

County Annual Meeting Season in Full Swing

One tradition of being "on test" is to hold an annual meeting to recognize those producers whose herds have excelled throughout the year. A variety of awards are presented for highest production, highest butterfat, and lowest somatic cell counts in a given county. Although many areas do not hold an organized annual meeting, it is still quite popular in some counties throughout the Dairy One region. Typically, about 50-150 members attend a meeting along with Dairy One farm service technicians and Market Managers. In some counties, meetings are held jointly with other Agriservice organizations, providing increased opportunity for interaction and fellowship within the area.

Dairy One's Kim Haupt and Jyll Strothmann assist members with all aspects of the planning, organization and implementation of meetings. Kim is responsible for generating awards listings and data, while Jyll takes care of making the certificates and mailing meeting notices and programs. If you have any questions or would like more information about the county annual meeting and awards program, please contact Kim or Jyll through the toll free 800 number or e-mail kim.haupt@dairyone.com or jyll.strothmann@dairyone.com.

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Profile of Dairy One Board Member, Dale Hoover

Dale and his wife, Charlotte, live on a 94-acre farm in South Annville Township in Lebanon County, PA. They are blessed with three grown children, Angela, married to Jeff Youtz, with the added blessing of a grandson, Cole (almost 5); Matt, married to Emily, soon to be parents; and Alicia.

Dale and his son Matt, farm Caristone Farm. The farm houses 135 Holstein cows with a RHA of 24,400 and an equal amount of heifers. They raise all forages and some grains, and purchase protein concentrate. Dale also is in a cropping partnership farming 500 acres with his brother Reid, who also milks 135 cows.

Dale has been involved with the Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association (PADHIA) Board of Directors and Dairy One Board of Directors for more than 10 years, and before that served on the Lebanon County DHIA board. Dale served as president of PA DHIA during the transition to the Dairy One organization and was president of Dairy One for the past 2 years.

In addition to DHIA, Dale has valued his involvement in the Lebanon Area Evangelical Free Church where he serves on the Board of Elders, teaches Sunday School, and is on the Building Committee. His relationship to Christ is the first priority in his life.

As part of Dairy One, Dale feels that the organization has excellent people in the field, in the labs, and in management. He feels Dairy One has an opportunity to better use its skills and information generating systems to help members manage their herds and meet the requirements of the industry. Examples of projects where Dairy One has made or will make a difference include the mastitis culture program and the National ID program. This program is fast becoming a requirement in our industry. "These are only two new areas where our organization can assist our members. Another area we need to be focusing on is turning the volumes of information we create into usable management information", notes Dale.

Dairy One is a strong organization with a good relationship with the dairy industry...

The Dairy One laboratories are a wealth of technical expertise that can be used in other areas such as forage analysis for the horse industry or soil testing for the agronomy industry. Such diversification can improve efficiencies and help control the cost of services to members.

Dairy farms are decreasing, and producers need to work together with other organizations to provide the most efficient service as possible to members. Sometimes that means accepting different ideologies and putting aside past differences. Dairy One is a strong organization with a good relationship with the dairy industry, particularly DairyLea. They are well-positioned, and continue to make the best use of their resources to help improve member profitability.



Dale Hoover (right) with Board President-elect, Russ Beck (left) at the 2004 Dairy One Annual Meeting.



Dairy One NEWS

Where Information Creates Opportunity

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Dairy One has recently updated its web site to make it much more useful and informative. Please access it at www.dairyone.com.

Animal Identification From the desk of Jamie Zimmerman, General Manager

There has been a lot of press over the past year in regards to the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). The NAIS plan has been developed over the past few years as a result of animal disease outbreaks abroad and here in the U.S. The goal of the system is to have the ability to trace back animals to their place of origin and contact with other animals within 48 hours of the identification of a serious contagious disease or bio terror threat.



The NAIS is built on two main issues – each farm or animal handling facility is identified with a unique premises number and each individual production animal is identified with unique identification number. A system will be built to store the premises and animal numbers in which will serve as a national repository. The system will also have the ability to track animals as they move through the channels of commerce. The plan calls for information in the repository to remain confidential and only be used to trace animals to their place of origin in the event of an animal disease outbreak.

At this point many individual states are working on their own systems to allocate national premises and individual animal numbers to farmers within their own states. Each state would in turn be responsible to transmit the information to the national repository. The current preferred form of individual animal identification is a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tag placed in a cow's ear.

Dairy One is participating in a pilot program in Pennsylvania in which we will be part of a process that will tag 50,000 cows in the state with RFID tags. Premises numbers and cow information will be transmitted through the DHIA system to Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. Tags will be provided to participating farms at no charge.

Perhaps more exciting than providing a mechanism for animal trace back, RFID technology is providing new herd management tools. Please see the article on page 2.

