

we worked on a very powerful, flexible, and unfortunately complex nutrition program with the extension faculty at Penn State. What they delivered was an excellent program for in depth feed evaluation and recommendation. But too many DHIA members just aren't using it. That's not what we're looking for on this. What members asked for in the district resolution was a change to the more basic nutrition information we collect, that would still accommodate more modern feeding practices like rotational grazing, the use of very high TDN feeds, more feeds fed and more flexibility. Concentrates should be reportable in decimal amounts, and the feeds reported analyzed on a dry matter basis. We want to be able to handle 80 or 90% of what people are doing without making this so complex in the process." The KISS principle? "Exactly," says Hayes, who is canvassing interested farmers, practitioners, and nutritionists for a meeting later this month.

The advisory committee also considered a simplified DHIA reporting program first proposed by co-chair Don Duncan that would emphasize action lists and "management by exception". While many of these action lists are currently available as optional reports, the committee envisions pulling all of these together — again, to produce decisions — not just numbers.

The most immediate change noted by members will be color-coding of paper DHIA reports. The advisory committee recommended immediate adoption of colored paper for DHIA reports to address readability concerns that have been voiced by farmers ever since the adoption of laser printing three years ago. Some time early next week PaDHIA dairymen will see a more colorful report packet in their mailboxes.

In response to requests by LER (Labor Efficient Records program) and Sample Analysis herds, the processing center will soon implement an electronic bulletin board system for the DHIA lab. Processing center staffers anticipate that the new bulletin board will allow access to lab components and somatic cell results before the herds have even started to process through the DHIA

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 one-fourth of the herds across the state.

DHIA Averages for all herds processed between 03/06/94 and 03/13/94

Number of Herds Processed	1,107
Number of Cows Processed	64,900
Number of Cows Per Herd	58.6
Milk Per Cow (Lbs)	18,517
%-Fat	3.67
Fat Per Cow (Lbs)	681
%-Protein	3.19
Protein Per Cow (Lbs)	591
Average Days in Milk Per Cow	319
*Value for CWT Milk(\$)	12.93
*Value for CWT Grain(\$)	8.01
*Value for CWT Hay(\$)	4.23
*Value for CWT Silage(\$)	1.50
*Value for Pasture Per Day(\$)	.28
*Value for Milk Per Cow Per Year(\$)	2,236
*Feed Consumed Per Cow Per Year(Lbs)	
A: Grain	7,164
B: Hay	2,236
C: Silage	15,360
D: Day Pasture	59
*Feed Cost Per Cow Per Year(\$)	
A: Grain	574
B: Hay	94
C: Silage	231
D: Pasture	17
*Total Feed Cost Per Cow Per Year(\$)	917
*Income Over Feed Costs Per Year(\$)	1,477
*Grain to Milk Ratio	1:2.5
*Feed Cost Per CWT Milk(\$)	4.96
Avg Level For 994 SCC Herds	376,770

*Member-generated figures.

mainframe. "Herds getting sample analysis only, or on LER programs using the DII format are anxious to get their component results into their farm management programs as quickly as possible, without additional retyping. We offer an option to receive this information on diskette, but providing a bulletin board cuts out the clerical middle-man, and will speed access." As an ancillary benefit, Boyer also anticipates the bulletin board will be used to allow agricultural publications, county agents, and other processing centers more transparent access to DHIA data.

Turning to the question of test day reporting by DHIA technicians on farms, the advisory committee considered and will further study a number of alternatives. Although Pennsylvania DHIA had long planned to go forward with Valley Ag Software's "Dairy Comp 305" as its test day reporting offering, that may change. "We're looking at a number of possibilities," says Boyer, "Westfalia has made us a very attractive offer on the licensed use of its own management software, Dairy Plan. We may also decide to do something in-house. But there are

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Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association
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Member Input Critical For DHIA Success

Member Input Is Key To PA DHIA'S DRPC Plans

PAT TORETTI

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — The Pennsylvania DHIA Dairy Records Processing Center Advisory Committee has big plans for PaDHIA's DRPC, if the Advisory Committee meeting held in State College last week is any indication.

The advisory committee considered proposals to overhaul or improve a number of traditional paper reports, launch Pennsylvania DHIA more forcefully into desktop computing, and join the "information superhighway" concept that has become such a buzzword among politicians and computer industry insiders.

But recognizing the DHIA technician as the lynchpin in any DHIA program, the advisory committee gave careful consideration to such topics as how the DHIA processing center can improve employee support, education, and training, as well as what programs should be considered for test day reporting now that PaDHIA's laptop program for technicians is settling into a routine.

Calling this quarterly meeting "perhaps the most successful we've had since the inception of the DRPC Advisory Committee two years ago," committee co-chair George Cudoc had high praise for the group of mostly farmers who gathered March 10 to consider new directions for DHIA's processing center.

"Farmers are the backbone, and the most important contributors, to our advisory committee. I was

glad to see so many brave the weather to get here."

Noting that the best programs in the world are worthless unless they are able to reach dairymen, the committee held an extended discussion on how the processing center, acting in concert with the field division, could improve communications and education for individual technicians.

After considerable debate that touched on all aspects of the DHIA business, the committee approved a resolution to make programming resources available to the field services director and to direct the Technician's Advisory Committee to measure employee retention by geography, age, key-employee status, and other demographics.

The committee also resolved to supply whatever resources would be necessary in order for the processing center to aid the field in improved computer support and records education.

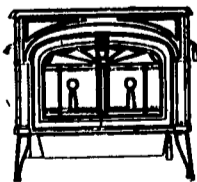
As a direct result of resolutions passed at the state DHIA convention last month, the programming staff got instructions to develop a "Cull the Right Cow" guide, which would allow dairymen to select from a number of flexible options in deciding which animals to sell.

The emphasis will be on providing decisions, not just numbers.

Improving the basic nutrition system was also slated for implementation. Senior Project Leader Joe Hayes, a 25-year veteran of DHIA's processing center explains. "For a number of years

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