

Blair County Dairy Farm Takes Three Of Four Top Pa.DHIA Awards

(Continued from Page A1)

for Holstein milk production.

"I've been surprised about the whole herd (winning the management award), and I was surprised the (individual cow) records ranked so high. I figured they would make it within the top 20, but not top the state," Mark said.

Frederick Farms is a family partnership that operates on about 350 acres in the Morrison's Cove area. In addition to Mark, there is his brother Dave and their father Gerald. Dave and Gerald primarily take care of raising forages and grain. "My dad and my sister (Carol) do night milking most of the time," Mark said.

The herd management award they won is casually referred to as an award that recognizes the Pa.DHIA-member herd that has experienced the largest increase in average milk and milk component production.

The Frederick Farm herd average is 28,060 pounds of milk, with 1,091 pounds of butterfat and 886 pounds of protein. The herd increased production per cow by about 8,000 pounds of milk over the last two years.

Normally, surges in average production indicate a landmark change in management, or a significant change in the herd.

In some cases a surge in production can also be caused by returning to previous production levels: a partial herd dispersal followed by a strong production increase as heifers mature; or, in other cases it may signify recovery from drought, or disease induced setbacks.

In the Fredericks' case, milking three times per day — at 6 a.m., 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. — was the only major change in management in the past two years, but it correlates to production increases of about 4,000 pounds each year.

"We saw an immediate increase in the amount of milk we were getting," Mark said.

"We had come to a point where we either had to get more cows or get more milk out of the cows we had, in order to be profitable. We tried the three-times-a-day milking and didn't have to look any further."

Daryl Brumbaugh, a Pa.DHIA technician who works with the Fredericks said the change was very apparent.

"By milking three-times-a-day, the Fredericks had an immediate 20- to 25-percent increase in both volume and quality," he said.

If the increase in average herd milk production was the only criterion for the award, the Fredericks would probably win, but there is more considered in determining the management award winner.

All the Pa.DHIA awards are based on end-of-year data, which is as of Sept. 30 (see Oct. 30 issue *Lancaster Farming*).

In addition to considering production improvement, Pa.DHIA also considers sustained production, mastitis management, and reproductive management. Each category is broken down into sub-categories and points are assigned.

Out of a total possible estimated 230 points (one category determines points by formula), Frederick Farms earned 154, which puts them not only at the top of the Holstein breed, but of all breeds in the state on test.

The individual cow production awards are more straightforward.

Frederick Farms cow No.32 was top Holstein in the state for butterfat production. The homebred, Walkway Chief Mark daughter,

made the record on a lactation started when she was 4-years, 2-months old.

Her dam was a Creek Bluff Elevation Lester daughter and made about 28,000 pounds as a 5-year-old, five years ago, when the Fredericks put their herd on test.

The highest protein producing Holstein was No. 68 in the Frederick herd. No. 68 is a registered daughter of Cold Springs Helios, a Jetstream son. She made a lactation record, started at 5-years-2 months age, of 37,576 pounds of milk, 1,281 pounds of protein, and 1,463 pounds of butterfat.

Mark said he had bought No. 68 and her dam, Trix, from Virgil Walters, 77, of Blairsville, who sold some of his milking string to Mark in 1988. Actually, Mark said he first bought the dam, and then later bought six heifers from Walters, and No. 68 was one of the heifers.

"I would like to thank him (Walters) for selling them to me. They really did well for me," Mark said.

The cows Frederick bought from Walters had not been on test, though Walters had previous herds on test, Mark said, so while he didn't know exactly what kind of documented production he could expect, he knew that Walters had a good reputation and the cows appeared as though they would perform well.

The second highest producing Holstein on Pa.DHIA test was Frederick Farms' No. 53, which Mark said is the smallest statured cow in the herd. A 5-year-old when she started her last lactation, she recorded a production of 40,581 pounds of milk with a 2.8 percent test on butterfat, and 2.8 percent on protein.

"I don't know how she does it," Mark said.

However, the basics are followed at Frederick Farms, Mark said. Treating all milking animals the same, rather than setting up "showcase" cow stalls, Frederick Farms uses a freestall barn and double-six herringbone milking parlor built in 1968.

It takes two people a little less than 2 hours from start to cleanup for each milking, he said.

Mark said he feeds a totally mixed ration (TMR), and he feeds six times per day, making no abrupt changes in the rations.

"We fed a TMR since about 1991," he said. "That really boosted (production) some, but I wouldn't say that is why" the dairy herd came on so strongly.

He said production gains took the herd to the 20,000 pound mark, but it stayed there until going to the 3X milking schedule.

"We had about three years with about 20,000 (pounds of milk average), then last year it went to 24,000 pounds and this year it's 28,000 pounds," he said.

He said the increase in production can't be a simple function of increasing maturity in the milking herd — "We're almost 50 percent 2-year-olds," he said. They raise from 100 to 120 replacement animals. All bull calves are sold.

Mark said he puts credit for the herd and individual cow performance on several things, but he said he mostly counts on the increased number of milkings.

He did say that consistency in feeding high quality forages seems to make a big difference.

They make haylage, silage, high moisture corn, and also feed cottonseed and a 40-percent pellet, he said.

The quality of forage is high,

Mark said, crediting the rest of the family with having as much responsibility for ensure the profitability of the help.

The Fredericks don't have a computer system from which to work.

He uses a breeding wheel to keep track of the cows coming into heat and to record artificial inseminations. He also talks over bull selection with his representative from an artificial insemination company.

