

# Dukas' DHIA career travels north of Mason-Dixon line

BY DONNA TOMMELLEO

UNIVERSITY PARK — 'Tis the season for turkey and thanks and 'tis also the season for county DHIA's to reflect on their testing year and recognize the efforts of individual producers at annual dinner meetings.

This year's banquet circuit introduces a new face to the Pennsylvania dairy industry. He's 28-year-old Philip Dukas, the new general manager of state's DHIA testing lab, which officially opened earlier this spring.

Has Dukas found things to his liking?

"I feel this is the best lab in the country as far as efficiency and accuracy go," he reported.

But Dukas and staff are looking for ways to increase the lab's efficiency. The new DHIA manager explained the addition of a key punch would help reduce turn-around time.

Currently, as samples enter the testing lab at University Park, the accompanying barn sheets must travel to Penn State's administration building so the information can be key punched and fed into a computer for processing.

The addition would cost about \$56,000 for most of the computer hardware, said Dukas.

"The funding is ready," he added. "The Pennsylvania dairyman is footing the bill." He explained that a previous 15-cent raise in testing rates helped defray costs.

While meeting with dairy producers, either on the road or at the state lab, Dukas has fielded a number of requests to expand the testing program.

"There is an interest from farmers to be able to access their records via home computers," he reported. "We'll constantly be monitoring this interest."

"As each year goes by, the possibility of a remote access system becomes more feasible," Dukas predicted.

Such a system, said Dukas, would allow farmers, with the right kind of computer, to call up their records directly from the main DHIA terminal.

Dukas' background with the Virginia DHIA gave him some exposure to remote access systems.

"This can tailor the reports to exactly the needs of your farm," he explained. "But unless an on-the-farm access system is done with a lot of planning, I seriously question the credibility. DHI is a very high credibility system," he added.

The new director of operations, Dukas is a 1977 graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, with a degree in Dairy Science.

The son of a career Army officer, Dukas has lived all over the world, but because of his involvement with Virginia agriculture, calls the "Old Dominion" home.

Following graduation from Virginia Tech, Dukas began his career as a DHIA supervisor.



Philip Dukas

Testing cows, said Dukas, became his best source of practical experience.

"You see how a lot of guys do it right and wrong," he recalled. One job often leads to more opportunity and soon Dukas and wife Kit found themselves milking 120 Holsteins and tending calves on a central Virginia dairy.

But the call for DHIA work returned. Dukas answered and began as an area fieldman in the Shenandoah Valley region.

The central office in Blacksburg, Va. expanded and Dukas moved back to his alma mater.

"I still worked in the field to some extent," he said. However, field duties were gradually replaced with an administrative role.

Following a year in the Blacksburg office, Dukas was hired by the Pennsylvania DHIA and started earlier this fall as director of operations. Dukas, wife Kit and daughter Alex reside in State College. The Dukases are expecting their second child in May.

Dukas' arrival has been just one of a series of innovations for the state's DHIA participants. At the new lab's christening in April, only two of seven testing machines were set up for protein, explained lab manager Dean Amick. Today, all the machines record the protein and butterfat content within seconds of each other.

Because of the growing interest in protein testing, Dukas has been examining different protein pricing systems, such as the one instituted by Milk Marketing, Inc.

"Any good protein program will have a somatic cell adjustment," he noted, since an increase in SCC will tend to elevate the protein content.

The new general manager will be at the helm less than four months before the new nationwide DHIA rules take effect.

"The whole tone of the rules is different," Dukas commented. "In the past, the rules were to safeguard the credibility of the program and guard against infractions.

"But now, the rules are based on a guarantee that every dairyman has an accurate and reliable test," he added.

The following list includes some of the more apparent rule changes, which will take effect next year.

Any equipment used on test day, found to be out of tolerance must be repaired before further use.

The beginning and ending time for each milking shall be recorded for DHI herds.

Cows used as donor dams or embryo recipients must be tested

as members of the herd where located.

