

Program Highlights Dairy Cow Reproduction, Nutrition

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — A dairy day seminar held at Yoder's Restaurant in New Holland last week featured several experts on dairy reproduction and nutrition.

The seminar was sponsored by Agri Basics Inc., a consortium of 10 independent dairy farm consultants who offer feed and soil services.

The business of independent dairy nutrition consultants and also a soils specialist started in March 1989 in order to allow the members to offer clients tailored services available through the team, according to Kurt Umble, president of the board.

The seminar offered a number of speakers not connected to the business and display area for commercial exhibitors at the restaurant facility.

Umble said that since he and his partners started the business, they felt it was important to offer educa-

tional seminars for their clients, rather than to hold promotional gatherings.

One of the key speakers was James Furgeson, assistant professor of dairy research at University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton research center.

Furgeson, of Honeybrook, had previously worked at Cornell University for three years and in the private sector for six. He discussed reproduction and the use of macronutrients to increase the reproductive efficiency in dairy cattle.

Also speaking was Mike O'Conner, Penn State University dairy extension specialist who discussed the latest information on the heat cycling of cows and how it relates to successful fertilization with artificial insemination, and Dr. Brian Reed, who discussed analysis of reproductive records.

Furgeson said, "When you talk about milk production, you're

really talking about reproductive efficiency."

He explained that no matter how high a cow's individual lactation production is, the key to maintaining a strong year-in, year-out herd production is reliable quick turnaround on lactation.

The more days open, the less money can be made selling milk from the cow and the longer it takes for that cow to pay for herself.

He said that research has shown that the lactation curves for cows of all levels of production are the same. That means that the only way to become more efficient is to work to achieve and maintain a herd standard of 11 to 13 months turnaround on lactations with each cow.

"The first 100 days of lactation is when you are going to make half of the money on that cow that year," he said.



Dr. James Furgeson, assistant professor at University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center, explains the relationship of major nutrients to dairy cattle reproduction.

However, he said that the 11- to 13-month optimum turnover should not be a herd average, because an average allows wide variance between herd mates. He said the key is to get the majority of cows to fall within the optimum range in order to obtain the peak efficiency and the most productivity.

To achieve this, he suggested setting a goal of getting 80 percent of the herd pregnant prior to 120 days open. This will optimize calves born for replacement and genetic gain.

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