

**dhia**

Dixie L. Burris,  
Membership Development

Call 1-800-DHI-TEST for information.  
Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association  
DHIA Service Center, Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802

## Training Pa.DHIA Technicians

**DAVID BIGELOW**  
Training Coordinator  
UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Pa. DHIA recently completed another field training seminar on Feb. 17, and congratulations go out to Kevin Rickert of Beaver County, and Renee Miller, of Westmoreland County, who completed their studies.

For technicians, education is a continuous process.

The field training seminar recently completed by Rickert and Miller is just one of several steps in the training procedures for technicians at Pa.DHIA.

Before attending the five-day field training seminar, all new technicians receive initial training.

The initial training involves working directly with an appointed trainer from Pa.DHIA. All aspects of the testing procedures are covered. Also included is getting familiar with the laptop computer.

The overview of responsibili-

ties, sample handling and equipment procedures are covered in-depth.

Pa.DHIA recognizes the importance of on-the-farm training. This involves the trainer being present with the newly hired technician and helping him learn how to perform in a parlor herd, pipeline herd, as well as a bucket herd.

At this point in the training process, practical situations such as managing a circuit and recognizing a rule infraction are covered. Communication between both the dairymen and the Pa.DHIA staff is important for a successful circuit, therefore much time is spent learning how to handle different situations that may arise in the field.

As the trainee completes two weeks of employment, he is put through another phase of training. This phase involves the trainer traveling along with the technician and evaluating his performance at six different herds.

After making the evaluation, the trainer determines whether the technician requires more fundamental training.

The field training seminar follows shortly after the two-week evaluation, with time allowed in between to provide the trainee with the opportunity to be exposed to different situations, and develop questions.

This training process gives each new technician the exposure they need to gain more experience. This also allows for communication situations between Pa.DHIA staff and the dairymen on the circuit.

The five-day field training seminar covers in-depth the Quick Barn Sheet on the laptop computer. A special emphasis is put on the correct usage of the computer, as well as having each technician become familiar with each option on the option screens.

The correct procedure for starting a new herd, and the correct procedures in handling split herds is also taught in this seminar.

Professionalism and also circuit management is taught along with many different examples on how to handle different situations that come up in the barn.

An in-depth study of feed and forage is taught along with the different formulas to calculate milk price.

A special emphasis is placed on the laptop computer at the field training seminar with the technician required to constantly use it.

Our main objective is to make each technician familiar and comfortable with the laptop computer. During the seminar, a tour of the sample and meter lab is included, to familiarize each technician with the general operation of each department.

Learning how predicted trans-



From the left, Kevin Rickert of Beaver County, and Renee Miller, of Westmoreland County, are two relatively new Pa.DHIA technicians who completed their field training seminar portion of training.

mitting abilities (PTAs) are read, and interpreting the member's reports are a high goal for the week. Each report that a dairymen can receive is broken down and covered in-depth.

Handling in-state and out-of-state transfer cows and calculating the records is covered in the training so each technician understands the transfer process.

Time is set aside for discussion of the how to fill out the Hiefer Management Report, and how to fill out all reports.

At the end of the five-day seminar, a certification exam is given to each technician. This exam allows for each technician to decide if they may need more assistance in the future.

After a technician has been employed for six months, the regional Pa.DHIA manager does an evaluation. The regional manager conducts the evaluation with a visit

to a farm while the technician is performing testing. It is determined then if the technician is capable of working with limited supervision.

Furthermore, a yearly evaluation of each technician is conducted to determine the training needs of a technician at the point.

Part of the yearly evaluation is requesting suggestions from the dairymen within the technician's circuit. This is done by giving each member dairy farmer the opportunity to fill out a questionnaire about his/her technician.

This information, as well as input from the regional manager, can be helpful in determining each technician's particular training needs, in the constant goal of providing dependable, high quality service to members.

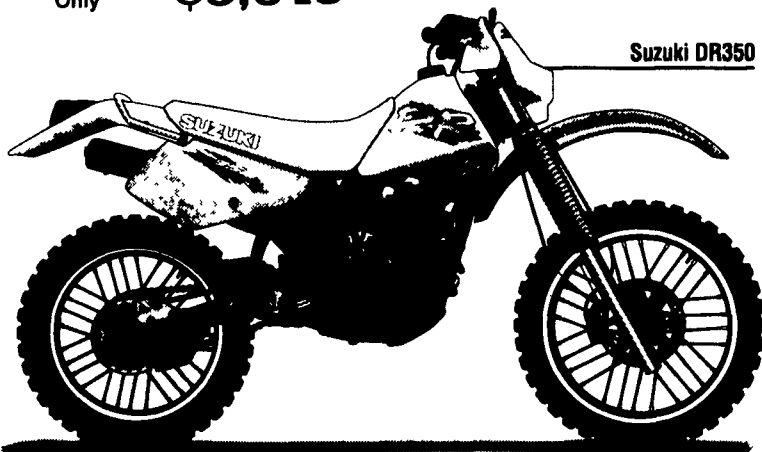
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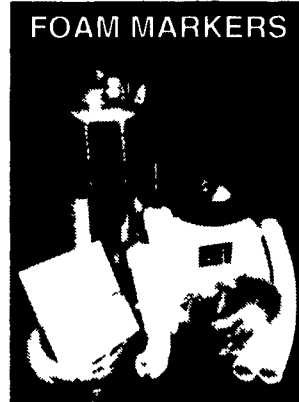
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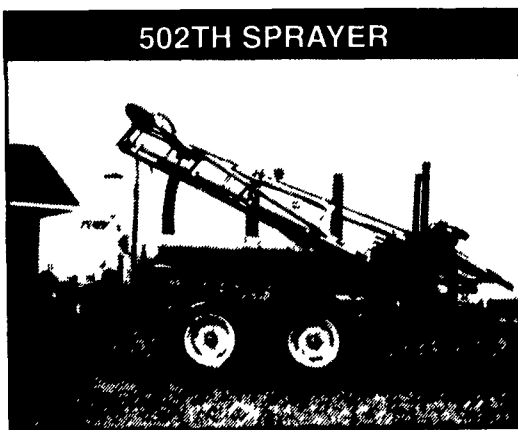
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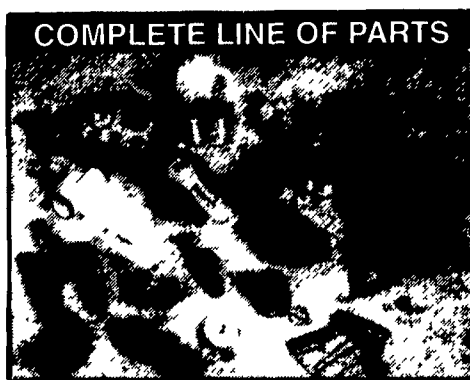
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