"I usually try to mate for udders, feet and legs, and for production. I like them (PTAs) to be a ton of milk, and prefer type to be at least a 1.80. I've probably watched for protein, this last year at least, maybe more than I did before," he said.

"It's a lot of luck. I do my artificial insemination studies, then we breed and hope for the best."

Currently on the farm are Gerald and Beverly; son Mark and his wife Carla, and their children Paul, Mark Jr., and Missy; son Dave and wife Kim, and their sons Aaron and Adam; and daughter Carol Frederick.

The family got involved with dairying when Gerald, who is a school teacher, decided to buy some milk cows.

"He didn't like to milk," Mark said, "so mom and I always did it. It got into my blood and that was the beginning."

Gerald, Mark, David, Carol, and Carla were all FFA members and



Mark Frederick holds the halter of Eve, his nephew's show cow which is currently producing 150 pounds of milk per day.

earned their Keystone Farmer Degree. The next generation is following suit with Adam and Aaron in FFA, and Paul and Mark in 4-H. All four have dairy cattle projects.

The milk the Fredericks sell is marketed to Sani-Dairy, which retails over a fairly large rural and urban-poketed region, and while the market seems to be holding, Mark said the family has no immediate plans for a large expansion.

"I think we'd like to get to a hundred cows," he said, "but

nothing really big."

However, the current herd looks good, Mark said. In addition to the stock he purchased from Walters, "I also bought a few heifers off of Jay Houser, in Spring Mills. They've done real well for me. None of those made the (top Pa.DHIA) list, but several made 30,000 pounds of milk as cows."

The next milestone for the Fredericks is yet to come. They have scheduled their herd's first classification for December.

Dairy Board Sets Budget

BROOKFIELD, Wis. — Setting organizational priorities and a budget aimed at helping dairy farmers build more demand for their milk and coordinating the 15-cent promotion checkoff were the goals of a special planning meeting held by the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board Sept. 21 before its regularly scheduled meeting.

The 36 dairy farmers serving on the National Dairy Board approved four major priorities to guide programs during the coming year. The vote on priorities and strategies for achieving the goals attached to each priority guided the Board's decisions in allocating the \$80.34 million budget.

Fully aware of the downtrend plaguing fluid consumption and farm milk prices, dairy farmers serving on the National Dairy Board set a goal to boost per capita fluid milk consumption back to last year's level, 15.3 gallons, by December 1995.

"Considering the steady decline in per capita consumption of fluid milk over the past few years as well as the tremendous growth in market share and the number of different categories of competing beverages including teas and bottled waters, we think holding fluid consumption steady is an ambitious goal," said Robert Giacomini, California dairyman and chair of the National Dairy Board.

The National Dairy Board will work closely with UDIA which leads the charge for promoting fluid milk. Strategies which will help achieve this goal and sell more fluid milk include: developing and marketing improved fluid packaging, products and positionings; maintaining the already favorable attitudes and usage of fluid milk by kids improving attitudes and increasing consumption of fluid milk by late teen and adult consumer segments; and working with others in the distribution

chain between cow and consumer.

The Board approved \$30.266 million to cover costs of all programs supporting these strategies.

Cheese Priority

Cheese sales have the most impact on the M-W price and have been climbing steadily for the past decade. So the Board set a goal to increase per capita consumption of cheese to 28 pounds by December 1995, maintaining the current cheese consumption trend.

The Board topped its list of strategies for selling cheese with maintaining favorable attitudes in the face of growing health concerns and more stringent nutrition labeling laws. Other strategies include: building top of mind awareness and expanding usage of cheese through new ideas and newer varieties, both at home and away from home; improving customer satisfaction through increased quality and safety of cheeses, particularly low fat; coordinating better with all participants in the cheese distribution line, including cheese makers; expanding cheese use as an ingredient in food manufacturing; and expanding cheese opportunities in export markets.

The Board approved \$22,089 million for programs to support these strategies for selling more cheese.

Milkfat Priority

The gap between the amount of milkfat produced and commercial use of milkfat continues to widen. To address this downward force on farm milk prices, the Board set a goal of using 200 million pounds of milkfat annually via newly identified or nontraditional uses and products by December 1996.

National Dairy Board members approved three strategies for achieving this objective which include: developing the role of milkfat in meeting newly identified opportunities, positionings and uses for consumers (i.e. cosmetics and

confections); commercializing the benefits of milkfat for new uses; and identifying additional nontraditional areas of opportunity for increased sale/use of milkfat.

The Board approved \$1.442 million for funding of milkfat activities which will be spent mostly in the area of product and process research.

Image Priority

Generally, market research shows consumers regard dairy products as natural, good and wholesome. Various news reports have been chipping away at consumer confidence in that image. Therefore, National Dairy Board members set a goal of showing improvement in consumers' overall predisposition to dairy foods, based on monthly random interviews, by December 1995.

The Board is to continue current and establish new programs aimed at refocusing consumers from avoiding certain foods to fulfilling individual needs; discovering and demonstrating the health benefits of milk and dairy foods; implementing an industry wide "dairy image" communications plan; maintaining a system for predicting and disarming potential issues that might hurt dairy sales; and assisting the industry in delivering safe, high quality products.

The Board approved \$6.708 million of the budget for programs to carry out these strategies aimed at building the image of dairy products.

Other Priorities

Although not specific priorities, the National Dairy Board has agreed to continue with many activities including butter advertising and market research, foreign and domestic promotions of U.S. ice cream, promotions of U.S. yogurt in other countries, communicating with the industry about all its programs, and various research projects to develop and improve dairy product quality and safety.