

More Than 350 Attend Bradford Dairy Day

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Bradford Co. Correspondent
EAST SMITHFIELD (Bradford Co.) — A steady stream of farmers milled through the nearly 40 trade show exhibits and listened to informative speakers at the 1995 Bradford County Dairy Day.

Held at SRU Middle School, on Feb. 20, visitors to the event totaled well over 350, making the event a success, according to Lehan Power, area farm management agent.

Educational programs on dairy expansion and foot care were both well attended.

Gary Snyder, farm business consultant with Farm Credit of Western New York gave the morning presentation.

"You've got to say, 'Hey, I'm in an industry that's changing every day.' If you're going to expand, go through the stages," Snyder emphasized.

The first stage in Snyder's expansion plan was an investigative stage where one should visit as many farms as possible.

"Don't just look at the physical resources," said Snyder. "Stick around long enough to see how they get the jobs done right."

Next on Snyder's to-do list was budgeting to see if the project is feasible.

"If you can't budget, you can't manage a big farm," he noted.

Establishing limits is one key factor in this stage. Snyder sug-

gests that farmers should "limit to their ability to handle change, limit to how many cows you will buy, limit to how much debt you can carry, and limit to how quickly you want to expand."

He also recommends being as organized during the transition as possible. Keys to remember are to start early, consider all environmental factors, get permits and use caution when buying animals.

Labor issues can also be a tough obstacle to handle. If the manager would rather milk the cows than manage his milkers, there could be a problem.

"If things aren't real good between dad and son, and you go into expansion, you're going to magnify the problem. You need to be comfortable now and understand where you are. Once you do that, you can go ahead with expansion. A manager is able to marshal the troops to get those people to take care of the farm business," said Snyder.

Perhaps the most emphasized point in Snyder's presentation was that farmers need to "grow in steps, but grow."

"A stairway expansion is best," he said. "Your business has to



Over 350 people enjoyed a lasagna dinner provided by the trade show exhibitors. Here, Curtis Scott, Duane Wilcox, Gerald Pratt and Matt Scott enjoy the food and fellowship.

grow so you can remain competitive in the national dairy business."

He explained that growing doesn't only mean adding cows or more land, it means finding key areas where the business can get better every year.

"There's no one secret combina-

tion of factors that provides profitability in a farm business," he said.

The focus of the educational programs changed from expanding your dairy to preventive medicine as Dr. Dale Moore DVM, with Penn State University took the

stage. "Lameness in cattle is the third highest cause of involuntary culling," she said, as she began the afternoon program with a slide show.

"Not only does lameness cost (Turn to Page A33)

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