

OCU dhia

Scott Williams
Training Coordinator

Call 1-800-DHI-TEST, fax (814) 865-3294
Web site <http://www.dhia.psu.edu>
Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association
DHIA Service Center, Orchard Road, University Park, PA 16802

PA DHIA To Shutdown Mainframe Operations After 43 Years

Pat Toretti
PA DHIA Staff Writer

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.)—After nearly 43 years of continuous operation that began in the basement of Old Main with a card-punch and mechanical calculator setup manned by extension staff and technical assistants, Pennsylvania DHIA is shutting down its mainframe computer operations. And for DRPC manager Jim Boyer, it can't come a minute too soon. "This is the culmination of a project we began about two years ago, but we really didn't get up a full head of steam until this past October," says Boyer. "From now on, the mainframe we all knew and loved for most of our careers is history. Pennsylvania DHIA has become the first Dairy Records Processing Center in the United States to

move its entire large-scale operation to the PC platform." The list of firsts is not new to PA DHIA, which was the first DHIA in the US to test for protein, the first to test SCC, had the first computerized DHIA lab in the country, was arguably the first DHIA to generate significant MUN testing, had the first Windows '95 farm management programs of any US DRPC, and was the first American processing center on the Internet.

What will the change mean to Pennsylvania dairymen who use PA DHIA's system? "Not much actually," says Boyer, "on the other hand, quite a lot. Not much, because we've actually been running the new system parallel with the mainframe for some months to make sure we'd worked all the bugs out. As a matter of fact, many farmers

have already received their third set of test results from the new system. They should not have noticed a difference at all."

"At the same time, we'll be saving a tremendous amount on maintenance and other expenses that are part of the cost of doing business when you're dealing in big iron. We're not dealing in big iron anymore. We'll save at least 10% in operating costs the first year alone. And in terms of capitalization, we have gone from about \$100,000 per year we had to amortize forever, to effectively zero."

"There are huge incidental costs associated with mainframe operations," Boyer continues, "you have to provide physical security and environmental controls for large computing centers, and you have to pay a premium price for software and operating systems that aren't mass produced the way PC's are. Here's just one example of a cost most people don't know about that's associated with processing on large platforms: With mainframes you've got to pay big bucks for a disaster recovery program. In the nature of the game you simply must assume that your computer—no matter how big or small—is going to crash. With a large operation you've got to be prepared to move archives, live files, developers and support people to a complete backup operation on retainer somewhere in the event of a catastrophe. That's a part of the cost of doing business. By contrast, we can now afford to have multiple redundant systems in the event of failure at a

fraction of the cost. In the very worst case scenario—where all of our equipment is completely destroyed—we can go to our off-site backup, pick up a tape that has all the cows, all the tests, and all the lactations ever recorded in Pennsylvania on a single tape about the size of a pack of cigarettes. And on the way back from the U-Store we can stop at Sam's Club and buy the computer we'll use to resume operations. That's the kind of flexibility we now have."

But the cost benefits were not the real motivation to move the operation, Boyer admits. "What we were interested in doing was maximizing the productivity of our developers. Simply put, the mainframe is no place to develop software. It's a waste of time and it's a frustrating environment for serious program development. By moving our operations out of the mainframe we accomplish two things: First, those legacy programmers almost instantly became more productive. Second, because we can now focus all of our energy on the PC—where the future is—we aren't wasting half of our talent in a dead programming world."

Does it really matter all that much where a programmer plugs his keyboard in? "Yes!" answers an enthusiastic Joe Hayes, a former Clinton county dairy farmer who's spent the last twenty seven years in program development for PA DHIA. "For the last two years the people in the mainframe group have been watching the

PC developers working on Heifer '98, Barn Owl 2000, and a number of other projects and we've been saying 'when do we get to do these cool things?' Now, all of us get to code on the edge. It's more satisfying work for us, and if the reception that we've gotten from our Windows '95 programs at the district meetings is any indication, it's a lot more productive work for our farmers and the consultants who support them."

"You also have to consider this," Boyer adds, "the talent pool to develop dairy records programs throughout the entire world is an extremely small, extremely specialized group of people. With the red-hot job market for programmers right now, you're very lucky to retain people for more than two, possibly three years."

