

Veterinarian + Dairyman = Profits

Herd Health Programs Require Team Effort To Succeed

BETHLEHEM — "Is the veterinary profession going to help the dairy farmer stay in business, or is Coca-Cola going to manufacture a low-fat product made from soybeans?"

Turning a statement of policy into a question, Dr. Elwood Borger welcomed a large crowd of dairymen and veterinarians to the Dairy Herd Health Seminar held recently to educate veterinarians and dairymen to work together for greater profits.

The seminar was held at the Holiday Inn, Bethlehem, last week, and was sponsored by several ag-businesses and the Ackermanville Veterinary Hospital. Total herd health programs which the veterinarian could introduce and aid in implementing with his dairy farmer clients, and which the dairyman could then carry out on his farm were stressed throughout the day.

"We should all be working together for better profits," stated Dr. Charles Gardner, Ackermanville Veterinary Hospital, as he echoed the sentiments of his associate. "Dairy farmers will have to continue to change if they want to remain profitable, and the role of the veterinarian will have to change to," he continued.

Gardner maintained that there are six key areas of dairy management that a veterinarian must have a good working

knowledge of to help his client. The knowledge of these key areas and the willingness of the dairyman to allow his veterinarian to treat sickness, prevent disease, and maximize herd performance add up to a total herd health program.

Basics of nutrition, mastitis control, reproduction, replacement animals, housing and records, were all addressed by Gardner. The records of a dairyman, whether DHIA, calf records, or supplemental records, brings all of these areas together for the veterinarian, according to Gardner. Also, the dairyman as well as the veterinarian must be motivated and must benefit from such a program to ensure its success.

Following this point, the featured speaker, Dr. James Jarrett, Rome, Ga., began his discussion on making a total herd health program work on the farm. A previous president of the Bovine Practitioners Association, and a contributor to *Hoard's Dairyman*, Jarrett explained his basics of good cow management in a practical, common sense approach.

"Too often we know what to do, we just don't get it executed," he began. "Good management depends on getting the little things done."

Jarrett began by discussing

mastitis and stated that the control program begins in the environment of the cow.

"Water, except in the watering trough, is one of the worst enemies on a dairy farm," he stated.

Jarrett suggested: clipping udders for added cleanliness; pre-stripping before milking to reduce count in the bulk tank; pre-dipping to get pre-kill on bacteria; and completely drying off a cow before attaching the milking unit.

He also advised having the milking system checked often, checking equipment often and using a good teat dip. Iodine, with a broader spectrum of killing bacteria, and with glycerin added so that it stays on the teat longer is Jarrett's preference.

The replacement program on a dairy farm, "begins the day you turn the mother dry," according to Jarrett. "I like to see most of the vaccination program concentrated in that dry cow," he continued.

"Every dairy farm has three rations," Jarrett noted as he began his discussion on nutrition, one of his four areas of concern, "the one that's calculated, the one that's mixed, and the one that's fed," he stated. Nutrition, Jarrett continued, deals with quality forage and the art of storage, and "you try to get her to eat one more bite." He added that cows should be fed as much on body condition as on production.

Success in reproduction has much to do with dry cow management, according to Jarrett. Shock her to dry her off and then gently get her going uphill



Speakers for the seminar on a Total Dairy Herd Health Program included, left, Dr. Elwood Borger, Dr. Charles Gardner, Dr. James Jarrett and Dr. Charles Rinehimer.

just before she calves, Jarrett advised.

"The best cow person on the farm should be responsible for heat detection," Jarrett explained. The person, the time of day, and the surface can all effect good heat detection.

Concerning infectious diseases and vaccination programs involving reproduction, Jarrett said, "If you put her under enough stress, you can break any vaccination program."

"It all works together," he said as he concluded his presentation. "It's a matter of putting the total package together."

Also on the program was a review of computer programs developed for a total herd health program. Dr. Charles Rinehimer, Ackermanville Veterinary Hospital, presented the computer

program. Stressed as an ideal program to monitor changes in the herd over each month, Rinehimer is currently working with several clients on this program.

Gardner summarized the curriculum of the seminar in one of the handouts he provided to all participants.

"A total herd health program can pay good dividends for the veterinarian administering it, and especially for the dairyman receiving it. It requires at the outset, that both the dairyman and the veterinarian want the veterinarian to be an integral part of the herd management team. Beyond that it simply requires the proper knowledge on the part of the veterinarian and the willingness to institute and follow sound management programs on the part of the farmer."

Berks Cattlemen's Meeting Postponed

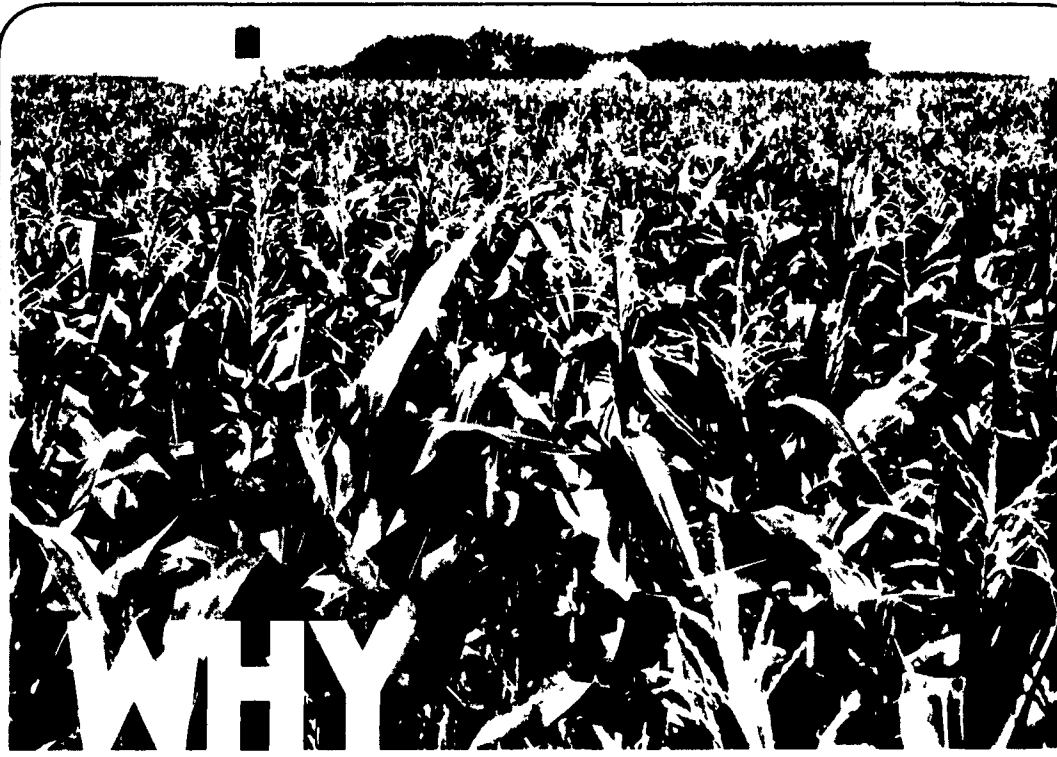
LEESPORT — The meeting of the Berks County Cattlemen's Association scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 24 has been rescheduled for Thursday, Mar. 5 at 7:30 p.m. in the Berks County Ag Center. The meeting is open to the public. Anyone with an interest in

beef or dairy cattle is invited to participate.

For more information about the Association or the upcoming meeting, contact Mike Firestone, secretary, 717-866-4185 or Clyde Myers, county agent, 215-378-1327.

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