

# Dairy Stakeholders

(Continued from Page A32)

health.

Changes in school, he recommended, were using plastic containers instead of cardboard, gable-topped containers, making sure the product is cold, and making the milk available not only in the cafeteria line, but also in vending machines.

In addition to Lord, three speakers combined to speak about building a successive dairy industry.

Carl Theunis, Wisconsin, discussed transitioning a business. Theunis stressed the importance of teaching family members while they are "working alongside of us," he said.

"Give your children a chance," he said. "Let them be involved in the decision-making now." Having meetings where family members decide goals or make projections, he said, is an integral part of the transition process.

The golden rule of leadership,

according to Theunis, is to build people up by building their self-esteem.

It is also critical to pass on a positive attitude. "Make sure that as they're small, and growing up, that they know the importance of working in agriculture," he said.

"A winner empowers, a loser confronts," he said. "A winner sees opportunity, a loser sees problem."

Theunis, who has four sons, cited a few transition planning questions, such as, who will take responsibility? Is the business structure for change/succession? Are those stepping into responsibility ready for change?

Sharon Zimmerman, Meadowview Farms, Reynolds, is involved with a 650-cow operation that employs six full-time and nine part-time people.

The dairy recently went through a major expansion after a 3-4 year planning process.

Off-farm experience in a plant nursery helped Zimmerman, she

said, learn the employee management skills she uses as she works with the dairy's employees. A motivator is willing to praise, gives employs directions, sets expectations, and measures employee results.

She also learned prioritization of tasks, such as stepping back and deciding what to focus on first. Communication skills for training, listening to, and asking questions of employees are also important in her work at the family dairy operation.

Establishing routines and meeting a budget are also important, she said. Zimmerman came back to the family, she said, to work on the challenge of expansion and to work with her family.

"Successful farming from generation to generation does not just happen. It's a process that you need to prepare for. You need to address concerns of employees and come up with a plan that is going to work for everyone," she said.

Andy Young, from Red Knob Farms, a 750-cow, 600-heifer operation that employs 25 people

and includes 450 tillable acres and pasture, also discussed inter-generational family farming.

Young, a past Pennsylvania FFA president and involved with mission work, draws on his college degree and other varied experiences as he works on the farm.

Although his life's experience may have pointed him more toward the business world, he returned to the farm to enjoy the quality of life, flexibility, and time for family and service that agriculture offers.

Farming "provides challenge and fulfillment, and puts my skills to work," he said.

Although Young said that his talents are not in outdoor work, but in administrative arena, "What skill set is required to be effective in agriculture?" he asked. "Each one of us plays an important part on moving the operation forward."

Young wanted to benefit both him and the farm, and uses his skills to "put feet and legs under the ideas of the organization," he

said.

"As an industry, we need to check our mindset about what a dairy farmer must look like." Red Knob Farms, he believes, has taken his talents and combined that with other employees with more traditional talents for diversity.

Karen Vines, distance education coordinator, Penn State, discussed Dairy Farm Planning, a comprehensive list of service providers and educational resources for progressive dairies.

A Website, she said, was the vehicle of choice to disseminate information, since it can be easily updated. The purpose of the site is to suggest a logical progression for changes and provide contact information.

Key sections are project planning, financial resources, construction, and operations management.

The Website address is dairy-development.psu.edu.



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## Penn State Improves Dairy Website

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Penn State's Dairy Cattle Nutrition Group recently launched an improved version of their Website, which may be accessed at the same address as the previous site: [www.das.psu.edu/dcn](http://www.das.psu.edu/dcn).

The Website features redesigned navigation bars and categorizes resources by topic to help visitors find information quickly.

With the release of the new Website, Penn State also offers several new resources, including a revised edition of the publication "Feeding the Newborn Dairy Calf" and fact sheets covering manure evaluation and free-choice mineral feeding.

These publications join more than 30 other publications that address many aspects of nutrition and feeding management, forage quality, and feeding and management of dairy heifers and calves.

The Website also provides spreadsheet tools to improve nutritional programs. These include tools to evaluate particle size and heifer growth and to calculate feed values and compare feed ingredients. In addition, videos discussing rumen function, silage fermentation, rumen development, body condition scoring, calf care, and heifer rearing can be ordered from the Website.

Other resources available on the site include information about upcoming continuing education events, links to experts, movie clips, and free cow images.



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