

Penn State Dairy Alliance Offers BusinessSense Training For Dairy CFOs

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Penn State Dairy Alliance has developed a program to provide hands-on training in data collection and interpretation for chief financial officers of dairy farms.

Called BusinessSense, the program combines formal instruction, group discussion and computer analysis in a small group setting so participants can learn from each other, as well as from the instructors.

According to Brad Hilty, information management specialist with Penn State's Dairy Alliance program, monitoring business performance is critical to maintaining a competitive position in today's dairy environment. Key decision-makers of the business must know what data is important and how to interpret it.

"The chief financial officer, who in many cases is the dairy producer and farm owner or their spouse, must know how to collect, organize, process and report data in a format that is easily interpreted," Hilty says.

BusinessSense has been designed to train key decision makers in dairy businesses to make decisions in a systematic and standardized way using data management and analysis.

The BusinessSense program will help participants answer these key questions:

1. What benchmarks are important in monitoring the performance of a dairy business? How are the benchmarks used to pinpoint bottlenecks in an operation?

2. How can standardization in data collection and organization improve the quality of information used for decision-making?

3. What is the importance of knowing and controlling production costs? Who is more profitable, the low-cost producer or the producer who stresses production?

BusinessSense is a series of three meetings designed to progressively build the participants' skills in information and business management.

— Session 1, Establishing a Baseline for Business Evaluation, features a lecture on "Benchmarks and Bottlenecks — Evaluating Business Performance." Participants will collect data required to complete the Pennsylvania Dairy Farm Business Summary and conduct a comprehensive business analysis.

— Session 2, Data Interpretation and Standardization, will include lectures focusing on "Analysis Results and Data Distribution and Implementing Standardization in Information Management Practices." A group discussion will help participants determine what management practices provide the best returns and identify opportunities to increase profits in their business.

— Session 3, Calculating and Controlling Costs of Production, will offer participants hands-on experience in calculating a standardized cost of production with Dairy COP\$, a computerized cost of production model developed by Hilty. The session also will

feature the lecture "Who retains the most money? Low Cost vs. High Production," and a group discussion on practical methods for controlling costs and maximizing returns.

Instructors for BusinessSense are Hilty and Jeff Hyde, Penn State assistant professor of agricultural economics and farm business management specialist.

The program is being offered around the state. Each session begins at 9:30 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m.

The Lancaster County Series, offered in cooperation with Lancaster County Cooperative Extension, will be conducted at the Lancaster County Farm and Home Center. The dates are: Dec. 14 and Jan. 22, 2002.

Sessions will be held in north-central Pennsylvania (Bradford, Tioga and Potter counties) on Dec. 19, Jan. 24 and Feb. 7, 2002. The location will be announced later.

The program will be offered in northwest Pennsylvania (Erie, Warren, Crawford, Venango, Forest, Mercer, Clarion counties) on Dec. 6, Jan. 7-8, 2002. The program will be held at the Link To Learn Computer Training Center in the Crawford County Industrial Park in Meadville.

The cost of the program is \$150 for all three meetings. Additional individuals from a business can attend for an additional fee of \$65 each. Checks should be made payable to Penn State University.

Crops Conferences Set

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — Wildlife pest management and an annual update about new products for agronomics are some of the topics being offered at the Southeast Pennsylvania Crops Conferences in 2002.

The program is a cooperative educational effort between Agway, Moyer and Son Inc. and Penn State Cooperative Extension.

Annual programs that were previously sponsored by these organizations, such as Penn State Crops Days and grower/dealer meetings offered by Agway and Moyer & Son Inc., will not be conducted. The Southeast Pennsylvania Crops Conference is being conducted in lieu of these programs.

There are four dates and locations. Growers can attend any meeting that fits their schedule. The meeting for Jan. 22 at the Leesport Farmers Market, Leesport and Jan. 25, East Brandywine Firehall, Guthrieville, is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. registration, with a 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. program. Lunch is served.

The meeting for Jan. 23 at the Days Inn, Allentown and Jan. 24 at the Montgomery County 4-H Center, Creamery, will offer a day program, with four concurrent sessions. The sessions are scheduled to give producers maximum flexibility in their schedules and choice of topic. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the program is scheduled

from 9:30 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Lunch is served.

An evening meeting at both Allentown and Creamery is offered especially for part-time farmers, starting with a 6 p.m. registration, dessert, and coffee served at 6:30 p.m., and program from 7 to 9 p.m.

Cost is \$10 for daytime program by Jan. 15, \$12 after Jan. 15. The evening program costs \$5 by Jan. 15, \$7 after Jan. 15.

Producers in Berks, Bucks, Chester, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, and Schuylkill counties are invited to attend. Pesticide credits will be offered at all locations and a trade show will be in conjunction with the program.

Penn State University specialists and agency representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Game Commission will be present. Sponsors of the Southeast Pennsylvania Crops Conference include Agway, Aventis, BASF, Dow AgroSciences, MidAtlantic Farm Credit, Monsanto, Moyer and Son Inc., Penn State Cooperative Extension, and Syngenta.

For more information about the agenda or registration information, contact Mena Hautau, Penn State Cooperative Extension-Berks County, (610) 378-1327, (610) 378-7961, e-mail: Berks.extension.psu.edu, or contact your local county extension office.

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Afternoon - 12:30 PM

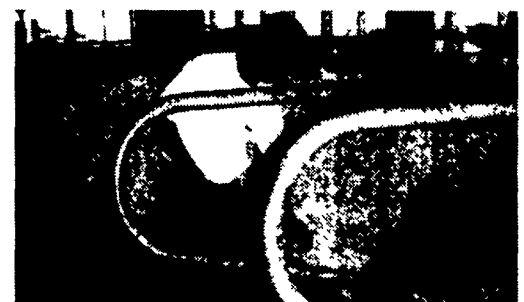
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