

Program Helps Keep Ohio's Dairies Competitive

COLUMBUS, Ohio — To stay competitive, many Ohio dairy farms will have to make some pretty dramatic changes in the next five years, said Dianne Shoemaker, agriculture and natural resources agent at the Columbian and Mahoning County Offices of Ohio State University Extension.

The Profitability and Expansion Initiative, created in 1996 by members of Extension's Northeast District Dairy Excel Team, is designed to help. Ohio's milk production has dropped from seventh to 10th nationally and is predicted to fall to 11th within a year.

"The initiative will help a person who is committed to improving their management and looking at continuing to have a profitable operation for the next 10 to 20 years," Shoemaker said.

The three-phase program assesses the current competitiveness of a dairy farm and its ability to undergo major changes or expansion, helps the farm develop change or expansion plans, and assists with completion of those plans.

In phase one, Excel Team members visit an operation and assess its management, financial status, and facilities and resources. They then offer suggestions of how the operation could become more profitable.

Cost control suggestions, farm strengths and weaknesses, estate planning needs and ideas for facility, nutrition and management changes are some of the assessments made during phase one, Shoemaker said.

Three or four team members usually take part in phase one, but other Extension faculty and specialists help if needed.

Eight dairy operations, in-

cluding four pilot test farms, completed a phase one assessment in 1997, Shoemaker said. Another has been done in 1998, and two more are scheduled. A phase one farm assessment costs \$500, which covers the travel, telephone and support expenses of team members.

This year, Dairy Excel Team members are developing phase two of the initiative. The second phase looks at long-range budgeting, helps create plans to improve the profitability of an operation without expansion, and helps develop expansion plans for farmers who want to expand. Environmental issues, operational goals and objectives, cash flow projections, building plans, site plans, work force changes and product marketing will all be part of phase two, Shoemaker said.

"During phase three, team members will help implement plans created during phase two and offer follow-up support if plans change once producers start building and pouring cement, which often can happen," she said.

Separate fees will be charged for phases two and three, but the amounts have not yet been set.

The Northeast District Dairy Excel Team decided to start the Profitability and Expansion Initiative because no other service like it exists in the state, Shoemaker said. Plus, the Dairy Industry Task Force identified the program as a need, and many graduates of Extension's Dairy Excel program were asking for help with expansion planning.

The Extension Dairy Excel Team members involved in the program have been Shoemaker, Lanny Anderson in Ashtabula County, Northeast District dairy industry specialist Bruce Brockett, Tom Noyes in Wayne County, Ernie Oelker in Trumbull County and Northeast District farm management specialist Jim Polson. Anderson recently retired, but Jim Skeeles in Lorain County and Terry Beck in Wayne County soon will join the team, Shoemaker said.

Dairy producers do not have to be Extension Dairy Excel graduates to take part in the program. To get started, interested producers should either contact their county extension offices and ask about the program or contact one of the team's members directly.

"Most of the operations we have assessed so far have been in northeast Ohio, and we'll probably stay close to this area," Shoemaker said. "But we haven't said 'no' to anyone yet."

Phase one usually takes five weeks to six weeks to complete from start to finish, and there is a two-month waiting list. But once the other two team members begin helping, the wait time should get shorter, she said.

So far, surveys of dairy operators who have completed phase one of the initiative have been positive.

"They said they liked the team approach, open-minded evaluations and unbiased analysis," Shoemaker said. "This new opportunity helps position Ohio's dairy operations for a profitable future."

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1955 Super 55 Oliver tractor, 3ph, swinging drawbar, new paint. Looks good, runs good, \$3,200. York Co. (717)428-0118.

1957 Oliver Super 55 tractor w/Sauder loader, 2-buckets, \$3900. Rear blade, \$250. Call Manheim 717-665-2850

1961 C-60 Dump H.D. 8' bed, engine runs, but needs work, not inspected, good tires, \$750. Two Ontario grain drills, 9-hoe; one w/fertilizer box. Good for parts, no wheels, make offer. Holmes 440 Wrecker PTO winch, sling. (717)865-3025.

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1949 Allis Chalmers tractor; model-B, good condition, hydraulic system, two bottom plows, \$1,400/obo. Also, disc roller harrow corn planter, tobacco planter, BEST OFFER. 717-627-2938 after 5:00pm.

10R sprayer, horse drawn, long tongue, good condition, field ready, \$1450. Levi King, 1851 Mine RD., Paradise, PA

10x60' Fairbanks electronic scale; 11R Kinze planter; large bean hopper for 11R planter. 717/382-4659.

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1993 NI 800C1 Cummins turbo diesel, 4WD, w/ custom built conveyors to work compost and load snow or grain, good condition, \$49,000. (717)626-1394.

1996 644 NH round baler, silage special, excellent condition. 717-363-2474

1997 Ford NH tractor 3930, 148 hrs., \$22,900. (301)334-2990.

216 flex head, can be fixed or for parts, \$1500 OBO. 610/942-0239.

225 amp Lincoln welder w/ cables and rubber tired chassis, ac and dc, excellent condition, \$1,200. 2 cyl Wisconsin engine, electric start, very good, \$500. 10,000 watt belt drive generator, good condition, \$400. John L. Stoltzfus, 956 Fallowfield Rd., Atglen, PA.

2300 gallon stainless steel tank, \$2,000 OBO. (717)596-2875.

(2) 716A JD forage wagons on 12-ton tandem gears, excellent condition. 3960 JD forage harvester, 3RN & 7' hay pickup. 330-424-3667

2745 MF tractor, 24' int. disc, 27' packer. MF 880 plow, 6x18. JD tractor 3020. (609)267-5858.

2940 4wd 260 loader, 3580 hrs., 1 owner needs repairs \$8000o.b.o., G-1000D RBLT INJ Pump & nozzles, cab new parts \$2500o.b.o., Oliver 1800 4wd parts or repair \$1500o.b.o. 301-423-5806 leave message.

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2 row JD potato planter, 48" potato washer. (610)286-9510.

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795 NH 2 beater manure spreaders, \$1800. Zimmerman 500 gallon sprayer, 40' boom, \$800. 717-738-1964

7 Sickle bar mower (Pitman type), for Ford tractor, 3pt hitch, good condition, \$225. 610/683-3329.

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AC 190XT, Series III, 3ph, new tires, used; \$5,500. 717-865-5719.

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