

Lancaster Farming

Meeting Set For Development Of Maryland Dairy Association

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff
FREDERICK, Md. — As part of an ongoing effort by those in the Maryland dairy production industry to create a more powerful and representative force in dealing with issues affecting dairy production, an organizing committee has called a special meeting.

During a recent hearing, held in

Frederick, of the 1996 Maryland Dairy Task Force, a member of the task force announced that an organizing committee is scheduled to meet 10 a.m., Nov. 26, at the New Midway Fire Hall, located along Rt. 194 (Woodsboro Pike), to consider the formation of a Maryland dairy association.

Lunch is to be served at 12:30 p.m., at a cost of \$6.

To make reservations, call Wilhide immediately at (410) 775-7201, fax (410) 775-7624, if interested in attending the meeting.

According to Myron Wilhide, a

Maryland dairy farmer who represented the Maryland Farm Bureau on the Task Force, there have been three dairy task forces created by the Maryland Legislature since 1993, and Wilhide served on all three.

During the hearing, Wilhide said that the findings of the 1993 Dairy Task Force included the recommendation for the formation of a dairy association to represent dairy interests in policy making.

However, he said people became confused as to the purpose for the organization because of the wordings proposed to describe

such an association. He said it was assumed by many that such an organization would not be supported by the entire industry.

In the meantime, there has been no effective lobbying interest solely dedicated to representing Maryland's dairy producers.

While the Maryland State Grange, and Farm Bureau, represent dairy farmers who are also members, the representation and policy is not directed specifically on behalf of only dairy producers, according to Wilhide.

"Other ag groups have associations," Wilhide said. "We did

have co-ops (representing most dairy producers), but no association to address legislation.

"We need an organized voice for dairy to provide a forum (for the debate and creation of policy ideology)," he said.

According to Wilhide, a dairy producers' association has yet to be formed since 1993, in the meantime, the dairy industry in Maryland has slipped from being the second most important agricultural industry (in terms of annual gross sales) to being third.

Horticulture has moved up into

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Deadlines Change For Thanksgiving

The Lancaster Farming office will be closed Thursday, November 28 in observance of Thanksgiving Day. News and advertising deadlines for this week are as follows:

- Public Sale Ads - Noon Mon., 11/25.
- General News - Noon Wed., 11/27.
- Classified Section C Ads - 5 p.m., Tue., 11/26.
- All Other Classified Ads - 9 a.m. Wed., 11/27.

More Work Needed To Control Poultry Ascites

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) — The poultry industry has to come up with better ways to diagnose ascites disease and "put this into our selection process," said Dr. Robert L. Owen, V.M.D. and director of research/development operations and veterinary services for Hubbard Farms.

Owen — the diplomate for the American College of Poultry Vet-

erinarians and director of R&D for the Walpole, N.H.-based company — told producers Monday that as broiler companies continue to select for rapid early growth in flocks, there is a diminishing respiratory capacity for the birds, which can lead to ascites.

Owen spoke to 25 poultry producers and agri-industry representatives Monday at the Penn State-sponsored Poultry Health and Management Seminar at Kreider's

Restaurant.

Owen reviewed research into identifying the disease and coming up with management strategies to successfully deal with it.

Ascites (pronounced AY-sites) is simply part of a larger category of heart-related chicken health problems, including cardiopulmonary and leg disorders, according to Owen.

Veterinarians recognize ascites by the distinctive blue coloration

of the bird's comb and wattles. The legs can turn blue, and there can be gross lesions with a distended abdomen holding yellow, acidic fluid.

The blue-like conditions of the bird are caused simply by a lack of enough oxygen in the blood. What kills the birds is ventricular fibrillation of the bird — the heart beats at a rapid, uncontrollable pace. The

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At Whitney Harter Farm Goats Have Been Elevated To Commercial Dairy Levels

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Managing Editor

BELLEFONTE (Centre Co.) — When you think of goats, you may visualize a few farm pets that all look alike, eat tin cans, and keep the fence rows trimmed. Or the old adage "Contary old goat" may come to mind.

But for Danny Harter and Anne Whitney, and several hundred other farms across the East Coast, goats have been turned into a miniature dairy herd with all the trials and blessings of dairy farming.

Yes, the animals are smaller in size so that you need to handle 10 goats for every cow. The milking parlor uses calf stanchions, and the milking units have two teat cups instead of four. But it's still a seven-day-per-week, two-time-per-day, 365-day-per-year job. The sanitation and nutritional requirements are the same as a cow dairy. Goats, like cows, have a pecking order and a mind of their own which would give some credibility to the idea that goats are contrary. But so are cows.

"For some reason, a lot of people who have no ag background want to milk goats," Anne said. "They have no idea what it requires. We always ask if the interested person has goats or cows now."

In addition, you need to be prepared to make the large investment to set up a dairy that will qualify as a milk production unit if you want to have any chance at profit.

"And you need to give up emotional attachment to the animals and make decisions based on monetary value. You need to be thinking in terms of milking several hundred goats. This takes \$40,000 to \$50,000 investment in animals alone. And then you have the parlor, milking equipment, and bulk tank to buy."

Whitney and Harter were milking 20 goats by hand before they decided to enlarge their dairy. So they know how incredibly hard the dairy business can be. That's why they traveled from Vermont to Texas to view goat milking parlors and piece together what would be ideal for their operation.

The stanchions in the parlor are calf units with increased space between stalls. The goat pipeline milkers came from Germany, brought across customs through Canada. Ten goats are brought at one time into the linear parlor that has five milking units on line.

Feed is given at the rate of three pounds of grain per day for goats milking over nine pounds, and two pounds of grain for those milking under nine pounds. An excellent quality hay that tests 22 percent protein is purchased from Idaho. Their own 27 acres are being turned into all alfalfa with a move toward green chop to reduce labor.

Their milk is shipped by bulk truck to the Fleur De Lait Foods plant in New Holland in Lancaster County on a three or four day pickup from routes that start as far west as Ohio. Milk prices are figured on protein and time of year. The milk price ranges from \$19 to \$40 per hundredweight. But you don't get much milk from a goat.



Danny Harter and Anne Whitney with a prize milking goat at their farm located east of State College.

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