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Dairy Herd  
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## Why Lebanon County Cows Give More Milk

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The role of the county agent, in an intensive and productive agricultural county, such as Lebanon County, is very exciting, interesting and quite challenging.

There are many things that can make this fast-paced job very gratifying. One of those is the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with producers under certain production programs that provide real insight into guiding and evaluating their management decisions.

An example of such a program is DHIA.

This past fall, I had the pleasure of announcing to 250 Lebanon County DHIA members that they were number one . . . that's right . . . number one in the state of Pennsylvania for milk production.

This honor, that was bestowed upon my dairy farmers, once again made me quite proud. Lebanon County's average DHIA production record of 18,360 lbs. of milk per cow was 1,374 lbs. higher than the state average. Lebanon County's production was also 420 lbs. higher than a year ago.

The question that I find intriguing is, why?

My experience and dairy science studies at Penn State tell me that milk production performances are the result of two main criteria — genetics and environment.

In the field, I've found that it really doesn't matter how good the genetic makeup of a cow (or anything else); if it is not properly cared for, you have little or nothing.

This same axiom can be reversed. That is: Though it may help, the greatest tender loving care in the world will not make up for a lousy breeding program.

To put it bluntly, my training and experience has taught me that it takes a balanced program in all

disciplines, to survive in the dairy industry.

But to better answer the question of why Lebanon County dairy farmers are producing so well, I put the question to some top Lebanon dairy farmers.

I've been able to establish that there are some prevalent thoughts shared by these farmers that seem to have given Lebanon County the edge in becoming the top producers in the state.

Many of these ideas I'm sure won't take you by surprise, but they may help you either rest easier in knowing that you're doing a good job, or possibly to re-evaluate your current situation and make changes toward higher production.

### The Good Qualities Of Land And Soil

Dennis Kauffman of DGK Holsteins, also county DHIA president, said he feels that, first and foremost, Lebanon County farmers are "blessed with good land that has the capability of producing top crop yields even in some poorer years."

According to Kauffman, much of the Lebanon Valley is limestone soil that has top production capabilities. It has some of the most productive soils in the world, yet this land is being threatened by houses, industrial parks, shopping centers and parking lots. It is threatened to be taken out of agricultural production.

Kauffman said he also feels that personnel are a key to making Lebanon dairy production strong. Not only do we have a "good group of DHIA supervisors and directors working for our interests, but we also have an excellent corps of feed service people helping to balance our feeding programs to optimize production," said Kauffman.

### Quality Trained People

Harold Bollinger, of Willow Maple Farm, who has a history of

having a top producing herd, said he agrees with Kauffman.

Bollinger said that "the excellent veterinarian care that my herd receives is unmatched. We have some of the best vets anywhere, here in Lebanon County," he said.

Good genetics is another strong point for DHIA herds in Lebanon County. Many agree on that.

### Dependable Bloodlines

Ken Mase, past DHIA president in Lebanon, said he feels that "most everyone in the county is striving for more superior genetics. We have much-higher producing two-year-olds, as a result of better breeding programs."

Chiming in on that same vein are the Bollingers and Roy Nolt.

Bollingers have been strengthening their genetic base for years; everything has been bred AI since 1944. It doesn't take long, when talking to Harold or Donald Bollinger, to detect the strong belief in artificial insemination. In fact, Harold has served as a director for Atlantic Breeders Cooperative for 33 years.

At the Roy Nolt farm, genetics is a major concern, too. The Nolts had the top-producing herd in Lebanon County in 1989, with a 24,236 lbs. of milk Rolling Herd Average. At the Nolts, bulls are hand selected from the red book to match each individual cow.

Roy and Janice's son, Duane makes the bull selections to compliment each cow. Duane selects bulls with +1,000 lbs. PD's for milk that also have balance in other traits. Roy said he remembers his father's comments that "it takes the same amount of time and feed and care for a good animal as a bad one." He said he now lives by this rule.

Nolt said he breeds for production because "that's what you get paid for." But he does admit that their cows must also be sound in all respects including type, for the

## Average Farm Feed Costs For Handy Reference

To help farmers across the state to have handy reference of commodity input costs in their feeding operations for DHIA record sheets or to develop livestock feed cost data, here's this week's average costs of various ingredients as compiled from regional reports across the state of Pennsylvania. Remember these are averages so you will need to adjust your figures up or down according to your location and the quality of your crop.

Corn, No. 2y - 2.76  
Wheat, No. 2 - 3.84  
Barley, No. 3 - 2.15  
Oats, No. 2 - 1.74  
Soybeans, No. 1 - 5.47  
New Ear Corn, - 74.25  
Alfalfa Hay - 119.25  
Mixed Hay - 103.00  
Timothy Hay - 99.00

Nolts also like to sell good bull prospects as AI studs.

### Reproduction: Close Eye, Quick Action

Bruce Heilinger, owner of Lebanon's top producing herd in 1988 and second in 1989 sees yet another key in his herd — reproduction.

