



Dr. Arlen Mills demonstrates a little calf sense for workshop participants.

Dairy Alliance Checks Producers' 'Calf Sense'

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BAINBRIDGE, (Lancaster Co.) Challenging more than 20 dairy producers on their "calf sense," members of the Dairy Alliance and Penn State extension recently put workshop participants through a "boot camp" on newborn calf care.

The day-long training workshop took place at Meadow-Vista Farm, owned by Gerald and Don Risser, Bainbridge.

The workshop focused on the first three days of life in newborn calves and how to increase calf-raising success, according to Rich Stup from Penn State Dairy Alliance.

"This is a challenge regardless of farm size," Stup said. "Look at the value of calves. (They are) the next generation of the farm."

In its second year, Calf Sense workshops provide systematic management training and provide tools to take home to the farm.

The day started off with general sessions touching upon several areas of dairy calf management: colostrum management, newborn calf health, and calf care consistency.

"Whatever is ingested first is absorbed first and fast," said Dr. Jud Heinrichs of Penn State as he reviewed the importance of colostrum management.

Heinrichs stressed the importance of feeding colostrum to a newborn calf early for the quick uptake of microbes by their immune system. Hendricks recommended three quarts at birth and follow up of three quarts four hours later.

Testing for colostrum quality, Heinrichs said, is important to make sure the calves get what they need.

"You can't look at this stuff and tell what it is," said Heinrichs.

Other points included how to freeze colostrum and using frozen colostrum as a management tool to eliminate Johne's disease on a farm.

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