

Northeast DHIA Reports Good Year

ITHACA, N.Y. — The ninth annual meeting of the Northeast Dairy Herd Improvement Association Inc. was held recently in Ithaca, N.Y.

The meeting brought together 63 delegates representing the dairy members in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, New York and Pennsylvania.

The two days were dedicated to reviewing and discussing the current status of Northeast DHIA and its proposed ventures to position the organization's herd management services for the future.

General Manager Nelvin Empet opened the general session with a theme from the well known poem by Robert Frost, "The Road Less Traveled."

Empet reviewed some of the innovations the cooperative has been involved in and suggested that by selecting the "road less traveled" Northeast DHIA has not only delivered better management tools for Northeast Dairy producers but blazed trails for dairy producers and DHIA services throughout the United States.

A few examples include the "AP" program which was introduced by the cooperative in 1972 and amongst controversy began to publish AP records in 1980. The Somatic Cell program was started in the Northeast with a complete report in 1978. NIR technology was initiated in the Forage Analysis laboratory in 1981. Also in 1981 milk protein testing was made standard with milk fat testing. Most recently, Milk Urea Nitrogen (MUN) testing was introduced in the United States by Northeast DHIA.

Empet acknowledged the record processing system change completed in 1996 briefly took a bumpy side road but got back on track by ending up at DRPC Raleigh. He expressed his gratitude for the vision, leadership and courage of the Northeast board and the efforts and support provided by Cornell University, dairy producers and Northeast DHIA staff.

"Financially Northeast DHIA is strong," he said. "The balance

sheet is very strong with adequate reserves."

He attributed that strength to Northeast DHIA being able to go into their fifth year with no general fee increase for DHIA services.

In addressing the issue of the proposed alliance with DairyLea, he pointed out that in the future there will be fewer herds and cows supplying the milk needed in the market place and those herds will have even more diverse needs than today.

This alliance was proposed by two strong organizations, out of the need for greater efficiencies and to facilitate the consolidation of information services for dairies in the Northeast, he said.

Paul Sirois the manager of the DHI Forage Analysis Laboratory discussed the Ohio State University energy prediction system, recently adopted by the Lab. The new prediction takes into account protein, fiber components, non-structural carbohydrates and fat.

The system brings improved energy values for common feeds and forages and the capability to give energy values for uncommon plant origin feeds, where previously the industry could only use book values. This system does not predict energy for feeds of animal origin.

Milk Analysis Laboratory Manager John Malaney reviewed the new Milk Urea Nitrogen analysis and the growth of that service. Milk Urea Nitrogen analysis of milk can help a nutritionist determine how well animals are being fed and if the balance of energy and proteins are correct in the ration. The service continues to grow rapidly.

Jack van Almelo, marketing director, reviewed the new service packages scheduled to be released this winter. According to Mr. van Almelo, "The actions a dairy can take on a cow to make money are relatively few and uncomplicated, but being organized with a management information system that truly fits each dairy's unique circumstances is the issue." He indicated the new service packages represent the next generation in custom services and are possible because of the changes Northeast

DHIA completed in the last year.

Diane Ledvina, field services specialists for Northeast DHIA reviewed the National DHIA changes that were scheduled to begin this week. The current set of National Rules will be replaced by two components.

The Uniform Procedures describes how each DHIA-affiliate and its Field Technicians will collect data, and how each Processing Center will handle the data.

The Code of Ethics is a description of the standards which each DHIA member must follow to ensure the reliability of their records.

Additionally, a Herd Profile report for DHIA member dairy herds, and a Cow Profile for individual cows, will be available to dairy industry allies (with member permission). The Herd Profile describes the production statistics of each member herd and allows the end user to determine what value they will place on the herd's records.

Finally, Records Standards Variables are a new method of describing lactation records. While the current labels for type of test will still be used for some time, the new records will also include such data as the number of tests, the percent of milkings weighed and sampled, and the number of test days that are supervised by a DHIA field technician.

The USDA will "weight" each record before using it in genetic evaluations. Ms. Ledvina stressed that the changes will become apparent only gradually and entire dairy industry has yet to determine just how it will adjust to the new standards.

Richard Smith CEO of DairyLea Cooperative described his organization as oriented towards partnering with other organizations in order to create efficiencies and increase effectiveness.

"We look for the situations where we can make 1+1=3 for the Northeast dairy farmers," according to Mr. Smith. "The alliance with Northeast DHIA will create an organization uniquely positioned to serve dairy farms' changing management information needs into the next century."

President of the Northeast DHIA board, Harold Bodwell III discussed the previous year's changes and expressed his gratitude to the dairymen, DHIA staff and Raleigh processing center for bringing the organization through the previous years changes.

"The changes give us needed flexibility. We need to continue to be the best possible solution for each dairy as they determine what information they need and what form they need it in."

The New Hampshire dairyman went on to say, "Information is power, and to dairy producers it is profit."

Addressing the proposed alliance, Mr. Bodwell recalled the

speech given the previous year by then president, David Chamberlain. Mr. Chamberlain explained to those delegates that the declining number of dairymen in the Northeast could ill afford the number of cooperatives serving them and finding a strong partner to create an alliance which gained efficiencies and improved service was a top priority.

The delegate meeting primarily focused on the proposal to form an alliance with DairyLea to expand information services in the Northeast. After a thorough discussion the delegates voted to support the proposal to create the new jointly owned information organization.

81st Pennsylvania Farm Show Opens January 11

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The nation's largest indoor agricultural exposition, the Pennsylvania State Farm Show, is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 11 through Thursday, Jan. 16 in Harrisburg, according to Agriculture Secretary Charles C. Brosius.

"The Farm Show pays tribute to Pennsylvania agriculture, the keystone of our economy, and the 50,000 farm families who provide essential food and fiber products to our neighbors around the world," Brosius said.

"The 81st Farm Show will showcase their achievements and affords them a wonderful opportunity to share their livelihood with consumers on the other end of the food chain. It allows farmers, producers and agribusinesses to see what advancements the industry has made each year and to plan for their future. It is truly a family show, one that's enjoyable and educational for our exhibitors and visitors alike."

Gov. Tom Ridge will tour and officially open the Farm Show on Saturday, Jan. 11. Also, Gov. Ridge will address the Farm Show International Day dinner on Friday, Jan. 10, which promotes Pennsylvania-grown and produced products to a gathering of international trade representatives.

Thousands of beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep, swine, horses, goats, rabbits and poultry are in the limelight of competition and sales throughout the Farm Show week. Three hundred commercial exhibitors feature their newest innovations in farm equipment, services and products. Daily entertainment is featured in the large and small arenas, with rodeos, horse and pony pulling contests, draft horse hitched competition, a folk dance festival, and a sheep to shawl contest.

Good food has long been a part of the Farm Show tradition. Eleven agricultural associations are located in the Food Court, serving up tons of delicious food all week long. Visitors can buy processed food products from a variety of companies in the Pennsylvania Food Market. Cooking demonstrations take place all week in the Food Pantry.

The show is free and open to the public all week long. The hours are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 11, through Wednesday, Jan. 15. On Thursday, Jan. 16 — the final day of the show — the hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is a \$5 parking fee per vehicle in the Farm Show parking lot, which is located beside Exit 23 of Interstate 81.



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