

FOCUS

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS & CUSTOMERS



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PA DHIA Annual Member Management Report

DAVE SLUSSER General Manager

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — It has been an honor to serve you as your general manager for the last five years.

This report will include what we have accomplished these last five years, our plans for 1999, and projections into the Twenty-first Century.

PA DHIA has completed the third straight year of profit and introduced a 1999 budget that required no feed adjustment. We are very proud of this record, however five years ago it was a different story.

In 1994, PA DHIA had a major operating loss, and along with National DHIA, N.E. DHIA, Vermont DHIA, and Ohio DHIA, was involved in a major lawsuit.

For the next 3 1/2 years, the association paid out over \$1,500,000.00 in debt reduction and legal fees, however during that same period of time new services and accomplishments occurred.

Our innocence was vindicated, however not before accumulating large legal bills.

Since this time, PA DHIA has moved forward with new services and accomplishments. They are as follows:

- 1) developed a Strategic Long Range Plan.
- 2) improved accuracy of usable records from 76% to 83% (highest in the Nation)
- 3) introduced MUN testing, having tested to date 1.5 million cows
- 4) supported MUN with educational meetings
- 5) became first DHIA to transfer data to farmers and consultants through the Internet.
- 6) introduced Performance Economics to DHIA.
- 7) became the national leader in innovative test plans.

This past year was no exception to our forward progress. A new cost reduced owner-sampler program, which recorded a 45 percent growth during the year was introduced.

Other accomplishments were:

- 1) a statewide membership marketing program with David Bigelow.
- 2) PA DHIA farm consulting service with George Cudoc.
- 3) partnering our truck routes with milk cooperatives, partnering in field service with AI Cooperatives.

4) a new nitrogen management report

5) new laser printers for farm management reports.

6) developed Heifer 98, the first Windows 95, 98, NT farm management software

7) worked hard to get uniformity in MUN testing throughout the US DHIA system.

8) worked to restore unity in National DHIA

9) provided a field certification survey for California DHIA

10) began development of other outside sources of income.

None of these accomplishments could have been accomplished without the hard work and loyalty of our members and employees. This spirit will be the driving force that propels us into the next century.

PA DHIA is not a cost to dairymen but an investment.

If you are not getting a 200-percent return on your investment, please give us a call. We can and will improve your profits.

George Cudoc can be a valuable help in the utilization of your PA DHIA records. I have gotten nothing but positive comments from our members who have used his service.

If you have three consecutive MUN tests with PA DHIA, you are entitled to a free farm visit from George upon your request. Our service will improve farm profitability through improved milk quality and production efficiency. No other DHIA supports it membership with such service or accuracy of information.

Plans for 1999 are more exciting. Just released is our Windows 95, 98, NT labAnalyst program. This program, designed for users of lab test analysis, SAP herds, and consultants, is powerful.

Costing only \$30, the program is an awesome product. the MUN report, somatic cell report, and many other reports are just as they appear on hard copy in your reports.

Our herd management program, Barn Owl 2000 (now in test herds) will include Heifer 98 and the labAnalyst program. These powerful programs are developed by our farmer-owned and controlled PA DHIA.

Most of our accomplishments could not have been possible without having our own Data Processing Center and programmers.

Other activities being planned for 1999 are:

1) converting entirely to PC processing

2) research possibilities of connecting Barn Owl 2000 to a financial package

3) performing our own meter repair and certification of meters

4) performing new lab services

5) seeking further partnering including breed associations

6) continuing our attempt to bring National DHIA together.

The next century will bring new excitement and challenges to Pennsylvania and PA DHIA.

Farm management information technology will be the future with large and small herds alike.

Data entry services and sample collection will be important roles for our field service. The most powerful computer programs in the world are worthless without high quality data entry. PA DHIA will project more information into the future, giving projected calving intervals, days open and cash flow.

Closer relationships will evolve between our cooperative and other DHIA's.

Your PA DHIA will be provid-

ing American farm management technology, information technology, and processing throughout the world via the Internet. With this information highway we

will increase the opportunity for members to market genetics.

PA DHIA has challenged the status quo in American DHIA's and now we are challenging it throughout the world. Dairy farmers can govern and control their own cooperative and their own destiny.

Farmer to farmer we can improve the world one cow at a time.

Component Tests Tell You More Than What's In The Milk

GEORGE CUDOC

Consulting Dairyman

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — In the past, butterfat and protein component tests were used mostly to identify superior cows.

Breeding superior cows would increase a dairy farm's milk payment - which is based heavily on protein and butterfat content.

Component tests were seldom used to sharpen management skills. But today's dairymen can work with on-farm professionals to look at component testing in a much broader scope.

DHIA fat and protein information tells a lot about the nutritional status of dairy cows. Individual data that can be sorted into groups helps pinpoint specific places to start your quest to improve nutritional management. This is so much more useful than bulk tank information which suggests problems exist, but gives no information as to where you begin to solve them.

Butterfat is the oldest component test and still the most important in that it reflects a cow's rumen health.

We know that cows typically produce milk in the early weeks of lactation with a butterfat test above normal. As lactation proceeds, fat levels go down while milk production peaks, then gradually go back up.

Early-lactation butterfat tests which are below normal (3.8 percent in Holsteins) may not seem significant at the time, but will rumen acidosis cause

laminitis later in the lactation? What about high fat tests? Can we learn something from this, or does it just indicate higher prices for our milk?

A very high test in early lactation might mean your cows are burning fat reserves at an accelerated rate. You may want

a vet to check them for ketosis.

The goal is using butterfat as a measure of rumen health is to ward off problems that may erode profits later. Poor performance and sick cow treatment costs are huge profit robbers.

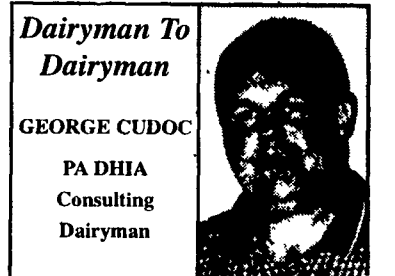
Milk protein has overtaken butterfat as the largest basis of payment to farms, except in rare situations. This is reason enough to use the component test in managing nutrition.

Low protein doesn't just reduce the value of milk. Low protein, along with high butterfat, usually indicates low dry matter intake, which is often associated with metabolic disorders such as ketosis.

Drops in protein alone indicate a shortfall in energy consumed by your cows. This may be due to either reduced dry matter intake or a lack of fermentable carbohydrates in the diet.

Identifying the cause of low protein will put you on track to preventing a repetition. Look at factors relating to cow comfort when dry matter intakes is the problem. Poor ration formulation or delivery can cause low protein tests even when a cow's environment is all that it should be.

MUN (milk urea nitrogen) testing is another component test now becoming available, and it can have significant impact on bottom-line performance.



Testing individual cows for MUN, like butterfat and protein, can help evaluate nutrition performance and give insight to problems associated with the nutritional needs of your cows.

In general, high MUN values indicate protein utilization is not what it should be. Overfeeding protein, of course, may be responsible, but more often than not the problem is a combination of less-than-desirable carbohydrate levels and too much, or the wrong kind, of protein.

The use of MUN, along with protein tests, can point the way to better cow nutrition.

Low MUN, along with low protein in lactation, tells you that rumen-degradable protein and carbohydrates are both low.

Low MUN, along with high protein, shows low degradable protein with excess degradable carbohydrates.

These are just some examples of MUN uses in the field.