Dairy farmer can save $5,000 with better management

LANCASTER — "Approximately five thousand dollars of potential savings are available on a dairy farm," Donald Mahlandt informed the group of farmers attending the annual Pennfield Dairy Day Meeting.

Throughout the meeting Donald Mahlandt, Manager of Dairy and Swine Feeds and Dr. Brian Perkins, Manager of Dairy and Livestock Nutrition pointed out areas where these savings might be realized.

One area to consider is reproduction management according to Perkins. By reducing the calving interval more milk will be produced, more calves for sale or replacement will be born during the life of a cow, lower semen costs will be incurred and lower vet bills can be realized. All are a possible area for cost reductions.

Perkins went on to list the points to consider which effect reproductive efficiency: date of first breeding following calving, 50 days is considered optimal for maximum profit; heat detection efficiency; culling policy based on reproduction; and conception rate.

Perkins explained that for every day past 85 that a cow remains open, it costs the farmer $2.50 per cow per day. In addition to this the rolling herd average declines by 10 pounds for every day open.

Mahlandt discussed the value of putting higher energy forages in rations that are home grown. Through charts and graphs he illustrated that a savings of up to $80 over grain costs can be realized.

Mahlandt also briefed the audience on the technical services that Pennfield has available to its customers. He also reported on the progress of the new mill under construction in Mt. Joy. This mill will have the capability of precision formulating a ration that will compliment any forage program.

Dr. Perkins concluded the day's program by highlighting the new advances in dairy nutrition. Among the recent advances that Pennfield has been working with is IsoPlus. This product has been on the market since November 1985. It is a natural chemical that combines with the VFA's in a cow's rumen to make the rumen bacteria more efficient.

These bacteria are then able to digest the nutrients more effectively and less nutrients are passed through to the manure. The cow's entire system in turn then becomes more efficient.

NIR, or near infrared scanner, is the latest technology for feed analysis. The only drawback to this system is the need for a wet chemistry lab to verify the results.

The newest analysis for fiber to receive attention is NDF or neutral detergent fiber. This test is highly correlated to intake of feed as it measures the cell wall composition, or true fiber.

Perkins discussed the subject of protein utilization. The newest theory concerns protein degradability in addition to protein solubility. Requirements must be met for protein, amino acids, and ammonia not only for the cow but also for the rumen bacteria.

The latest NRC requirements are expected to include metabolizable protein - the net protein for lactation.

The subject of Monensin was described by Perkins to be economical, and feasible. This additive is used in heifer rations to bring heifers to breeding weight faster by increasing rate of gain and feed efficiency. Rations that include Monensin and produce the best heifers are ones that are high in quality forages.

Experiments are also being done with favorable results involving supplemental light. Trials with 16 to 18 hours of continuous light at 13 foot candles intensity have produced an increase in production of six to ten percent. This also recorded a increase in feed intake of an equivalent amount.

Perkins commented on the progress of the growth hormone for lactating cows currently under research. The product is called methionyl bovine somatotropin (MBS). Use of this product has yielded higher production at a higher feed intake with increased feed efficiency.

MBS helps a cow reach her genetic potential for production. Perkins expects this product to reach the market about 1990. This will become readily available following FDA approval. It is anticipated they will approve it as an implant instead of the current daily injection.

Donald Mahlandt

Dr. Brian Perkins

Egg output down 2% in state

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania's December egg production totaled 406 million eggs, down two percent from December 1984, according to the Pennsylvania Crop and Livestock Reporting Service. The average number of layers on hand during December 1985 was 18.3 million, virtually the saem as a year earlier. Egg production per 100 layers was 2,219 compared with 2,268 for December 1984.

The U.S. laying flocks produced 5.88 billion eggs during December, down three percent from the 6.04 billion produced a year ago. The total number of layers during December averaged 280 million, down two percent from the 286 million a year ago. December egg production per 100 layers was 2,097 compared with 2,109 eggs for December 1984.