But haven't people been doing records on PC's for a long time? "Let's be clear about what we're talking about here," Boyer responds. "We are not talking about a new farm management program, or even a pure 'Official Records' system for PC's. What we are talking about are all the functions provided by a dairy records processing center: invoicing, affiliate management, lab analysis, control of the analytical instruments, QCS reporting requirements, transmissions to and from technicians, records sent to USDA, monthly summaries for county agents, benchmarks for vets and agribusiness consultants, breed association classification and formats, and

(Turn to Page A33)

Thanks and Congratulations to



Kenneth & Dorothy Martin, Mifflinburg, PA
On Their New

2 - 44'x500' Broiler Houses

Northeast
agri
systems

Quality
Building
and
Equipment

Featuring:

- **CHORE-TIME Feeding**
- **CHORE-TIME Nipples**
- **CHORE-TIME Ventilation**

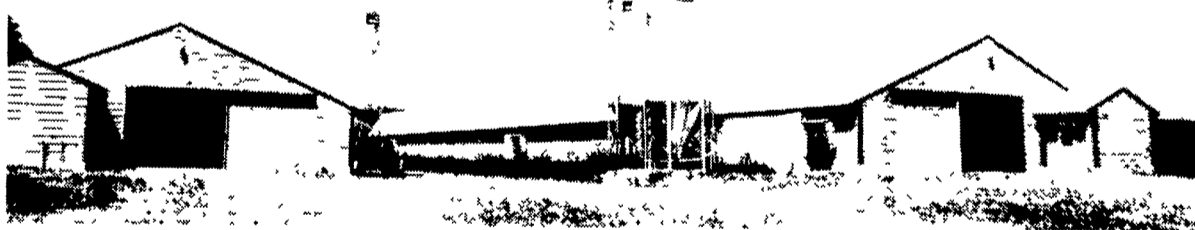


Automated Controls

- **Panelized Building**
- **Poured Walls**

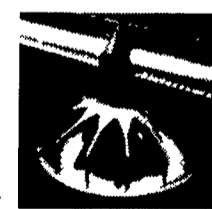


Chore-Tronics™ Controls give you the competitive edge. The Chore-Tronics™ Line of controls was developed specifically to meet today's management challenges. Improvements in individual systems, genetics, and nutrition still offer production advances, but these may not offer enough of an edge in today's competitive market. Properly integrated house management using Chore-Tronics Controls for the ultimate in flexibility and precision offers the greatest potential for a competitive advantage.



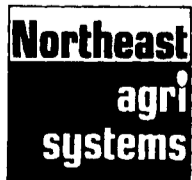
Chore-Time nipple drinkers come fully assembled for quick and easy installation and feature a low profile aluminum support channel. To eliminate problems there is no glue, sonic welding or rubber "O" rings in the nipples, saddles and pipe assemblies.

Chore-Time's new MODEL C2® PLUS Broiler Feeding System gets birds off to a good start, minimizes wasted feed, and provides birds with consistent access to fresh feed. The latest in Chore-Time's 45-year history of outstanding broiler feeding systems, the MODEL C2® PLUS includes a reinforced pan eating area and cone wear surface. This may be Chore-Time's most durable broiler feeder yet.



"Building and Equipment by Northeast Agri Systems"

Authorized **CHORE-TIME** master distributor since 1982



Northeast Agri Systems, Inc.

Flyway Business Park
139A West Airport Road
Lititz, PA 17543
1-800-673-2580
Ph: (717) 569-2702

Delmarva Office
305 University Ave.
Federsburg, Md.
1-800-735-6361
410-754-9434



Store Hours: Monday-Friday 7:30 am to 4:30 pm
24 Hour-7 Day Repair Service



Contracts Available
Call For Information
• Broiler • Turkeys • Hogs
• Breeders •
Organic/Natural Egg •
Call for our free brochure
"What is contract
production?"
Call Jay Sensenig
1-800-673-2580

CHORE-TIME

Dedicated to
PRODUCT
LEADERSHIP™