

ADADC, Upstate Farms Conduct Media Training

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — The American Dairy Association & Dairy Council, Inc. and Upstate Farms Milk Cooperative recently teamed up to train area staff and farmers on media and crisis communications.

The training took place at the Upstate offices in LeRoy, N.Y. on April 4. T.J. Walker of Media Training Worldwide trained the group on crisis communications, basic media skills, and how to develop key messages. All trainees had the opportunity to go on camera to be interviewed, as well as viewing the interview for critiquing.

"The training was excellent. Everyone was pleased and enjoyed the interaction. We found out things about ourselves — good and bad," said Bill Young, director of member services for Upstate Farms. "We learned how to improve our messages when dealing with the media."

Various issues were mentioned dealing with the dairy industry. Whether it was environmental or animal health issues, the group was trained to develop three to four key messages that will help them when being interviewed. They were also trained on techniques that will help them in in-

terviews such as asking the reporters what the focus of the interview will be, and letting them (the farmers) know that they have the option to stall an interview to prepare.

Farmers are urged to alert ADADC to any media stories that could negatively affect dairy at (315) 472-9143. There is a staff member on call 24 hours a day to answer any media questions. The American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Inc. is an advertising and promotion agency representing farmers in New York, northern New Jersey, and northeastern Pennsylvania.



Upstate Farms members John Gould and Ron McCormick field questions from T.J. Walker at the media training workshop.

Pa. Third In Ice Cream Production

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Ice Cream Production Up six Percent: Pennsylvania manufacturers produced 56.0 million gallons of ice cream in 2002, third nationally. Lowfat ice cream production totaled 12.0 million gallons, down 46 percent from 2001. Milk sherbet production, at 2.2 million gallons, is 8 percent lower than the previous year.

Butter Production Increases Eight Percent: The state's processors churned out 80.6 million pounds of butter during 2002, an increase of 8 percent from 2001.

Production of all cheese, excluding cottage cheese, totaled 374.1 million pounds in 2002, up 2 percent from 2001. Production of all types of Italian cheeses decreased slightly to 251.7 million pounds. Production of Swiss cheese, at 9.0 million pounds, was up 14 percent from last year.

Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service



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own prices. We don't take anything to the auction. We don't wholesale.

In the long run, we firmly believe, road frontage is much more valuable for a roadside market than for housing lots.

But how do you diversify something like a dairy farm? Cows still have to be fed and milked at least twice a day, every day.

It may be easier than you think if you start small and go slow. You probably already have a garden. Make it bigger this year. Build a hoophouse or high tunnel to extend your growing season in spring and fall. For about \$1,000 you can build a simple structure that can earn twice that amount the first year,

depending on your crops and markets.

We have three high tunnels now. They produce crops — and income — from early March through Christmas. They work so well that a friend of ours farms only in the winter months in high tunnels — in Maine!

Until your own crops come in, partner up with your neighbors and "direct market" their produce. Sure beats taking it to the auction and selling it for whatever a middleman will give you. That way you can set your own prices and make sure that more of the food dollar ends up where it rightfully belongs — in your pocket.

But where do you start? How do you "direct market?" How do you reach consumers? How do you know what to charge? (One veteran farmers' market vendor I know always takes the supermarket price — and adds at least 5 percent!) How do you sell at a farmers' market? Where do you buy a high tunnel? How do you build one? What do you grow?

That's only natural. We wres-

tled with those and many other questions not long ago. One thing we quickly learned is that there is no magic formula. One size does not fit all. What works for us may not work for you. The answers are as varied as individual farms and farmers.

Whatever you do, advised USDA's Dorr, don't be in a big hurry to build an expensive new barn (keep digging the hole deeper, as Hightower would say) and fill it with a few thousands sows. Hog prices are already low enough. The law of supply and demand is brutally clear: Increasing production eventually drives prices even lower.

And this isn't a Sear's barn from the turn of the last century that will remain in service for up to 75 years, added Dorr. The life span of a new livestock confinement facility, he said, is five years, tops. Then what do you do?

Many farmers around the country are finding a less expensive option — with a quicker and higher return — in pastured poultry, chickens, and even

ducks for meat. It seems a natural for dairy farmers who already have plenty of pasture and temporary electric fencing.

Yes, once you stop digging that hole and take a good look around, you'll quickly discover a lot of new, profitable possibilities in just about every direction.

So greet newcomers with smiles and lots of good things to eat, rather than "no trespassing" signs. Remember, just like you, each and every one of them likes to eat at least three times a day. They're going to buy their food from someone. It might as well be you.

Editor's note: With his wife and 25-year-old son, George DeVault raises certified organic vegetables near Emmaus. He is a Food and Society Policy Fellow with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy in a program funded by the Kellogg Foundation. The DeVaults' articles on diversification, high-value crops, greenhouse growing, and cut flowers are available on the Rodale Institute's new Website, www.newfarm.org.

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