

# FOCUS



Diane L. Serris, Membership Development,  
 (Call 1-800-DHIA-TRUST for information.)  
 Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association  
 DHIA Service Center, Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802

## How Does Your Herd Compare?

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — These data are calculated using information 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 about 1,400 herds across the state.

DHIA Averages for all herds processed between 10/9/93 and 10/16/93

Number of Herds Processed	1,090
Number of Cows Processed	65,082
Number of Cows Per Herd	59.7
Milk Per Cow (Lbs)	18,435
%-Fat	3.66
Fat Per Cow (Lbs)	675
%-Protein	3.18
Protein Per Cow (Lbs)	586
Average Days in Milk Per Cow	317
*Value for CWT Milk(\$)	12.79
*Value for CWT Grain(\$)	7.81
*Value for CWT Hay(\$)	4.15
*Value for CWT Silage(\$)	1.50
*Value for Pasture Per Day(\$)	.29
*Value for Milk Per Cow Per Year(\$)	2,359
*Feed Consumed Per Cow, Per Year(Lbs)	
A: Grain	7,276
B: Hay	2,187
C: Silage	15,266
D: Day Pasture	59
*Feed Cost Per Cow Per Year(\$)	
A: Grain	568
B: Hay	90
C: Silage	229
D: Pasture	17
*Total Feed Cost Per Cow Per Year(\$)	906
*Income Over Feed Costs Per Year(\$)	1,453
*Grain to Milk Ratio	1:2.5
*Feed Cost Per CWT Milk(\$)	4.92
Avg Level For 969 SCC Herds	350,411

\*Member-generated figures

## District Meetings Set

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — The district meetings for local DHIA directors are planned for November.

There are five meeting schedules around the state, corresponding to the five director districts. These meetings are held every year, primarily for directors of local DHIA committees or boards.

It is an opportunity for directors and management to get together for discussion of issues and developments affecting DHIA members statewide.

Discussion from the board representatives will explain in detail the changes to the association that will occur when the new bylaws are adopted.

Anyone interested in attending the meeting in their district may contact their county committee or local board.

The meetings will begin at 10 a.m. and end no later than 3 p.m. Lunch is to be provided and all members are welcome to attend.

Nov. 1: Southeast District at Berks County Ag Center, in Leesport.

Nov. 2: Southwest District at Ramada Inn, in Somerset.

Nov. 3: Central District at Family House Restaurant, in Millintown.

Nov. 4: Northeast District: Pink Apple Restaurant, in Tunkhannock.

Nov. 5: Northwest District: Bonanza Restaurant, in Franklin.

Delegates please mark your calendars now for this very important information meeting. The subjects discussed will affect the election of your member representatives, due to redistricting, on the Pa.DHIA Board of Directors, starting in 1994.

changed over the years because most poultry operations are owned by industry. "Few producers are left. And it's getting harder and harder to survive. It's at the point where you almost need to expand or get out. Definitely, you need to be more efficient," he said.

Armstrong has his own ideas on how to become more efficient by reducing the amount of egg dirties and cracks. He knows other farmers have good ideas, too. He'd like to see the Association hold a day-long session just to share those ideas so producers can learn from the other.

For himself, Armstrong said that the best way to identify the problem is to candle your own eggs the day after they are laid. Hairline cracks around the belly of the egg or star burst cracks are tell-tale signs of mechanical problems. Armstrong picks eggs off rows to find which row has a problem. Timing belts sometimes need to be adjusted, holes or sagging in the cage floor or a feed trough hanging too low can result in dirties and cracks.

"If you straightened out your mechanical problems you can greatly lower your percentage of cracks and dirties," he said.

This past year, the Association placed 16 billboards along county highways to promote the poultry industry.

"The idea was good, but we were not 100 percent happy. We want to improve it and do it again," he said. Some of the billboards set back too far from the roadway and were hard to read. The color should be changed and a few other details that will make the billboards more presentable, he said.

Armstrong would like the Association to offer a half day seminar on pest control. "We (producers) spend a lot of time on eliminating flies and rodents. We each try to experiment with different types of methods. Some of us have learned what works best, but some guys don't have as much time to experiment. If we put all the experts and farmers in the same room, some-

thing someone says is sure to catch your attention and be the solution for you," he said.

Armstrong said that he doesn't worry about the flocks he tends contacting salmonella.

"We are cautious in cleaning, where we purchase our chicks, using clean equipment and supplies, and I don't foresee it being a problem," he said.

During his one-year term, Armstrong would also like to offer a seminar to teach different ways to cook and serve poultry and eggs.

This past year, the Poultry Association participated in Kreider Dairy Days by having a tent where they distributed red beet eggs, literature, and coupons.

"It was surprising to see the amount of people who had never tasted red beet eggs before," he said.

Because many requested recipes, the Association recognizes the importance of handing out recipes and food samples to encourage people to use more eggs and poultry in everyday cooking.

When he is not working, Armstrong enjoys being at home with his wife, Lisa, and children, Bryan, 7, and Stephen, 2, fishing and woodworking.

"Chickens are a hobby as much as my job. I never look at it as being a job. I always loved it. It's never boring and I thrive on challenges," he said.

"I have a reputation of trying to do 110 percent," Armstrong said. "I look at it this way. A lot of people don't get to do what they like to do. God gave me a talent to take care of chickens — I want to do it the best."

As president of the Association, it is Armstrong's responsibility to not only look out for the layer producer but also for the turkey, game bird, and broiler producer.

"Each has its own concerns. The Association wants to help as much as possible. If anyone has any ideas or problems, we want to help. They should contact a member of the board and share their ideas," Armstrong said.

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