

Team Approach To Problem Solving At Bradford Dairy Day

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Bradford Co. Correspondent
EAST SMITHFIELD (Bradford County) — What does teamwork have to do with running a dairy farm?

Plenty, if you ask Dr. William Heald, professor of dairy and animal science at Penn State.

Heald was the keynote speaker at the annual Bradford County Dairy Day at the SRU Middle School here, Monday, Feb. 16.

In his presentation, "Who does the dairy service industry work for?" Heald outlined a plan to build a team for your dairy farm.

"We are always looking for tools to make us more effective. We are always trying to make our hands more powerful, so we use a tractor. We look for tools to make us think better, so we use a computer. Farm teams get better results than individuals," explained Heald.

Heald defines his team as a collection of skills, abilities, and experiences that can focus on goals.

When building a dairy farm advisory team, farmers should take people that they normally work with and improve the efficiency of that working relationship.

"Think of it as a rocket. The dairy farm owner is the central rocket, but if he has booster rockets around him he can get there faster," said Heald.

Team members should include four to five individuals who have a vested interest in the continuation of the farm, such as the veterinarian, banker, nutritionist, farm workers, or computer technicians.

"Farming is so complex there is no way any one person can know all the best ways to get things done," said Heald. "If you bring people together you will have a better chance of solving problems."

To use the team effectively, choose a coordinator who will listen first, but keep the meeting on track and organized. Also set time limits for the meeting and choose some ground rules such as respect for others, the owner makes the final decision and that confidentiality is a must.

At the first meeting, identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the farm. Then set goals for the farm and assign particular jobs to team members.

At subsequent meetings, monitor progress and analyze any changes in the situation.

Heald also notes that the purpose of the team meetings is to accumulate knowledge and not to waste time.

Working as a team instead of going at the day to day work alone may take some getting used to, but it can help make your farm a better and more profitable place.

"It's a learning experience," said Heald. "You can know what others are doing and have a positive attitude."

Heald's comments were heard by many of the estimated 355 visitors to the annual event. Other activities of the day included visits with the 33 exhibitors and the Bradford County Dairy Princess and her court.

In the afternoon, dairy farmers could choose to update pesticide credits including hearing a review of the new herbicides for 1998 and a grower survey of integrated pest management practices.

Also offered in the afternoon was a workshop called "First on the Scene," offered by the Guthrie Rural Health and Safety team. In the program, participants were encouraged to develop an emergency plan and how to respond to agricultural accidents before help arrives.

Because family members are often the first on the scene of a farm accident, having a plan can help that person stay calm in the event of an emergency.

According to Greg Jelliff, there are some key decisions that need to be made such as, should you try to treat the injured person first or call 911 first.

"First," said Jelliff. "Slow down and think. Be safe yourself. You need to look closely at the scene. Sometimes running for help immediately is not the right choice."

He then outlined some situations where by attending to the victim first, you could prevent further injury, especially if estimated

response times for emergency help are long.

One example Jelliff gave is in the event of a tractor rollover. If the person is breathing on his own, but there are caustic fluids draining toward him, you could prevent further injury by digging a trench to make the fluids drain away from him.

He also noted that everyone on the farm should know how to turn off all equipment, have access to a fire extinguisher, and know some basic first aid and CPR.

When calling for help, it is important to have clear concise directions to the farm printed and kept near a phone.

"You may think, 'It's my farm, I can give the dispatcher directions,'" noted Jelliff. "But what if the person who found the accident was the artificial inseminator? He might know how to drive to your farm, but he might not know all the road names and be able to give directions to someone else."

The Rural Health and Safety team also offered free hearing tests and body fat analysis to all who were willing to participate.

"Juggling Job and Family" was the topic of yet another afternoon session which was presented by Family Living Educator Cathy Guffey. In her presentation, Guffey shared tips to make life a little less stressful, time management tips, money management tips, and ways to improve communication skills.

She also offered eight characteristics of happy farm families which she adapted from a study conducted by Jane McGonigal and Robert Bruce in New York. First, recognize that all family members' contributions are valuable. Second, shift roles as needed. Third, articulate feelings of uncertainty



Dr. William Heald, professor of dairy and animal science at Penn State, got the crowd drawing triangles in order to demonstrate just how effective using a team approach can be in problem solving.

and share emotions. Fourth, regularly participate in activities and hobbies that take you away from farm business. Fifth, take family vacations that are planned. Sixth, adults do not expect their adult children or children's spouses to live just like the parents. Next, there is experience with employment other than farming and eighth, they know about and use community resources as needed.

Guffey noted that there is a wealth of information out there for all families and that anyone interested in obtaining more information should contact their local cooperative extension service.

To include the youth in the day's events, the Bradford County Dairy promotion team got them involved in dairy trivia and other games during the afternoon.

The day concluded with final door prize drawings and hearty thank-yous from Extension Agent Tom Maloney, who chaired this year's event.

"We try to take a family approach to the day. This year we had one of the largest crowds we've seen," said Maloney.

Del. DHIA Sets Meeting

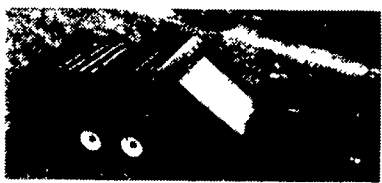
FELTON, Del. — Delaware DHIA is holding its annual membership meeting in conjunction with the Annual Delaware Dairy Princess Contest here at the Felton Firehall Wednesday, March 11, beginning at 6 p.m.

Delaware Dairy Extension Agent, Dr. G. Haenlein is supporting the meeting. All area dairy farmers from Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, their families, employees,

and friends are welcome to attend.

Tickets are \$11 for adults and \$5.50 for children under 12. Reservations with payment need to be made at least one week in advance with the DHIA technicians: David Szelestei, 757 Butterpat Road, Hartly, DE 19953-9603, (302)492-0260 or Thomas C. Hynson Jr., 3512 Peters Corner Road, Maryland, MD 21649, (410)482-8029.

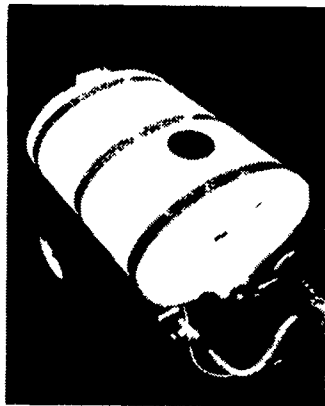
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