops also keep the center of gravity low and makes the trailer faster to unload," Bollinger says. "The product doesn't collect and comes off quickly even when it's cold."

Bollinger says his tank requires little preventive maintenance except to clean it. Liquid feed has ingredients that will react with stainless steel and cause it to pit. Bollinger's tank uses T316 stainless, which has higher chrome content than the more common T304. The more chrome, the more resistant the metal is to corrosion.

An investment in the tank's durability will pay for itself in reliable pickup and deliveries and



resale value, Bollinger notes.

I have one trailer and I wouldn't buy anything but Polar, he says. All you have to do is look at other stainless steel tanks running around out here to see the difference. Just like these feedlots out here, I'm watching every expense and asking whether I'm going to get my money's worth. With Polar, I know I am.