

Cooperative Resources International Reviews 1997 Achievements

OHIO, NEW YORK, WISCONSIN — Mid-March was a busy time for CDI subsidiaries. During that time, each subsidiary held its annual meeting and CRI conducted three annual meetings, one each in Ohio, New York, and Wisconsin.

CRI Chief Executive Officer Tom Lyon, in his annual address, reported that 1997 was "a stable year which provided the opportunity for more extensive strategic planning and the measuring of our progress against Board-adopted objectives." Lyon also told the more than 500 delegates who attended the three sessions that the newly-adopted CRI mission statement will guide the organization's decision-making for the foreseeable future. "We have made progress strategically toward making the mission statement a living and working statement," Lyon emphasized.

An example Lyon cited of the product strength offered by CRI was the February USDA sire summaries. "The February competitive price analysis indicates CRI to be very strong in the genetic value-to-price relationship," he said.

Lyon also commented on the consolidation of CRI's international activities, saying the "joint ventures with the Dutch, French and New Zealand continue to mature. We have every reason to believe that, in 1998, Holland Genetics and CRI will become strategically more closely aligned through embryo sales, sire housing and beef programming," he added.

Referring to the U.S. dairy industry, Lyon said, "... in the total scheme of our nation and world's economy, we must recognize we are relatively inconsequential, and begin to break down the barriers of individualism, pride, position and short-term fixes for coopera-

tion, coordination and integration, making the best use of the dairy farmer dollar. Our global leadership is being challenged and we must realize that global competitiveness is not just a distant possibility — it's here."

President's Address

In his final report as CRI Board president, Donald "Skip" Jensen, Penn Yan, N.Y., reflected on his more than 20 years of serving Genex members. Jensen retired from the Genex and CRI boards after he and his family decided on a career change and sold their dairy herd and farm last fall.

Jensen was instrumental in the formation of Genex and also worked closely with the Noba and 21st Century Genetics boards of directors. "My emphasis has always been to work together and help improve the lives of all dairy producers," he said. Commenting on the formation of Genex and its subsequent entry into CRI, Jensen emphasized the positives of the merger, saying, "We have one of the strongest sire lineups in the industry today and offer more choices in products and services to our members than ever before."

Noba Highlights

Working toward a common mission was the theme of the 1998 Noba Annual Meeting. The format of the Noba/CRI Annual Meeting was changed, opening more time for discussion among the delegates, directors and management. The event started the evening of Wednesday, March 18, with dinner and a presentation by Dr. Bruce Anderson of Cornell University. With down-to-earth humor, Anderson set the tone for the meeting, relating the trends of agricultural cooperatives today and considerations for a viable future. "So what is the future of cooperatives?" he asked. "I think it is very bright, but there are things

they must do." Anderson's suggestions for future viability included more aggressive strategies and communication of these strategies to members, greater emphasis on sales growth, and an attitude more like a business enterprise than a political organization.

The evening concluded with a message from Hap Allen, Noba/CRI vice president of operations, who presented Noba's "yardstick of progress" in 1997. Allen gave high marks to Noba's addition of service programs and field staff to help dairy and beef producers maximize their profitability.

The next morning, delegates and Noba/CRI staff brainstormed in small groups to develop solutions for value-added cooperative membership, creative marketing strategies, on-farm utilization of data and technology, and elimination of the herd bull.

"For the past five years, the Noba Board of Directors and staff have worked to ensure that Noba operates as a true cooperative," Noba President Palmer Steiner stated in his address. "Most importantly, the 1996 cooperative profits were returned to the membership through patronage. This was the first year since 1954 that patronage had been returned to the Noba membership, and several members have voiced their appreciation to employees and directors."

At the conclusion of his speech, President Steiner thanked the 1997 Noba Board of Directors and welcomed Larry Alexander, Big Prairie, Ohio, as a new director. Alexander represents members in District 4, including eastern and southern Ohio counties. He is no stranger to Noba, having served on the board of directors from 1974 to 1986. Alexander manages

Hyland Acres, where he and his family milk 210 Registered Jerseys and farm 500 acres.

Following the meetings, the board elected its 1998 officer team. Elected president was Bud Butcher, a dairyman from Senoia, Ga., beginning his second term on the board. Vice president is John Kronmeyer, a dairy producer from Pickford, Mich. Marvin Topp of New Bremen, Ohio, was re-elected board secretary. Also serving as Noba directors in 1998 are Larry Alexander, Big Prairie, Ohio; Jim Crocker, Valley City, Ohio; Jeff Hoepf, Tiffin, Ohio; Herby D. Lutz, Chester, S.C.; Myron Moyer, Greens Fork, Ind.; and Palmer Steiner, Apple Creek, Ohio. Representing Noba on the CRI Board will be President Butcher.

Genex Highlights

At the Genex annual meeting, Dave Hileman, Tyrone, Pa., was elected president to succeed Skip Jensen. The new vice president is Joseph Greenbacker, Durham, Conn., and Lanny Conerly, Kentwood, La., was re-elected secretary. Hileman, Greenbacker and Conerly, along with Alfred Waner Jr., Narvon, Pa. will represent Genex on the CRI Board of Directors.

The other Genex/CRI board members are: Jacques Couture, Westfield, Vt.; Paul Greene, Berlin, N.Y.; Earl Fuhrman, Hanover, Pa.; Lee Kummer, Evans City, Pa.; John Fogler, Exeter, Maine; Hugh Humphreys, New Hartford, N.Y.; Charles Slade, Homer, N.Y.; and Ron Totten, Strafford, N.Y.

The Genex/CRI Board voted to accept areas of Tennessee as membership territory for the cooperative following last year's addition of Virginia and the non-member counties of West Vir-

ginia.

21st Century Highlights

Approximately 300 delegates, directors, employees and friends of 21st Century Genetics attended the annual meeting in Eau Claire. With the board being downsized from 15 to nine directors, delegates met in regional caucuses and elected the following men as directors: Randy Holewinski, Seymour, Wis.; John Ruedinger, Van Dyne, Wis.; David Watkins, Moscow, Iowa; Bob Prah, Wausau, Wis.; Walt Wytenbach, Kasson, Minn.; Cal Mullen, Rice Lake, Wis.; Steve Anderson, Foley, Minn.; Duane Nelson, Winthrop, Minn.; and Alan Haugdahl, Henning, Minn.

In the board reorganization meeting, Ruedinger was elected president, Watkins first vice president, Anderson second vice president and Mullen secretary. Ruedinger, Watkins and Anderson will represent 21st Century on the CRI Board.

Doug Wilson, chief operating officer for 21st Century and Noba, told the 21st Century delegate body that the cooperative's role in the CRI structure is to operate in a responsible way and take to the membership a product, program and service which fulfills the new Mission Statement. With CRI sampling 270 Holstein sires and 50 colored breed sires each year, along with affiliations and contracts with Holland Genetics and LIC in New Zealand, Wilson said, "No other membership in the U.S. is investing as much in genetic selection pressure."

Wilson also commented on the amount of information dairy producers have available for sire selection. "There is absolutely information overload," he said, "and the real issue is losing sight of real

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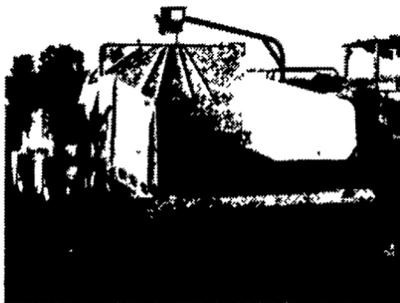
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