

## LER Program Taking Off

### PAT TORETTI

Innovative testing plans, once experimental territory for a bold few of Pennsylvania's dairymen are finally taking hold in a big way. "In the past six months we've added as many labor efficient records herds on test as we put on the program in the whole previous eight years," says Dean Amick, Field Services Director for Pennsylvania DHIA. "We'll probably add that many again by the end of December. And we look for this to be the program of the future."

### Summary of the Board Meeting

#### by Dave Slusser, General Manager

The PA DHIA Board of directors met April 26th and 27th in State College. The board election resulted in Frank Orner, president, Bill Jackson, vice president, Lane Sollenberger, secretary, and Norman Hershey, treasurer. Marian Butler from Tioga County and Luke Rebeck from Northumberland County were seated as new directors. Marian is the first woman elected to the PA DHIA state board.

The board spent a lot of time evaluating our financial system, and decided to place in top priority the redesigning of the system. This will result in easier tracking of the accounts receivable, billing, and cash flow for management and the board. They also studied our cost of service and our pricing system. They want to move toward a uniform method of pricing. We find that our prices for service are very competitive throughout our service area and they want to remain that way.

Staff reports were given by Jim Garrity, Dixie Burris, Jim Boyer, Dean Amick, and Dave Slusser.

## Spring Conference

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our Pennsylvania DHIA DRPC staff. Over 2 hours of each technician conference was spent on computer functions and on farm reports. Our technicians were asked to name something good about working for PA DHIA, and the remark I heard far more than anything else was, "I love and care for my farm families". They really love you, and care for your future. God Bless them, and God Bless you!

Our laboratory and field training program has just completed the Quality Certification from National DHIA. The lab scored a 99%. The field service scored a pass. National DHIA QC now scores field service only pass or fail. Historically we have always scored 100%. I wish the scoring system had not changed because it does not give a true picture of our field service. I can assure you that they are the best in the country. Our DRPC service will be scored later in the summer.

The Labor Efficient Records Program, first sanctioned by National DHIA in the mid nineteen-eighties, is just one of several new and innovative record plans now being offered by PaDHIA. In the labor efficient records method of data collection, a dairy farm equipped with electronic meters and on-farm computers submits status and milkweight results monthly to DHIA as in a typical DHIA program. But that's where the similarity ends. A DHIA technician visits the farm

only once every 90 days. During the quarterly supervised tests, samples are taken for laboratory analysis, and permanent identification and computer procedures are verified. In some newer variations of the program now allowed by NDHIA, the technician's role is limited even during the supervised visits. In the "spot verification" innovative version of LER, the technician verifies the milkweights recorded in the parlor on test day and checks permanent ID, but never actually enters any milkweight or status information on a herd at all.

Because the cost of putting a technician on the farm on test day amounts to 80% of the price for DHIA, farms employing the Labor Efficient method of data collection to see significant savings in their monthly DHIA bill. And because most of the data collection is performed automatically, test day visits are smoother and less obtrusive than for other programs.

"Pennsylvania DHIA had some of the first, maybe the first herds in the country on this program when it was initially announced," notes Amick. "Wayne Harpster in Huntingdon, Frank Feeser in York, and Bill England in Blair county, have been on the program since the very beginning. Things have been bumpy from time-to-

time, as they will be on a new program of this kind. But those people have stayed with us and helped us make this into a useable program, to the point where this isn't just an experiment anymore."

The requirements for the program are minimal. All that's required is an NDHIA approved type of electronic meter in the barn, and a protocol for exchanging data with PaDHIA's computer. "Westfalia and DeLaval have a method for sending data that's based on an international standard, and those two systems seem to be the ones most easily able to exchange information with DHIA," notes Jim Boyer, processing center manager, "but we haven't limited the program to those manufacturers. We have Boumatic and Surge systems on LER also. The only thing that's really needed is the ability for the on-farm computer to be able to report milk weights and status change data. Fresh dates, dry-off dates, sold dates, and reproductive information. Most of the herd management programs can do that, and we're willing to look at systems that aren't currently plugged in to see if they're suitable."

The success of the Labor Efficient Records program has meant an increased willingness for DHIA to consider a variety of new

testing plans, not limited to farms with electronic gadgets. In one variation of testday procedures called "advanced notification", the farmer and DHIA technician work out in advance when the DHIA employee will visit the farm and stick to that schedule. And in a variation of the traditional AP program approved last year named "timerless timer", the AP timer has been replaced with a verification method that stresses the amount of testday milk shipped over the quirky and sometimes inaccurate electronic clock. "Not every new plan is approved by every breed association," says Amick, "and those involved intensively in sampling young bulls should check with their AI studs to see if a particular type test is going to be acceptable. But it's clear that the DHIA program is going to open up more and more as time goes on. National DHIA has come around to recognizing that we need to offer more options. And we need to take more of the burden for rule enforcement off the technician on testday."