All cows must be identified with a visible tag, neck chain, leg band or brand.

Adjustments for sick or injured cows on the first test day of the lactation will be made providing qualifications are met.

Bulk tank weights will be recorded by DHI supervisors from haulers weigh slips for three previous pick-ups and the number of milkings represented will be recorded. If unavailable, reasons why weights are not available will

be reported in writing to the state DHIA.

Refusal to test when a supervisor calls or arrives at the farm is a violation of Official DHI rules. Advance requests by herd owners not to test on a particular day shall be respected when reasonable.

Requests for retests shall be made within 15 days of the original test day.

"It's a good set of rules," Dukas said. "We'd rather incorporate them in our program and go on with the business of the day."



General manager Dukas, left, credits lab manager Dean Amick, right, with the lab's efficiency. The two DHIA officials stand behind one of the newer pieces of equipment which records butterfat on the left and protein on the right.

## Bucks DHIA celebrates 59th year

PLUMSTEADVILLE — Representatives of Delaware Valley College were laden with production awards, following Bucks County's annual DHIA meeting, last week.

The Doylestown college claimed the high herd milk and fat award with 19,965 pounds of milk and 754 pounds of fat on 40 cows.

High-production honors for an individual cow also went to DVC for cow "Abigail," with 28,842 pounds of milk.

Paul Bishop of Perkasio collected the award for high cow for fat. Bishop's "Deann" finished with 1,122 pounds.

Richboro dairyman Theodore Wilson owned the top cow for high lifetime production. Wilson's "Queenie," turned in a lifetime record of 225,187 pounds of milk and 8,376 pounds of fat.

Stephen Natali of Perkasio finished the year with the most improved herd for milk.

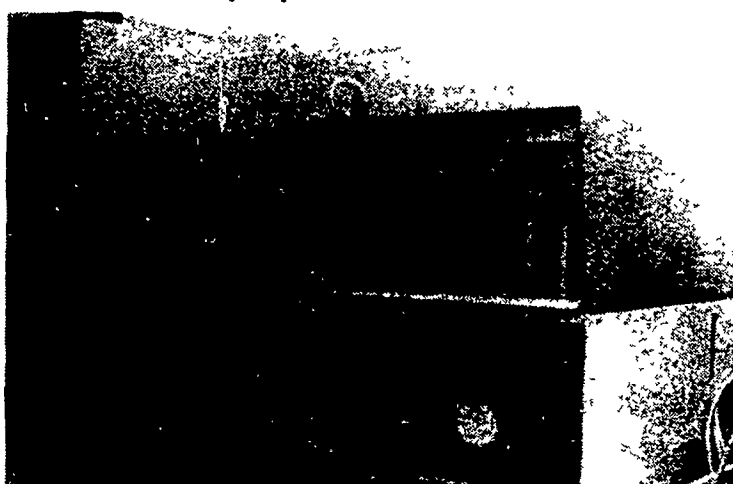
In all, 56 herds finished the 1982 testing year. The county's 3,362

cows averaged 16,223 pounds of milk and 604 pounds of fat.

The following are executive members of the 59-year-old Bucks County DHIA: president, Robert Holland; vice president, Roy Shull; secretary-treasurer, Clyde Bishop; directors, Clarence Berger, Warren Buckman, Jr., Joe Peters, Paul Wisser, Raymond Gross, David Walton and Kenneth Hager; supervisors, Christine Hess, Ruth Moyer and Earl Whitman.



Bucks Co. DHIA president Bob Holland, far right, and banquet speaker Carl Brown, second from right, join members of the Association honored for high production. From left to right the award-winners are: Theodore Wilson, high cow lifetime milk and fat; Paul Bishop, high cow for fat; Henry Swartz and Jim Harner, DVC representatives, high herd for milk and fat, high cow for milk.



Replaced by newer protein and fat testing equipment, these 13-year-old butterfat testers stand idle in one corner of the state's DHIA lab. Lab manager Dean Amick estimates that more than 5 million samples have run through the now obsolete equipment.