



DAVE SLUSSER DHIA General Manager

Ninety-six members and delegates attended the recently completed round of district meetings for PA DHIA.

Director elections were held in six districts and three resolutions were passed to be introduced to the state annual meeting on March 10.

The topic of the meeting surrounding a round table discussion was "Bringing PA DHIA Together." Also as part of the round table was a discussion of the new herd profile and cow profile proposal being introduced by National DHIA to replace the rules.

Election Results

- District 1 - Ralph Gilkinson, Erie County.
- District 4 - Marian Butler, Tioga County.
- District 6 - William Ite, Cambria County.
- District 9 - Lane Sollenberger, Franklin County.
- District 10 - Neal McCulloch, Cumberland County.
- District 11 - Mark Eby, Sullivan County.

Bringing PA DHIA Together

A discussion was held at each district meeting concerning differences that still occur between counties. Topics discussed include member fees, technician pay, and local annual meetings.

Last fall when the fee adjustments were made, a major step was taken toward a more uniform method of fees to members, it also reflected more our cost of providing service. Our field technicians, and the board of directors were promised a plan by management for a uniform method of pay and bonus for the field technicians by mid-summer.

The plan, after approval by the Technicians Advisory Committee and the board of directors, would be implemented with next year's fiscal budget, beginning Oct. 1, 1995.

Suggestions by delegates at the district meeting included the following:

- Uniform stop pay, plus per cow pay.
- Over a three-year period, bring technicians' pay across the cooperative to a more equal basis.
- Pay technicians based on a percentage of gross sales.
- Use merit award as basis for bonus pay.
- Make every effort possible to keep good field technicians.

The biggest cost to members is people.

These costs continue to increase regardless of the price of milk, therefore employee efficiency must constantly be improved.

Serving more cows per employee is the only solution to low milk prices, therefore A/P testing and other innovative programs that allow members to spread these costs over more cows will be a major part of our future.

However, traditional services will always be available, but must cover their cost. Technicians will be crossing county lines to more efficiently serve our members.

As we make necessary changes, the delegates suggested we work closely with county committees and notify our members when changes are made.

County annual banquet suggestions included the following:

- State develop uniform awards and ribbon programs. Anything different would be up to the county to prepare and fund.
- State pay the ticket to the banquet for field technicians.

The State Annual Meeting is scheduled for March 10 at the Days Inn in State College. An awards breakfast will begin at 8 a.m. and the annual meeting will follow at 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Delegates and members are encouraged to attend. This is an excellent opportunity to voice your concerns and vote on issues if you are a delegate.

Suggestions For Improved Service

At each round table discussion at the district meeting, delegates and members made suggestions and stated concerns.

The following is a list of those concerns and suggestions:

- Provide low cost, quality service and maintain integrity of organization.
- Provide numbers instead of codes in reporting somatic cell count.
- Conduct DHIA workshops and write more articles on use of records and report information (too many members do not realize the value of the information they receive).
- Improve software-to-software communications between members' computers and technicians' computers.
- Send list of services and supplies with barn sheet reports.
- List heifers with cows on Reproductive Management Report for members on Heifer Management Program.
- Send list of innovative programs out with reports.
- Many members do not know what technicians can provide on test day.
- Help technicians understand farm reports better so they can assist members.
- Evaluate truck cost on samples.
- Develop better communications with veterinarians, feed consultants, and bankers so they understand the value of DHIA information and can better serve the members.

All of these suggestions have been distributed to the board and staff of PA DHIA.

Herd Summary I

Last year at the district meetings a resolution was passed to improve the way feeds were reported to PA DHIA that would more reflect the modern way the dairy cows are fed.

As a result of the resolution and after a year's work, the program has been completed and Herd Summary I has been redesigned. Herd Summary II was not changed.

The new report will appear in your reports in April after the field technicians have been properly trained to collect feed information under the new system. This training will occur starting with the spring Technicians Training Conferences beginning March 17 and ending April 13.

The new Herd Summary I will include the following information:

1. Test period daily averages - very similar to the old summary.
2. Rolling Herd Average.
3. Profile of cow by lactation number - all information will include solid non-fat if you are on SNF program, dry matter fed as percent of body weight, and coded information and recommendations if feeding information has problems.
4. Profile of cows by group number
 - Provide milk information and feed information by group
 - Even if you do not group your cows you can designate groups as in the example below:
 - 2-year-old cows, under 120 day milk
 - 2-year-old cows, over 120 day milk
 - 3-year and older cows, under 120 day milk
 - 3-year and older cows, over 120 day milk
5. Profile of feeds fed
 - You can report up to 13 different feeds per group and up to five groups of cows.
 - Feed reported as - As Fed, and Dry matter pounds.
 - Feed weights can be measured in tenths of a pound.
 - You can assign any name you want to each feed or forage.
6. Test Day Somatic Cell Count Summary
7. Test Day Herd Summary
8. Rolling 365 day average for last year.
9. Profile of Projected Herd Inventory and Milk sales.
 - Projects for 10 months ahead.
 - Project cows and heifer freshing based on breeding dates.
 - Projects cull cows by month.
 - Projects pounds milk sold.
 - Projects gross milk check based on your history, your numbers of fresh cows and heifers, your culling rate and economic forecast for milk prices.
10. Group milking times
11. Reported milk price either by hundredweight or by pounds. The new Herd Summary I will be an extremely valuable management tool for you, your veterinarians or your feed consultant.

