

Mid-Atlantic Dairy Conference Set For Feb. 24-25

CHAMBERSBURG (Franklin Co.) — Successful dairy producers need a plan to meet the challenges they'll face in the next millennium. How can they develop a workable business plan and adopt the latest technology? Can it be done without compromising the family's values and goals?

The 1999 Mid-Atlantic Dairy Management Conference, "Systematic Approach to Dairying in the Next Millennium," promises to be a valuable conference with practical presentations on Business Viability, Specialization, Biosecurity, and Information and Nutrient Management. Each topic and speaker was chosen to help dairy producers think through their future business and family needs. The conference, planned by industry and university representatives from the Mid-Atlantic region will be held at the Radisson Penn Harris Hotel and Convention Center in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania on February 24th and 25th, 1999.

The Decision Case "The Final Permit: Will Environmental Policy Crack the Retirement

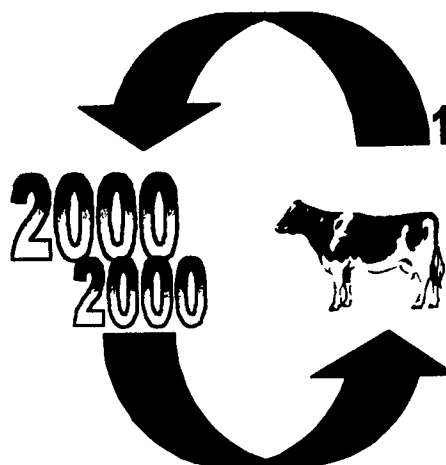
Nest Egg?" will be an integral part of the conference with the audience and speakers interacting to find the most practical solution. This is a case of a farm expanding from a 65-cow dairy/grain farm in the early 1990s to possible 525-cow specialized farm by 2007. The case will be presented at the opening of the conference and then speakers will contribute their expertise to different aspects of the case. After breakout discussion groups and presentations of possible solutions, a producer panel will respond to what is practical from their point of view and attempt to integrate the bits of knowledge into a unified solution of the case. Speakers include dairy producers, industry experts and university faculty from across the United States.

Make your plans now to attend so that you can hear the latest about nutrient loading, information management, comingling, water quality and contracting heifers and forages.

The program has been approved for American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists (ARPAS) credits and

for Pennsylvania Continuing Education Credits for Veterinarians.

The registration fee for the two-day conference and tradeshow is \$150 with a \$25 reduction for the second person from the same farm. The fee includes a copy of the conference proceedings, three meals and access to all conference activities. The registration deadline is February 10th, 1999. For more information or a registration brochure contact Beth Moore, Conference Coordinator by e-mail at beth@innernet.net or call her at 717-375-2639.



Dairy Farmers Strive For Balance

CHAMBERSBURG (Franklin Co.) — More and more dairy farmers today are seeking a balance between time spent managing their dairy operations and time devoted to family and leisure activities, according to Joe Conlin of the University of Minnesota.

"Dairy farmers want more time off and more quality time with their family," Conlin says "There is a lot of value living in the country and being your own

boss, but the constant work can take its toll"

Conlin, scheduled to speak at the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Management Conference Feb 24-25 in Camp Hill, says growth in profitability is the key to striking a balance between farm and family goals "There are a lot of opportunities for farmers to make changes and to improve profitability," he says

Among these "opportunities" are controlling the costs of production, increasing milk production and improving labor efficiency. A "huge cost," for example, is feed "Look at ways to improve rations and improve consumption," Conlin says "Also consider alternative feed sources that can be worked into rations with excellent nutrient resources"

Farmers also can consider

increasing their milk production. This can come in one of two ways more production per cow or more cows. "Many herds tend to be too small to meet lifestyle goals," Conlin says "How much milk does a family need to market to support these goals?"

Conlin also suggests improving labor efficiency For some dairy farmers that may mean moving from a tie-stall to a free-stall barn "A lot of farmers are producing milk in stall barns that are physically wearing and tearing them down," he says

Conlin will address these issues and others during the "Business Viability Session" of the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Management Conference For more information or a registration brochure, contact Beth Moore, conference coordinator, at (717) 375-2639 or email beth@innernet.net

Environmental Issues On Tap

CHAMBERSBURG (Franklin Co.) — A major environmental concern for dairy farmers is nutrient pollution of surface water, but many farmers are unaware of cost-effective techniques available to reduce losses of these nutrients from farms, according to Katharine Knowlton, research scientist at Virginia Tech Department of Dairy Science.

