

With These Participating Professors

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**Penn State  
FARM AND DAIRY  
Business Seminar of the Week**

Herd Average	Cows Needed For \$25,000 Net Income	Lbs. Milk Put On the Market
10,000	151	1,500,000
12,000	72	864,000
14,000	51	714,000
16,000	40	640,000
18,000	30	540,000
20,000	20	400,000

I'm not naive enough to think that we could solve our surplus problem (currently running about 5 percent, and high enough to cause support price cuts of 75 cents per cwt by January 1988) by increasing Pennsylvania's average production from the current 13,000 pounds to 16,000 or 17,000 pounds per cow. Fifty stall barns will continue to house 50 cows regardless of how much they produce. But, I do know some herds which have gradually expanded to 60 cows to pay the bills and are producing 13 or 14,000 pounds of milk. These might be better off as 40 cow 18,000 pound herds and they would be putting 90,000 pounds less milk on the market besides.

Think of the pressures eliminating 20 cows would relieve. Milking time would be reduced by about 40 minutes. For many, this would mean getting out of the barn

in time to watch the 8 p.m. TV programs. Ten acres of corn would not have to be planted. Fifteen acres of hay would not have to be dried. This may mean that even Erie County would have enough sun so that you could get the hay made between late May and mid-June. Maybe you could quit renting that extra land which is five miles from home. And, with 10 less replacements, your heifer barn might once again be big enough.

I realize that nobody is likely to reduce their herd size. But, milk prices have already started to drop. Blend prices are now close to the \$12 mark and with anticipated support price reductions, could be close to \$11 by next spring. With grain prices expected to remain low, it might be a good idea to see if you can pay the bills by increasing production rather than by adding more cows.

**What Does It Take To Have A 20,000 Pound Herd?**

First, you have to make increasing production your primary goal. Everything you do needs to be evaluated based on whether it is affordable, and able to make milk. You have to pay attention to details. You have to plan ahead so that things get done on time. It means getting the machinery ready in the winter so that you can have the corn planted and sprayed in time to make quality hay. It means breeding AI even though a bull would be easier. It means keeping enough records so that you know what is working and what is not. And, it means averaging 65 pounds of milk per cow per day!

**WHAT DO YOU DO FIRST?**

**Forage Quality**  
Milk cannot be made on grain alone. Nor, can grain make up for poor quality forage. Things would be easier if we lived in a good alfalfa area. But, even grass (which we can grow) can make good hay if cut at an early stage of maturity. The best quality hay is made in late May and early June.

Clover and trefoil make almost as high quality feed as alfalfa. The main problem is their lower yielding capabilities. But, the high feed quality makes it worth the extra effort it takes to grow and manage them. With good management, you should be able to get three, and maybe even four cuttings from these legume-grass mixtures if the first crop is taken off on time. Thus, the yield you lose by starting early will likely be more than made up later on.

**Dairy Replacements**

Poorly grown heifers seldom

make good cows. One cannot reduce heifer raising costs by not feeding quality forage and adequate grain. Heifers raised on "dairy herd leftovers" frequently freshen at 2.5 to 3 years of age and in the end are more costly replacements than a well-grown 2 year old.

Erie County has more small poorly grown heifers than we should. This is one area which is costing our dairymen a lot of money.

**Performance Records**

Good production records are needed for two reasons. First they are needed to determine which animals are producing enough to pay the bills. Secondly (this is the more important reason) good production records are needed to monitor production performance so that you can tell what is working and/or when things are going wrong while the problem is still small and easily solved.

DHIA is one of the best means of obtaining these needed performance records. Nationally, DHIA herds average almost 5,000 pounds more milk per cow per year than non-DHIA herds. This one management tool alone has the potential of turning a 13,000 pound herd into an 18,000 pound herd. Yet, more than 60 percent of the Erie County dairymen are not taking advantage of this.

**Nutrition**

Correcting a nutrition problem will produce one of the quickest returns on investment available to the dairyman. Frequent forage testing and feed programming is a very low cost investment capable of making you big money.

**Genetic Improvement**

Genetic improvement has to be part of a long-range plan. Currently, we are gaining almost 100 pounds of milk per year in genetics alone. At that rate, one will soon fall behind if he doesn't have a breeding program which will enable him to keep pace with the industry. This means using AI on every animal, including the heifers. A dairyman also needs to be able to evaluate the genetic producing potential of each animal in his milking herd. Currently, cow indexes (DHIA is needed here, too) are the best way to do this. But, the animals' sire must be known to determine indexes. Of the 67 Pennsylvania counties, Erie County currently has the second highest percentage of animals sired by unknown bull (UNK0000). This situation needs to be corrected quickly.

Tight economics are forcing us to become better dairymen and better businessmen. Many regard this to be the curse of the times. It will cause you less psychological stress if you view it as a challenge. But, the necessary adjustments will still be tough.

**Northern Berks 4-H Dairy News**

BY AMY PHILLIPS  
Club Reporter

Our 4-H meeting was held at Willow Creek Animal Hospital. There were 16 members present at the meeting. Jeff Davis, Vice President called the meeting to order. Amy Phillips read the Treasury report. We have future plans for a milk machine at the Kutztown Fair August 11, to the 16th. And a milk carton boat for the boat race to be held in August at the Grange Mill Park in Reading.

Dr. Nirschl demonstrated how to trim feet on David Nirschl's 4-H animal. Dr. Nirschl also gave the

4-H members a tour of the Willow Creek Animal Hospital.

The next meeting will be held October 22, 1987 at Phil and Donna Werley's farm, just outside of Yoder Heights. This meeting will feature a Halloween party, the meeting will also feature Chris States, 4-H Extension Agent. She will be speaking about what to include in your project book. Bring your books. There will be no meeting in August and September since the members will be at the Kutztown and Reading fairs. A get together is planned for the evening of dairy judging for all 4-H members at the Kutztown Fair.

BY JESSE G. COOPER  
Farm Management  
Extension Specialist

Recently Erie County Extension Agent George Wilcox wrote an excellent article in his local newsletter *Dairy & Udder News* that I'm about to share with *Lancaster Farming* readers.



In fact I would class it as "must" reading for dairy farmers or anyone else searching for answers to our national surplus milk problem.

Don't overextend yourself — getting too big can be hard on you and your industry.

Here's an easy question. True or false: High producing cows help reduce the milk surplus? A quick glance at the following chart may change your mind:

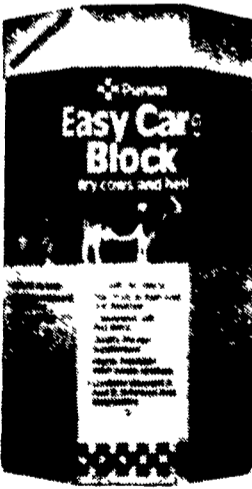


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