HERD PROFILE

Over the last few years, the official DHI rules have been debated. The vast majority of producers are less willing to pay the cost of prosecuting a small minority that choose to tamper with their records.

Major changes in farm management practices are affecting rule enforcement efforts, such as larger herds, BST, electronic meters, etc. and computer technologies now allow all users of DHIA records to make their own determination regarding the integrity of records.

Major changes are in the wind affecting official DHIA rules. A herd profile report and a cow profile report has been developed by a national committee of dairy producers and industry representatives for the purpose of replacing the rules.

The Herd Profile consists of:

1. Charted graph including Rolling Herd Average for milk, protein, and fat.
2. Average lactation curve of herd compared to normal lactation curves.
3. PTA Distribution.
4. Bulk tank comparison for the entire year which indicates supervised and unsupervised test. Also dates components were taken.
5. M.E. Distribution listed possible and probable outline cows.
6. Number of cows in herd.
7. ID changes in herd.
8. Percent usable records in herd.
9. Percent cows completing lactations.
10. Percent average U.S.D.A. weighing of accuracy.

In addition to the herd profile, individual cow profiles have been developed. Users of your DHIA information, after getting your permission, can evaluate the accuracy based on these new tools. The users might be bull studs, breed associations, consignment sales and buyers of your cattle. You will hear more of this new development over the next year.

RESOLUTIONS

Three resolutions were passed at district meetings. They will be presented to the Resolutions Committee prior to the annual meeting, and then to the membership for a vote. The three resolutions are listed below.

Resolutions from District 1 and 2

Whereas many PA DHIA members wish to have the options to sort their cows, heifers, and calves by birth date, and;

Whereas, many dairy management practices such as vaccinations and breeding require actions taken by age;

Therefore be it resolved that the PA DHIA DRPC (Dairy Records Processing Center) make available as an option, where practical, sorting by birth date of the animals.

Resolutions from District 9 and 10

Whereas, PA DHIA technicians have difficulty receiving enough Pennsylvania permanent ear tags to apply to calves on test day, and;

Whereas, dairymen have noticed the quality of permanent ear tags have diminished in recent years (ear tag falling out, rusting or impossible to clamp into ear of calf) and;

Whereas, Pennsylvania law requires permanent ear tags in dairy cattle;

Therefore be it resolved that the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture increase the quantity of ear tags available, so PA DHIA technicians can help their members fulfill the law of Pennsylvania and improve the quality of the tags so they will be readable and be in fact permanent.

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 - 2.32 bu. 4.15 cwt.
Wheat, No. 2 - 3.58 bu. 5.98 cwt.
Barley, No. 3 - 1.86 bu. 3.98 cwt.
Oats, No. 2 - 1.56 bu. 4.85 cwt.
Soybeans, No. 1 - 5.24 bu. 8.74 cwt.
Ear Corn 59.83 ton 2.99 cwt.
Alfalfa Hay - 91.25 ton 4.56 cwt.
Mixed Hay - 92.50 ton 4.63 cwt.
Timothy Hay - 87.50 ton 4.38 cwt.

Pesticide License Testing Set

ELIZABETHVILLE (Dauphin Co.) — By law, all applicators of certain pest control materials must be licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. Once an applicator is licensed, she or he must then attend educational programs in order to remain up-to-date on the latest information.

In order to become licensed by the state, applicators must prove their knowledge and understanding regarding pesticide safety and environmental protection by passing a test given by the Department of Agriculture.

Anyone who is interested in taking the test is invited to participate in a training program on Tuesday evening, March 7, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Ag Science classroom in the Upper Dauphin High School in Elizabethville.

Information will be presented to familiarize attendees with the Pesticide Educational Manual, a study guide for private applicators. Then on Thursday, March 9, from 9 a.m. until noon, a representative from the Department of Agriculture will be giving tests to candidates for the private applicator license.

There is a \$15 fee for attending the training session on Tuesday, March 7. This covers the cost of the Pesticide Educational Manual. Attendees can bring their own, previously purchased, manual or else purchase one on March 7. Access to a manual will be required.

For additional information, contact Paul H. Craig (717) 921-8803.

Estate Planning Seminar Set

WEST CHESTER (Chester Co.) — A free estate planning seminar has been scheduled Feb. 22 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. here at the Governmental Services Building.

The free seminar is sponsored by the Chester County extension office.

Guest speakers include Bruce Rosenfield, Esq.; Sam Goodley, Esq.; Mary Wade Myers, Esq.; Bob Hodge; Bob Lange; Dave King; and Bill Moore.

For more information, contact the extension office, (610) 696-3500 or Bob Lange, (610) 647-0711.