



From the Department of Dairy and Animal Science

This regular column from Penn State's Department of Dairy and Animal Science features the research findings, student opportunities, and reports on other important topics generated in the Department. The back issues of the column are archived on Lancaster Farming's Internet www.lancasterfarming.com home page. Look for them.

The World Wide Web In Education

Daniel R. Deaver, Ph.D.

Every day we see references to the World Wide Web, or WWW, and its potential to impact our lives. Major TV networks, newspapers, retail stores, movies, entertainers, sports teams, large and small businesses, and, of course, universities have a presence on the Web. The Department of Dairy and Animal Science recognized the importance of the Internet early in its development, and was one of the first departments in the University to hire a person dedicated to maintaining and enhancing our networks and connection to the world through the Internet. Because of this, we have been able to take advantage of our physical and technical infrastructure to develop impressive new tools for the classroom.

Faculty face a number of

challenges, including how to provide current information, interact with large numbers of students, and help students self-evaluate their progress prior to exams. Having information and learning tools available 24 hours a day is a distinct advantage.

Over the past nine months, the Department has developed software that allows faculty to make a variety of different materials available to students over the Internet. The development team included three faculty in Dairy and Animal Science (Dan Deaver, Lisa Holden and Dale Over) and two exceptional programmers (Craig Benner and Rob Walker - also undergraduate students). Each faculty member of the team teaches different types of courses in terms of class size and level. A major objective was to develop a single versatile package that could

be utilized for many different courses, and to have the material accessible to faculty and students from literally anywhere in the world. Finally, to increase its potential acceptability by both students and instructors we sought to make the program easy to use.

The program is called CourseSTAR, and was tested last fall in ANSC 431W - Physiology of Reproduction in Farm Animals. Students' responses to the software were very positive. They were able to obtain supplemental notes, copies of graphics used in lecture, and access to laboratory materials. They even took several quizzes that were immediately graded by the computer and returned. In the past, the laboratories were opened several nights before each laboratory practical. However as class size increased, from 20 students in 1990 to 88 students in 1998, this optional study time became difficult to manage. This year, CourseSTAR provided images of reproductive tracts, available for students to review from any location 24 hours a day!

CourseSTAR will be expanded dramatically in the coming year. The software will be available to any instructor at the University Park campus who would like to use it. In a survey, students who used CourseSTAR said they would like to see more courses using it, and they felt CourseSTAR was better than other software they had used designed to accomplish similar goals.

There is an important distinction between teaching and information transfer. Software like CourseSTAR does not teach. The art of teaching will continue to be

highly personalized and instructor dependent. In many ways CourseStar is similar to good management tools used by progressive livestock producers. It is of great benefit in providing up-to-date information and material to students. In order to reap the benefits of this technology, it will need to be used correctly. Computer technologies are here to stay. Incorporation of computer technologies into many of our courses will help develop and re-enforce critical life skills in our students.

We invite you to sample the ANSC 431W materials on CourseSTAR. Not all options may be available to you as a visitor (like the quizzes) but you will be able to gain a sense of what the technology can provide students. You can access the site from the Dairy and Animal Science homepage (<http://www.das.psu.edu/>) and follow the link to CourseStar. For UserName enter LanFarm and use DAS4U as the password. Then follow the link to ANSC 431W materials. Your comments and suggestions are welcomed!

National Dairy Production Program

BRATTLEBORO, Vt. — In a recent AP wire story it was reported that a Holstein cow named LA-Foster Blstar Lucy 607, registration number 14599252, set a new world milk production record by producing 75,275 pounds of milk in a 365-day period.

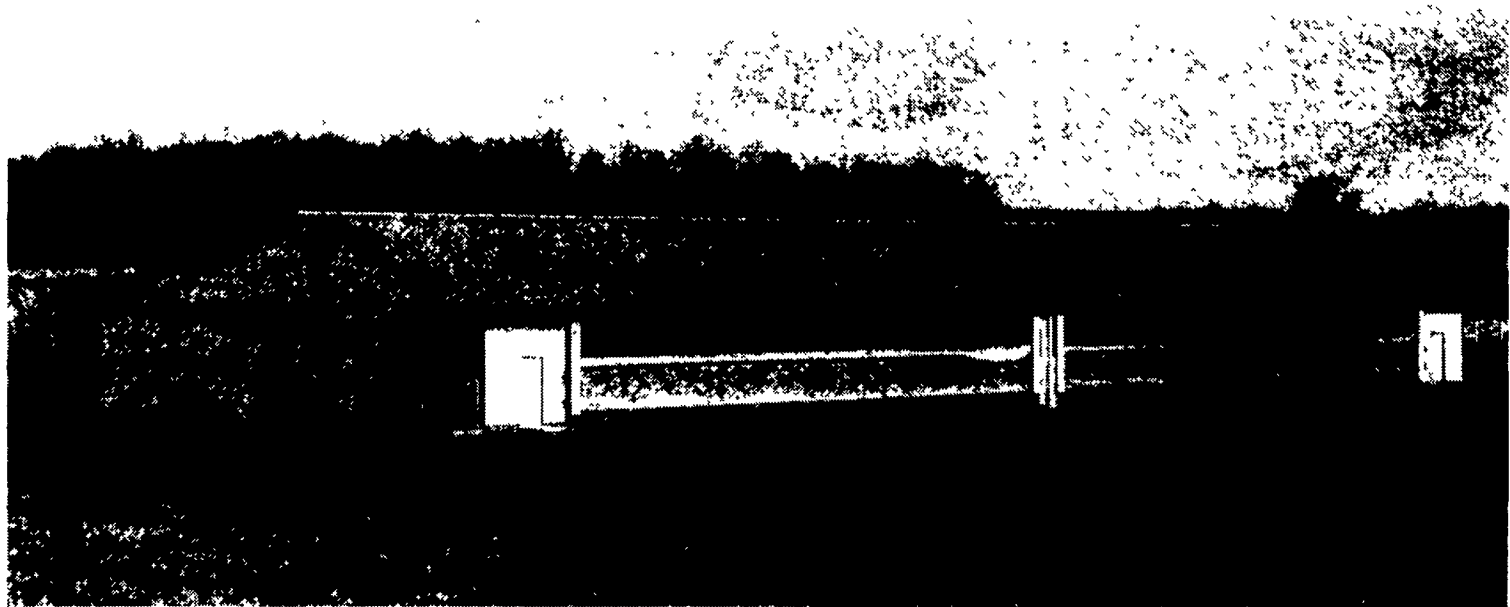
The Holstein Association USA is the national breed organization whose Production Leader Program designates official, national and state breed leading records. In the instance of Lucy the lactation record begun on December 12, 1997 and completed December 11, 1998, does not meet the Production Leader requirements set by the Holstein Association. While the data collection procedures appear to meet the basic conditions required for publication by the Holstein Association, they do not meet the current, more stringent requirements required for official recognition as a Production Leader.

In 1997, the organization

responsible for the collection of dairy production records, Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA), underwent a change in their approach to meeting the information needs of the U.S. dairy industry. One of the changes was the movement from rule enforcement to procedures that provide data collection information. This shifted much of the responsibility for determining the value and use of records to member producers and industry allies.

As a result, Holstein Association USA, created revised procedures to determine the eligibility of animals to participate in Official Recognition Programs. In order for a Holstein cow to be recognized as a Production Leader the herd owner must be enrolled in the Association's Premier TriStar production records program service option. In this system, eligibility is based on the completeness, supervision, and verification of lactation records.

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