

Dairy Advisory Team Coordinators Save Time And Improve Problem Solving

Shelly Hershey, William Heald, Lisa Holden, Larry Hutchinson and Beth Moore

Spring has arrived and many producers want to accomplish more in a day. While some producers struggle with the issue of time management, many are finding new ways to solve problems more effectively with less time spent. Over ninety Pennsylvania Dairy Advisory Teams were started over the last four years to improve farm business while saving time.

What is a Dairy Advisory Team?

A Dairy Advisory Team works together with dairy producers to develop new ideas, set goals, and achieve a vision. The dairy producer chooses team members who best complement farm goals and are often selected from current advisors. Instead of meeting one on one with the producer, key consultants meet together to share information and improve farm goals. Teams often include veterinarians, lenders, nutritionists, cooperative field persons, accountants, partners, experienced producers, consultants, and business management experts. Teams typically have five members with more complex businesses having larger teams. One third of the dairy advisory team should be farm decision makers.

One team member serves as a coordinator who works with the producer to organize and facilitate team meetings. Team meetings are short, focused, and regular. Advice given by team members is always in harmony with the producer's goals, values, and constraints. While all team members contribute to and learn from the advisory process, the farm owner makes all decisions and determines all actions taken.

The Rewards Of Being A Team Coordinator:

Scott Hodgson, Sales & Nutrition Manager of Cumberland Valley Cooperative, has been a coordinator of two Dairy Advisory Teams in Pennsylvania. He is also a member of two additional teams. Hodgson says that advisory teams help him better manage his time.

"I meet with each team once a month and am always ready to make an additional visit or phone call if there is a problem between meetings. Teams help producers verbalize their frustrations and challenges. Making a difference on the farm requires the team to understand the problems and issues that the farm faces.

Having key consultants together around one table puts these problem issues into perspective," Hodgson said.

He has also benefited from networking with other agricultural business people on the team. "I am able to provide better services to my customers with the knowledge gained from team members." Scott enjoys the sense of accomplishment that he feels when teams exceed their goals.

The Role of the Team Coordinator:

The Dairy Advisory Team process includes data analyses, a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), problem solving, goal setting, action planning, monitoring, and continuous quality improvement. In order to facilitate this process effectively, the team must have a skillful coordinator. The team coordinator plays an important role during

the team meeting as well as outside the team meeting. An effective coordinator keeps the team focused on the importance of increased productivity, profitability, and satisfaction for the producer.

During a team meeting, a coordinator keeps a meeting moving, and welcomes ideas from everyone, especially shy team members. Appropriately established ground rules encourage shared thoughts in a trusting atmosphere. A coordinator fosters this atmosphere by controlling dominating conversations and by helping team members listen to one another.

Hodgson says a great deal of information is gathered during a team meeting. "It is my responsibility as a coordinator to design a system of tabulating data and to share it with the other team member."

The system may be as simple as listing critical data, writing a short summary statement, making written action plans and

reporting monthly progress. Action plans determine tasks, spread the workload among the team, and set deadlines. Major outcomes should be shared in written form to all team members after each meeting.

Together with the producer, the coordinator can use action plans to set an agenda for the next meeting. The team coordinator summarizes farm data and creates a "Dairy Advisory Team Meeting Report." Hodgson says that this meeting report includes information from all aspects of the farm and is a great tool to monitor team progress toward goals.

Who Should Coordinate?

Few people are experienced team coordinators. Talented people need to be identified and encouraged to develop their team skills. An enthusiastic person who possesses excellent

communication skills and understands social dynamics makes a great team coordinator. The coordinator will use these interpersonal skills when facilitating a meeting of diverse personalities. Coordinators tend to be organized people with a service background: veterinarians, consultants, lenders, etc.

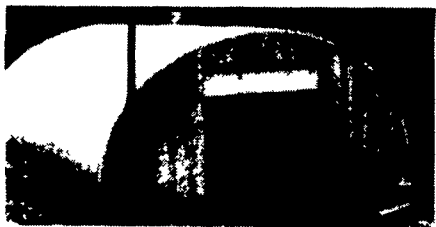
For more information about Dairy Advisory teams and coordinators, please contact: Beth Moore, Dairy Advisory Teams, Project Manager, Department of Dairy and Animal Science, The Pennsylvania State University, (717) 375-2639 Voice and Fax, beth@innernet.net E-mail; or Shelly Hershey, Dairy Advisory Teams, Project Liaison, Department of Dairy and Animal Science, The Pennsylvania State University, (814) 865-4685 Voice, (814) 865-7442 Fax, shershey@das.psu.edu E-mail.

MILK AMERICA'S HEALTH KICK

INCREDIBLE LOW PRICES!! SUPER TOUGH STEEL BUILDINGS



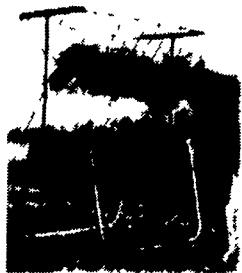
- Equipment storage
- Workshops
- Hay and animal shelter



Available models:
25 x 32 (2 left) 45 x 90 (1 left)
30 x 44 (3 left) 50 x 100 (2 left)
40 x 62 (4 left) 55 x 150 (2 left)
call for other sizes

Factory Direct 800/825-5059

Feedbunks



5 Ft. and 8 Ft. HORSE FEED BUNK and HAY RACK



Cattle & Sheep 5' Galv. Feed Bunks - GFB-5P - GUB-5P

- Tough polyethylene bottoms won't rust, crack or rot.
- Trough is a full 10" deep
- Galvanized all welded construction (Galvanized after welding to prevent rust).
- No sharp edges to injure livestock.

Lil Spring

by MIRACO

BIG Spring

All Poly Construction with Urethane Foam Insulation



5 gallon capacity is perfect for all sizes of livestock. 16" drinking height.



The FIRST waterers designed for free stall installations. 60 gallon capacity, 24" drinking height.

HUBER'S ANIMAL HEALTH SUPPLIES

810 Tulpehocken Rd., Myerstown, PA 17067

717-866-2246

Hours: Mon. 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thurs. & Fri. 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Tues. & Wed. 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sat. 7:30 a.m. to Noon

Gates Not Just Another Belt!

SUPER HC® AND SUPER HC® MOLDED NOTCH BELTS are designed for use where conventional V-Belt drives are impractical, where space, weight or sheave limitations are present and where increased horsepower capacity and higher speeds are required.



FEATURES:

- Gates "Curves"**
Concave sides, Radius Relief and Arched Top combine to minimize wear and assure proper support and strength.
- Full Oil & Heat Resistance**
Special material used throughout the belt provides resistance and also helps resist ozone, sunlight, weather and aging.
- Tough Tensile Members for Extra Strength**
Superior resistance to fatigue and shock loads. Special bonding material surrounding tensile members provides long service without separation.
- Molded Notches Reduce Bending Stress**
Notches are precision engineered for uniform distribution of stresses. Also dissipate the heat of rapid flexing.
- Bandless, Precision Machined Edge for Even Wedging Action**
Precisely machined to exact dimensions for uniform fit and reduction of belt slippage.



The world's most trusted name in belts and hose.

DEALER INQUIRIES

Join the leading team in belt marketing today. We are looking for dealers to market this competitive quality belt in new locations. Call Jay Laughman to discuss several dealership options.

Beiler Hydraulics
HYDRAULICS • PNEUMATICS • POWER TRANSMISSION
440 Concrete Ave • Leola PA 17540 • 717-656-4978 • Fax 717-656-4682