If you'd like to enroll in the LER plan, or would like to be considered for any other innovative DHIA program, contact your DHIA technician, or call 1-800-DHI-Test.



### December, 1993 through April, 1994 by County

**Adams County:** Mark Gieron, Ke-Holtz Dairy 2, Thomas Brougher

**Armstrong County:** Buffalo Creek Hol, Samuel W. Montgomery

**Bedford County:** Pennshire Lamanchas, Mike & Michelle Wilt, Rob Sandy Hawk

**Berks County:** Ammon N. Leid, Dervin Burkholder, James H. Martin, Steven W. Hoover, Lamar Lehman

**Bradford County:** Lloyd Barrett, Chasmarell Fann, Scrivners Angels, Dale Vannoy, Randy Chapman, Harold Weaver

**Bucks County:** Richard Troxel

**Butler County:** Dennis E. Hogg

**Centre County:** Diane Beatty, Dawn Rise Dairy, Emanuel Fisher, Isaac Z. King

**Chester County:** Benuel F. Miller, Daniel Z. Stoltzfus, Carl N. Hansen, Jr., Ben & Rebecca Smucker, Robert & Sharon Nolan

**Clinton County:** Howard Thompkins, Levi K. Esh, Paul K. Fisher, Jacob Fisher

**Crawford County:** Marshall Livingston, Fred & Kathi Wenzel

**Cumberland County:** David Burkholder, Jr., Roy E. Deitch & Sons, Daniel Zimmerman, Rob & Chris Waddell, Harry N. Leinbach

**Dauphin County:** Daniel B. Beiler, Martin Etzweiler, Melvin Esch

**Erie County:** John Wozniak  
**Fayette County:** Joseph A. Harim

**Franklin County:** Twin Lanc Farms, Arthur Gloss, Lynn & Rhonda Stoner, Carl Hawbaker, Richard D. Miller, Harry Kathleen Lehman, Donald Piper, Ernest F. Rotz, Wit Brook Farms, Pondview Farms

**Huntingdon County:** Raymond Middaugh, Joseph V. Feathers, Halls Dairy Farm 2, Sugar Run Dairy, Brant's Homestead, Randy Sunderland, Nolan Druist

**Indiana County:** Larry Spadine, Jewart Dairy, James D. Good

**Jefferson County:** Bowser Dairy, Dan Keller, Jim/Pam Berry

**Juniata County:** Ray & Dan Geissinger

**Lancaster County:** J.K. Swarey, Jr., Dr. Riddlepenmarydell, Leroy P. Stoltzfus

**Lebanon County:** Michael & JoAnn Shirk

**Luzerne County:** Chas & Kevin Drasher

**Lycoming County:** Daniel F. King, Charles Bosch, Jacob B. Zook, David C. Duncan II

**Mercer County:** Leroy McFall

**Mifflin County:** Wallace L. Yoder, Charlie Pent

**Montgomery County:** 7 Stars Farm, Waterhouse Herd  
**Northampton County:** Carol O'Neill

**Northumberland County:** William A. Betz

**Perry County:** Turtle Rock Farm

**Snyder County:** Darren + Debra Moyer, Jay Hollenbach, Alvin Stoltzfus, James W. Stahl Brad + Susan Ewing

**Somerset County:** Clyde McWilliams, Thomas E. Bell, Jr. Lind Farm

**Sullivan County:** Brian & Tracy McCarty, Forks Mount Guemsey

**Susquehanna County:** M&M Farm, Dennis Lewis, Maple Hill Farm

**Tioga County:** Pen Ro Farm, Tim Kaltenbach

**Union County:** Ammon B. Martin

**Warren County:** Nathan Damcott

**Wayne County:** Pocono Mt. Jerseys, La Tour Valley Farm, G+J Eisenhauer, Vince + Cheryl Smith, Bailey Graham Farm, Brookside Farm, Emil R. Swingle, Kyle Kerber

**Westmoreland County:** Michael Hepler, Walter Brown

**Wyoming County:** Robert Lock

**York County:** Jim & Norma Warner, William Robert Fantom, Calvin Hostetter

**New Jersey:** William Kerkendall, Gary Teel, Martin Little, William Systema, Oscar Ungamst, Jr., Tony & Mar Peticari, Stephen & Rich Czar, Mitch Cortright, John/Sarah Dumschat, Harold Cosh, C and C Farm, Casey Systema, Richard Systema, Dwayne L. Russell, Ervin Watters, John Kerkendall

**New York:** Carol J. Brooks