

Fall Conference Emphasizes Quality

DAVID BIGELOW
Training Coordinator
STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Technicians from all over the service area of Pa. DHIA convened upon State College to attend each region's scheduled fall conference Oct. 13-17, at the Penn State Days Inn from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Quality of the workmanship was stressed throughout the program, which included select speakers from the staff at Pa. DHIA. A round table discussion conducted by Dean Amick, director of field operations, proved to be very beneficial in addressing several different issues. Processing update which included the breed DHIR rule changes were addressed by Jim Boyer, processing manager.

Technicians received computer cleaning and maintenance tips from Randy Mayes, Helpdesk worker, as well as received auditing tips from Gary Homan, member services supervisor. Dave Slusser, general manager of Pa. DHIA, gave an updated report on the activities of Pa. DHIA which included a financial report.

Minnesota Judge's Order

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pay prices in certain areas of the country. Senator Patrick Leahy, Dem.-Vt., called the decision a "runaway ruling" that could jeopardize the incomes of dairy farmers by effectively creating a single milk price.

nation's dairy farmers went out of business either because they couldn't make ends meet, or they retired and the next generation decided not to go into an industry with such a bleak future.

"This ruling will only hasten the demise of dairying in the United States," Baumann said.

Historically, the milk pricing policy ensured an adequate supply of fresh, wholesome milk in areas of the country where milk production could not keep up with consumer demand. The differentials pay producers sufficient money to cover transportation costs when shipping their milk into deficit areas.

"Currently, law directs the Secretary of Agriculture to determine supply and demand conditions in different areas of the country and consider feed and other production costs when determining the local market price. The federal milk order system, before the judge's ruling, was a positive partnership between consumers and producers, because dairy areas with an over-supply could bolster their prices by being paid to move milk into areas where consumers needed it the most," Paul said.

Already USDA officials have gone on record opposing Judge Doty's ruling, and this week political and farm leaders were commending and supporting U.S. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman for saying the national ag department will appeal the decision.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's president, Guy Donaldson applauded Glickman for responding quickly to a situation which has taken the dairy industry by surprise. "Farm Bureau is very concerned about the immediate effect of this decision on Pennsylvania dairymen, as well as for producers across the country," Donaldson said. "Without putting a hold on the judge's decision, we will be facing immediate negative consequences for an already struggling dairy industry in Pennsylvania."

At the direction of Congress, the Agriculture Department was already working on a new program and this spring offered six possible plans to the industry. Joel Rotz, PFB's dairy specialist, said USDA is now in the midst of reforming and restructuring the federal order system, including pricing.

"We have been very involved in the process, submitting comments and participating in an American Farm Bureau order reform working group," Rotz said. "USDA is about to issue its first proposals next month. Those proposals may address some of the complaints raised by the Minnesota milk producers group. In any case, we should not let the Minnesota judge's decision throw us off course toward a responsible and carefully thought out federal order reform."

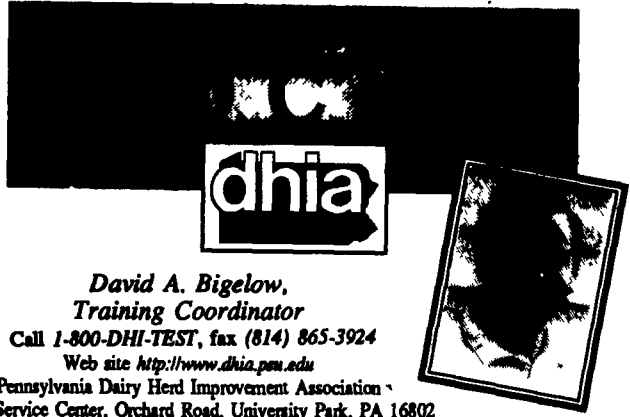
Rotz said it's hard to determine exactly where milk prices would be for Pennsylvania dairymen without the Class 1 differentials in place. The most likely effect will be price volatility and possibly a dwindling base of milk producers within Pennsylvania's borders.

Other officials believe the loss of dairy producers would be nationwide. Carl Baumann, Mid-America Dairymen, Inc. president, said we are losing an average of 6,000 dairy farms a year. In the past five years, nearly 25 percent of the

Larry Markel, director of finance and human resources, explained the different health plans that are now available to the technicians. Dixie Burris, lab manager, reported on special issues involving the lab as well as answered questions.

Marketing and retention was the emphasis placed on the presentation by Tom Smith, Marketing manager region four.

A movie produced by David



David A. Bigelow,
Training Coordinator
 Call 1-800-DHI-TEST, fax (814) 865-3924
 Web site <http://www.dhia.psu.edu>
 Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association
 DHIA Service Center, Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802

Bigelow, training coordinator, entitled "Welcome to California" was viewed and ideas were shared on different ways to service larger herds in the Pa. DHIA service area.

The fall conference is just one of the many ways Pa. DHIA con-

tinues to keep the technicians abreast of changes and issues that are taking place in the dairy industry.

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