Heilinger said he keys in on "good management and getting cows bred back quickly," he said.

By 60 days past calving, Heilinger is starting to swing things into action. At that time, he boosts the phosphorus levels by side dressing those cows. He also has included the injection of iron, vitamin B complex, and selenium into his management scheme. Heilinger says "his cows now clean better, show better heats and have less mastitis."

He said he also pays particularly close attention to his herd for signs of heat, when the cows are let out on the lot. Heilinger has not yet met his goal of 12.5-month calving interval, but he's not giving up.

Heilinger, like most dairy farmers, said he feels that his "forage is critical" and that he believes in a well-balanced ration. He does his utmost to grow and harvest top quality forages, that are the basis of his feeding program.

Roy Nolt is also a stickler for quality forages, noting that he forage tests everytime a change occurs.

Nolt said he monitors what goes in, by what comes out. His watchful eye examines the consistency of the manure for management tips. "The cows let you know when feed changes," Nolt explained.

Cleanliness is also high on the

priority list, according to Nolt. He said he feels that "little things make the difference in feeding cows." When feeding the herd, the Nolt family members have often been asked, "would you want to eat out of that?"

Nolt said it is his subtle way of saying that clean troughs and fresh food and water are a must in his barn. He also attributes his TMR's consistent ration for part of their success.

Ken Mase said he saw something else happening in 1989 to Lebanon County herds that may have helped lead the way to being the top-producing county.

"Many cows were culled due to high beef prices," Mase said. "I'm sure other counties had the same situation, but we may have culled harder. Often it is more profitable to do a better job with fewer cows," he said.

Among the other things that I have also seen happening among Lebanon dairymen is doing little things that keep cows comfortable.

I see many Lebanon County dairy farmers paying attention to making sure their herds have fresh air, clean dry beds, providing fans, designing their barns for comfort (ie. rubber mats) . . . in essence, maintaining a clean, well-managed operation.

And from my years here, I can attest that Lebanon County dairy farm families are good managers.

And, as I see it, it boils down to the words of a song: It's the "Touch of the Master's Hand".

My hat is off to you, the good dairy farm families that provide us all with nature's finest . . . Quality Milk.

## How Does Your Herd Compare?

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — This data is pulled from Pennsylvania DHIA's mainframe computer each week. It is a one-week summary representing approximately one-fourth of the herds on test, as they are tested monthly.

These data are valuable from a business management standpoint and can be used for comparing your operations to the averages from almost 1,400 herds across the state.

DHIA Averages for all herds processed between 2/05/90 and 2/12/90

Number of Herds Processed	1,438
Number of Cows Processed	81,506
Number of Cows Per Herd	56.6
Milk Per Cow (Lbs)	16,762
%-Fat	3.69
Fat Per Cow (Lbs)	619
%-Protein	3.19
Protein Per Cow (Lbs)	535
Average Days in Milk Per Cow	315
*Value for CWT Milk(\$)	13.76
*Value for CWT Grain(\$)	8.22
*Value for CWT Hay(\$)	4.19

*Value for CWT Silage(\$)	1.50
*Value for Pasture Per Day(\$)	.32
*Value for Milk Per Cow Per Year(\$)	2,307
*Feed Consumed Per Cow Per Year(Lbs)	
A: Grain	6,727
B: Hay	2,796
C: Silage	14,378
D: Day Pasture	67
*Feed Cost Per Cow Per Year(\$)	
A: Grain	553
B: Hay	117
C: Silage	216
D: Pasture	21
*Total Feed Cost Per Cow Per Year(\$)	908
*Income Over Feed Costs Per Year(\$)	1,398
*Grain to Milk Ratio	1:2.4
*Feed Cost Per CWT Milk(\$)	5.42
Avg Level For 836 SCC Herds	341,705
*Member generated figures	

## Cumberland Co-op Meeting Today

SHIPPENSBURG (Cumberland Co.) — The 60th Annual Meeting of the Cumberland Valley Cooperative will be held today, February 24, at the Shippensburg Area Senior High School, it was announced by Henry A. Zajac of the cooperative which has its main office in Shippensburg. Branches are located at Chambersburg, Newville, Longsdorf, Mechanicsburg and the Shippensburg feed and fertilizer plants at I-81 Exit 9.

The meeting will open with a luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. to which farm families, who are patrons of the Cooperative are invited. The formal meeting will start at 1 p.m. Officers will report

on the progress of the Cooperative. Slides on the CVC activities will be presented by Wayne D. Baker. The entertainment program will close the meeting with the drama group from the Shippensburg Area Senior High School.

Officers of the Cooperative include: Wayne G. Craig, 2833 Orristown Road, Shippensburg, president; Ronald C. Allison, vice president from 1900 Warm Springs Road, Chambersburg; Dennis W. Lehman, 8044 Church Road, Shippensburg, secretary-treasurer; Harry A. Mohn, Newburg, member of the executive committee; and Paul E. Hornbaker, Shippensburg R5, chairman of the board.