

# Shepherds Of The Field

**DAVE SLUSSER**  
Manager PA DHIA

Over the last few months I have had the opportunity to attend County DHIA Annual meetings of PA DHIA, and to speak with many members and their families. We talked about the changes made to your cooperative, and the reasons those changes were necessary. The responses that I received from you during this fall's annual meetings were so positive and encouraging. It is a real honor to be your hired man.

As I joined my family to celebrate Christmas, I counted my blessings and I thought about you milking, feeding, and cleaning up after dairy cattle on Christmas Day. It may seem strange to you, but after 24 years of doing the same my family missed Christmas Day in the barn. If you don't mind I would like to tell you why. Nearly 2000 years ago in a stable near a little town called Bethlehem a very special child was born. We all know the sounds, the smells, and the chilly air found in a barn in late December. Why was this very important child born under such conditions? Why were the first people who learned of this birth the shepherds watching their sheep? Why are you so respected and loved?

Now I would like to address the issues of today in these changing times. What has changed on your farm over the last 12 years? Almost everything has changed except the price of milk. Your cost has gone up on everything at a rate equal to, or better than the inflation rate. To survive you are doing things differently than you did 12 years ago. You may have expanded, cut down on hired labor, or both. If you have not left the farm business, you definitely have improved your management skills, production per cow and cost

analysis of everything that you do daily. The farm business managers will be the survivors and the most important purpose of DHIA is to aid those managers.

As national milk production goes up and cow numbers go down farm cooperatives that operate on a per cow basis must apply the same principles of business as dairy farmers. The cost of operation must be distributed more efficiently and over more cows. In order to provide the management services that dairy farmers need from DHIA, we in DHIA must change to meet the members' needs and do it in a way that members can afford. What we have done and what we have yet to do in PA DHIA is guided by these simple business principles.

Where are we headed in the future, and what are the effects of the past? Why were farm cooperatives started and when? They were started to benefit farmer members and they did their best work during the great depression. Farmers lost markets, services, and financing so they banded together to do what no one else could, or would, do for them. Farms were refinanced, markets were saved or developed, supplies were bought, and services were provided. Farm operations were saved and a way of life was preserved because farmers worked together to help each other survive.

Can history repeat itself? Are farmer cooperatives today working together for the benefit of farmers members? Are DHIA cooperatives in this corner of America working together for their dairy farmer members? You know the answers to these questions. I have been a co-op member farmer for 24 years, nineteen of those as a board member and now one year as a co-op manager. I believe that history can and must



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repeat itself, however, what I have seen and continue to observe is just the opposite. There are many good reasons why co-ops should get together, and there are reasons why co-ops should not. I have no problems with good reasons. It is the bad reasons that bother me. Some of the bad reasons center around the sinful nature of man. Some of the bad reasons that I have witnessed in my life are greed, pride, envy, distrust, power, etc. If co-op actions or inactions force farmers out of business, then those co-ops involved do not have the right to be farmer cooperatives.

I am not suggesting that we repeat the actions of the great depression. Times have changed. I am suggesting that we repeat the same spirit of cooperation that our grandfathers had. We are our brothers keeper, and until we reestablish that spirit we will continue to self-destruct.

The feelings I share with you are from love, because I love the shepherds of the field.

## FOCUS

**dhia**

Dixie L. Burris, Membership Development,  
Call 1-800-DHIA-TWENTY for information.  
Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association  
DHIA Service Center, Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802

### Average Farm Feed Costs For Handy Reference

To help farmers across the state to have handy reference of commodity input costs in their feeding operations for DHIA record sheets or to develop livestock feed cost data, here's last week's average costs of various ingredients as compiled from regional reports across the state of Pennsylvania. Remember these are averages so you will need to adjust your figures

up or down according to your location and the quality of your crop.  
Corn, No. 2y - 2.24 bu. 4.01 cwt.  
Wheat, No. 2 - 3.61 bu. 6.03 cwt.  
Barley, No. 3 - 1.80 bu. 3.84 cwt.  
Oats, No. 2 - 1.51 bu. 4.71 cwt.  
Soybeans, No. 1 - 5.21 bu. 8.70 cwt.  
Ear Corn 56.81 ton 2.84 cwt.  
Alfalfa Hay - 102.50 ton 5.13 cwt.  
Mixed Hay - 101.25 ton 5.06 cwt.  
Timothy Hay - 109.25 ton 5.46 cwt.

### 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 12/17/94 and 12/24/94



Number of Herds Processed	1,007
Number of Cows Processed	63,256
Number of Cows Per Herd	62.8
Milk Per Cow (Lbs)	18,655
%-Fat	3.69
Fat Per Cow (Lbs)	689
%-Protein	3.21
Protein Per Cow (Lbs)	599
Average Days in Milk Per Cow	318
*Value for CWT Milk(\$)	13.21
*Value for CWT Grain(\$)	8.08
*Value for CWT Hay(\$)	4.31
*Value for CWT Silage(\$)	1.56
*Value for Pasture Per Day(\$)	.29
*Value for Milk Per Cow Per Year(\$)	2,456
*Feed Consumed Per Cow Per Year(Lbs)	
A: Grain	7,162
B: Hay	2,098
C: Silage	15,070
D: Day Pasture	67
*Feed Cost Per Cow Per Year(\$)	
A: Grain	579
B: Hay	90
C: Silage	235
D: Pasture	19
*Total Feed Cost Per Cow Per Year(\$)	924
*Income Over Feed Costs Per Year(\$)	1,540
*Grain to Milk Ratio	1:2.6
*Feed Cost Per CWT Milk(\$)	4.96
Avg Level For 912 SCC Herds	337,353

\*Member-generated figures



TESTED AND APPROVED BY:

- Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Science
- Ohio State University, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center
- United States Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Research Service

### CAN YOU NAME ALL THE INGREDIENTS IN THE CHEMICAL PESTICIDES YOU USE ??

Statistics show many illnesses and even death are caused each year by chemical pesticides, not to mention the irreversible damage it does to our environment.

ORGANIC PLUS is an all natural insecticide with 3 ingredients:

1. **Diatomaceous Earth** - composed of miniature fossilized shells of tiny water-dwelling organisms which after milling are like razor-sharp daggers piercing the insect's outer skeleton, dehydrating and killing the insect. (Chrystalline Silica content is only .36% to 1.12%).
2. **Pyrethrin** - a botanical insecticide derived from the Chrysanthemum flower. It is used for its knock-down/killing ability, but has a short residual life and is approved for use on organic crops.
3. **Piperonyl Butoxide (PBO)** - botanical synergist that comes from Sassafras. The addition of PBO to pyrethrin produces the same killing power at lower rates and aides in the resistance that insects can build to pyrethrin.

Organic Plus is non-toxic to humans, animals and the environment, and is also very economical. It kills fire ants, fleas, ticks, termites, cockroaches and other roaches, silverfish, grain insects, scorpions, centipedes, and many other insects. (This product does not effect earthworms as they have no exoskeleton). Organic Plus products are used in homes, parks, golf courses, kennels, farms and businesses. Organic Plus, Inc. also carries: 1. Dia-Flour Anti-Caking Agent, an FDA approved all natural feed supplement used for prevention of internal feed clumping. 2. Grain Storage, FDA approved for use on livestock and in barns, dairies, milking parlors, milking rooms and poultry houses.

Organic Plus is the EPA & FDA approved alternative to the chemical pesticides that cause thousands of illnesses a year. For the future of our children and our environment, I urge you to call or write for a free information packet.

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