"Environmentalists, scientists, farmers and the public are increasingly concerned about the amount of phosphorus in surface water such as lakes, rivers and streams," says

Knowlton, who is researching the impact of phosphorus in dairy feeding programs on the resulting excretion — manure — and on the environment.

Knowlton, scheduled to speak at the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Management Conference Feb. 24-25 in Camp Hill, says dairy farmers have a real opportunity to reduce surface water pollution by changing their feeding programs.

"Most farmers feed phosphorus in excess of current requirements," Knowlton says. "It is commonly believed that over-feeding phosphorus reduces

reproduction problems in the dairy herd. However, there is no research to support such a benefit."

In recent years, excess phosphorus in water has been pinpointed as a cause of algae blooms and fish kills. "We thought if we controlled soil erosion we could control the amount of phosphorus leaving the farm," Knowlton says. "But we've discovered that phosphorus runoff can occur even without erosion in intensive animal production areas."

Decreasing the amount of phosphorus in feed rations by 20 percent to 30 percent will decrease the amount of phosphorus excretion per animal by the same proportion. This directly reduces the amount of phosphorus that needs to be land applied, reducing the risk of phosphorus runoff.

The obvious beneficiary of such action is the environment, but farmers benefit, too. "Farmers will benefit by reduced feed costs," Knowlton says, adding that phosphorus is the most expensive feed ingredient. Savings on feed costs could total \$2,500 per year for a 100-cow farm.

And for farmers facing environmental regulations in the next five to six years, there is an added benefit of reducing phosphorus in feed. "If we begin making changes now, it will be easier to meet the phosphorus-based regulations when they are imposed," Knowlton says.

Knowlton will talk in more detail about "Feeding Management to Reduce Nutrient Loading" at the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Management Conference. For more information or a registration brochure, contact Beth Moore, conference coordinator, at 717-375-2639 or beth@innernet.net.

Growth In Dairy Business Requires Changes On Farm

CHAMBERSBURG (Franklin Co.) — Dairyman Tom Frey of Frey Dairy Farms Inc. in Conestoga, Lancaster County, is no stranger to change. In fact, he currently is building a new freestall barn and milking parlor expected to be completed by late March 1999.

With the help of 20 full-time employees, Frey milks 1,000 cows and farms 900 acres. Soon after construction is completed in March, he will begin milking three times a day. He expects a 6 percent to 8 percent growth in cow numbers through home-raised replacements.

Frey readily admits that the approach he has taken to managing his farm operation usually has been in response to a change in circumstances or conditions. "I'm in it for the long term," he says of dairy farming. "If I'm not willing to change, then I would eventually go out of business."

That's the philosophy Frey will share with other dairy management farmers and industry leaders at the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Management Conference Feb. 24-25 in Camp Hill.

Frey began farming with his brother, Clifton, in 1987 following the death of their father. In 1992, while constructing a 600-cow freestall barn, Clifton left the operation and Tom began buying out his brother's share of the business. This change "forced the way I do things," Frey says

In response, Frey went from three-times-a-day milking to milking more cows twice a day. He also sold some peripheral real estate and slowed down aggressive debt payments at the bank.

Other changes, particularly in operations management, were to follow. These included custom cropping, custom manure handling and custom calf raising. The number one reason for these changes, Frey says, is labor.

Frey will talk about these changes and other plans for his dairy operation at the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Management Conference. For more information or a registration brochure, contact Beth Moore, conference coordinator, at 717-375-2639 or beth@innernet.net.



REGISTRATION FORM

Full Name(s) _____

Business _____

Each name as desired on name tag:

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone () _____

Walk-in Registration fee is \$170, \$145 for the second person from the same farm. Please bring this form and your payment to the registration table at the Radisson Penn Harris on Wednesday, February 24th between 10 AM and noon. A call to Beth Moore, Conference Coordinator on Monday or Tuesday would be appreciated (717) 375-2639; e-mail: beth@innernet.net.

Makes checks payable to:
Dairy Management Conference