

A Dairy Farm Necessity: 'A Feeder's Kit'

NORTH CORNWALL (Lebanon Co.) — Managing dairy feeding systems for optimum cow performance is critically important and merits special attention, especially when profit margins are tight.

Penn State cooperative extension will be helping producers design and implement management systems to manage and control feeding systems.

Through a series of three hands-on workshops, dairy managers and feeders will receive "A Feeder's Kit" to help them achieve optimum performance from their dairy rations.

The first two workshops will be at the Lebanon County Extension Office March 14-21 with the third session planned for Meadow Wood Farms near Lebanon March 28. Sessions run from 9:30

a.m. to 3 p.m.

A feeder's kit will be provided for each farm enrolled and participants will receive instruction on how to effectively use each of the items in the kit during the sessions. Participants should bring a sample of all ensiled forages and a TMR sample to the program. They will have the opportunity to practice measuring forage dry matter, pH, and particle size. Measuring, plotting, and analyzing particle size data will also be featured.

During the second day's program, participants will examine NDF intake for their herds and demonstrate their understanding of this fiber management tool. A hands-on computer lab will feature two spreadsheets that will help managers and feeders monitor ration changes and help con-

trol TMR mixes. The afternoon segment will feature carbohydrate management in dairy rations.

The final session at Meadow Wood Farms will begin with instruction on silage sampling and pH assessment in ensiled forages. Feedbunk observations, including the particle size of the TMR, feed refusal, and cow observations will be featured. Feeding facilities fundamentals will be taught including bunk issues and design, feeding area surfaces, and interactions of nutrition and dairy facilities including air quality, temperature, cooling, cow comfort, and cud chewing time.

Registration fee including the take-home items in the feeder's kit is \$500 per farm (one feeder's kit included). The fee for additional participants from the same

farm is \$40 per person to cover meal and refreshment costs. The program is limited to 10 farms so that individual assistance can be provided during the many hands-on activities planned.

To register for the sessions, contact the customer service desk

at the York extension office at 112 Pleasant Acres Road, York, PA 17402-9041, (717) 840-7408, fax: (717) 755-5968, or e-mail Tim Beck at tbeck@psu.edu.

Farm Entry Strategies Work For Beginners

MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.) — With less than two percent of Americans calling themselves farmers and many of those earning more than half of their income off the farm, beginners ask, "How can I get into farming in the current farm economy? What does it take?"

Pennsylvania Farm Link's Beginning Farmer workshop Feb. 17 will emphasize that a successful farm start-up is not dependent on age, size, type of farm operation, or previous career selection. Instead, success relies more on negotiating a good fit between your personal and financial resources, your farm and family goals, and the way you decide to enter farming.

Keynote speaker Steve Stevenson from the University of Wisconsin will present the results of his research, with more than 325 beginning farmers who started farming between 1993 and 1995. He will provide insight for new farmers on what other beginning farmers used to be successful. Career entry pathways include taking over your family farm,

taking over another family farm, starting from scratch, and doing an apprenticeship in production agriculture.

The workshop will also include real-world discussions with Pennsylvania's innovative beginning farmers from a variety of backgrounds and enterprises. Hear from those taking the reins from other family members, taking over a non-family operation, or starting on their own from scratch. Types of farms include dairy, beef, fruit and vegetables, speciality crops, cooperative members, direct marketers, and wholesalers.

The workshop will be Saturday, Feb. 17, at the Holiday Inn in Grantville, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Cost of the workshop is \$30 for an individual, \$50 for a couple, and \$20 for a student. Registration is required by Feb. 12 and includes lunch.

Contact Pennsylvania Farm Link at (717) 664-7077 or e-mail at pafarmlink@redrose.net for more information and a brochure.

USDA Tightens Bacterial Requirements In Dry Milk Standards

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The USDA has revised the U.S. Standards for Grades of Nonfat Dry Milk (Spray Process), the U.S. Standards for Instant Nonfat Dry Milk, and the U.S. Standards for Grades of Buttermilk and Buttermilk Product.

The changes reduce the Standard Plate Count (bacterial estimates) as follows:

- For U.S. Extra Grade nonfat dry milk manufactured using the spray process, the maximum allowable bacteria is reduced from 40,000 per gram to 10,000 per gram.

- For U.S. Extra Grade instant nonfat dry milk, the maximum allowable bacteria is reduced from 30,000 per gram to 10,000 per gram.

- For U.S. Extra Grade buttermilk and buttermilk product, the maximum allowable bacteria is reduced from 50,000 per gram to 20,000 per gram.

- For U.S. Standard Grade buttermilk and buttermilk product, the maximum allowable bacteria is reduced from 200,000 per gram to 75,000 per gram.

These changes in bacterial estimates will strengthen the quali-

ty requirements of the standards to reflect improvements that have taken place in the dry milk industry and improve the competitiveness of U.S. dairy products in international markets.

A notice soliciting comments to the proposed changes was published in the Sept. 8 Federal Register. Based on public comments, USDA has determined that changes are appropriate and has revised the standards accordingly. All become effective Feb. 2.

USDA grade standards are voluntary standards developed to facilitate the marketing process.

Manufacturers of dairy products are free to choose whether or not to use these grade standards.

The revised Standards are available from Duane R. Spomer, Chief, Dairy Standardization Branch, Dairy Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 2746, South Building, Stop 0230, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456 or by accessing the AMS Home Page at www.ams.usda.gov/dairy/stand.htm.

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