Lancaster Farming

Technology Featured, Awards Given At National DHIA

Clyde and Marie Robinson (left), distinguished leadership award winners with Richard Barth, Pennsylvania DHIA general manager.

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Managing Editor

GREENSBORO, NC—Smart milking machines and bar charted milk vial lids provided some of the innovative discussion topics here Monday morning as the 1990 National DHIA technology symposium opened the annual meeting for delegates and farmers from around the world.

A video of the robotic milking machine, developed in Holland and set to be refined with a research grant at the University of Maryland, caused the most stir in audience reaction. This futuristic equipment, designed to automatically attach the milking machine unit anytime day or night, allows the cow to decide when she feels the need to eat or be milked.

Set as the center of a self-sufficient 30 cow free-stall barn complex, the unit records the cow's identification by computer as she enters the milking compartment. As soon as the computer knows its visitor, feed is dispensed according to pre-determined needs. A bridge in the floor rises to widen the stance of the cow's real legs while gates contract beside her hips to keep her in place.

According to the video, the cow calmly eats her pellets as metal arms reach between her legs and udder from the back. Suddenly, a rolling wash brush cylinder follows the metal pipe arms in under the udder. For 45 seconds this mechanical brush cleans the cow's udder as slick as in any car wash operation you'll see the next time

you get to town.

Then it happens. At the blink of an eye, four teat cups slide in under the cow. With pantomime like movements, each cup moves into position, computed to the exact length and width of teat placement. Each cow is different, you know. But the machine recalls its previous experience with her teat placement. It's evidently hard to fool this smarty.

To make sure the teats remain in milkable position, an inflatable ring inside the top lip of the cup summons everything into place just before the vacuum pump is started. Gasps of disbelief and laughter turned to a battery of questions as the lights came up at the conclusion of the sales video.

How Ag Impacts Economy

BY LINDA WILLIAMS
Bedford Co. Correspondent

BEDFORD (Bedford Co.) — Members of the Bedford County Chamber of Commerce heard about the impact of agriculture on the local economy at their March meeting.

Sue Fox, Bedford County Extension interim director dairy agent, introduced her subject by pointing out that 197,000 cows in Bedford County produce 13,400 pounds of milk. There are 52,000 cattle, 1,040 calves, 10,000 hogs, 210 pigs, 2000 sheep and 80 lambs presently residing on 1040 Bedford County farms.

To feed this livestock, 35,600 acres of corn are produced along with 12,000 acres of grain, 32,000 acres of alfalfa, 1,000 acres of wheat, 600 of barley, 6,400 of oats, and 900 of soybeans.

Fox warned that there has been a decline in the amount of farm acres in the county. "We need at least 30% of the land in farms in order to maintain our agriculture," she told the group. In 1954, farmland totaled 56.4 percent of Bedford County. By 1982, that figure had dropped to 36% and by 1989 to 34%.

Last year, farm dollars in Bedford

Dairy Council Inc. Survives Test Of Time

VERNON ACHENBACH, JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff

TREVOSE (Philadelphia) — The 70th anniversary of the Dairy Council Inc. provided an opportunity for review of the nutrition-education agency that serves a tri-state area of Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Jan B. Stanton, executive director, said that in preparing for the annual meeting she had an opportunity to look back through old Dairy Council records and discovered that time hasn't changed everything.

She said conducting the research was educational.

"In doing so, two things really struck me," she said. "How progressive and foward thinking Dairy Council has always been and . . . how certain good ideas, projects and programs have been recycled and updated to meet contemporary needs."

According to Stanton, in the early 1920s, Dairy Council focused on the health of young children by working within the Philadelphia School District by offering nutrition classes and giving free milk to undernourished children.

"Our records show that in three months, the children who were 18- to 20-percent underweight improved such that there were only six- to eight-percent underweight," Stanton said.

"In recent yearsh, we have continued to have the nutritional needs of school age children as a priority at Dairy Council," Stanton said. "However, now there is more concern with the overweight, rather than the underweight children."

She said that the focus has now turned toward education.

"In this past year we offered a

seminar . . . 250 educators attended . . . ," she said. Additionally, she said the milk promotion conglomerate has introduced new materials directed as informing children about nutrition and fitness.

"Although our work began in the city of Philadelphia, we quickly expanded to other counties in Pennsylvania, as well as New Jersey. Today we work with educators in 35 counties (in the tri-state area)," she said.

"Our special relationship with Philadelphia has continued," she said, "as we officially adopted Sharswood shcool in south Philadelphia last year."

She said that the Dairy Council worked with the Middle Atlantic

Industry, Laboratories Combat Salmonella

Editor's note: Last week, Lancaster Farming covered some of the causes of SE and concerns about the continued spread of SE through the layer industry and the human population. This week we focus on a new mandatory SE testing program.

Part 2

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Now there is a mandatory program to control the spread of SE.

A program has been set up by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to control the spread of Salmonella enteritidis in table-egg poultry flocks in the United States, according to Jo Ann R. Smith, assistant secretary of agriculture.

"Salmonella enteritidis is a growing problem for the $3.2 bil-

lion egg industry and has emerged as a serious public health concern as well," said Smith. "Strains of SE are endemic in egg production flocks in the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states, and are now expanding into Midwestern and Northwestern states."

The control program will address the problem by testing and certification of the primary and multiplier breeding flocks that produce the table-egg layers, and tracebacks and testing of commercial table-egg layer flocks if and when they are implicated in human infection with SE.

Interstate movement

Interstate movement of chickens, eggs, and associated articles from flocks infected or associated with SE will be restricted, and all egg production breeding flocks must be classified "U.S. Sanitation Monitored" under the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP),

or meet the requirements of an equivalent state program, to move interstate.

Smith said the action is a logical progression from the Voluntary Model State Program and the NPIP for testing of SE begun in 1988. "That program was neither nationally accepted nor fully successful, primarily because both testing and reporting of SE was not mandatory," Smith said.

Much of the control work will be done through NPIP.

On February 1 this year, the USDA declared poultry diseases caused by SE "endemic diseases of economic and public importance," and made $6.8 million in additional funds to USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) available to implement the control program.

Uniform SE monitoring

The plan will be mandatory in

Tim Secott, microbiologist at the Summerdale laboratory, picks colonies of suspected salmonella from a selective media and inoculates other media to confirm and identify the strain of salmonella. *Photo by Andy Andrews.*