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RFID Technology and Pocket DC

As dairies begin moving toward eventual compliance with the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), many are putting radio frequency identification (RFID) tags in their cattle. These tags which contain the RFID chip are typically a button tag put in the cow's ear. RFID technology brings new opportunities for improving the way cattle are identified, and for improving management tasks like herd checks and shot administration.

Several dairies that use Dairy Comp 305 on-farm software, also use "Pocket DC" – a program that runs on a Dell Axim or similar Pocket PC product. Pocket DC has a feature that uses the RFID tag to identify a cow using a wand scanner connected wirelessly to the Pocket PC. The ID's are scanned into the pocket DC program on the Axim, actions are performed on the cow, recorded on the Pocket PC and then the data is transferred or "sync-ed" over to Dairy Comp.

The scanner provides a way to be sure each cow is identified quickly and accurately. Currently, vet results can be sync-ed back to Dairy Comp. Other event synchronization between the Pocket PC and Dairy Comp is in development.

When using it during a herd check, move the wand over the tag and the AXIM tells you if that cow is on your vet list. If it finds her on the list, the program then tells you if she is up for a pregnancy check or if she's on the list for something else. If she is not on the list, the program responds with a "cow not found" message. Results from the vet check are then sync-ed back into the Dairy Comp program. By using the scanner and pocket DC for shot lists, you can be sure the right cow is identified each time. For example, you can quickly move down the row of headlocks and give shots to those who the scanner "finds" on your list.

Regardless of whether the dairy has RFID in place or not, the Dell Axim and Pocket DC are becoming popular tools. Look for more information on RFID and Pocket DC as we work to continue making advancements in this technology.

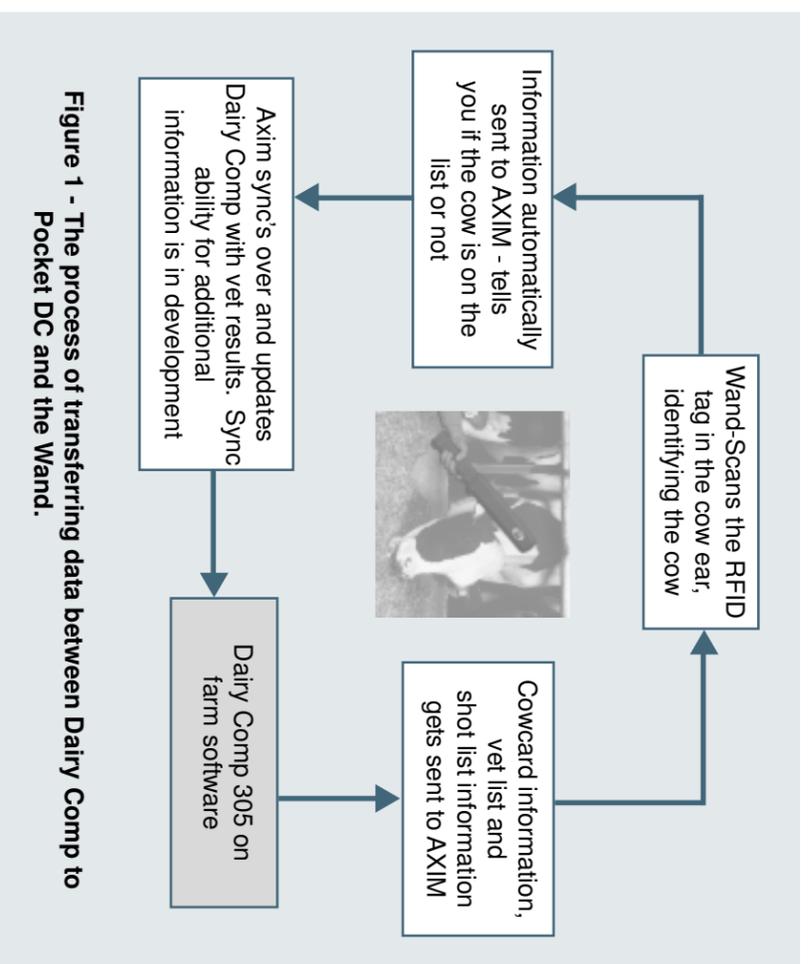


Figure 1 - The process of transferring data between Dairy Comp to Pocket DC and the Wand.

Milk Laboratories Provide Accurate Results

Dairy One Milk Laboratories are one of the largest milk analysis laboratory networks currently operating in the United States.

There are four individual laboratory sites: Ithaca, New York; State College Pennsylvania; Hagerstown, Maryland; and Waverly, Pennsylvania. Each lab is run independently, but works closely with one another to balance sample volume and lab throughput.

An excess of 425,000 samples are processed each month through all four laboratories and each maintains high quality assurance standards.

Accuracy is the primary focus of every employee. To ensure that all sample results are accurate the labs adhere to standards set by National DHA, the USDA, the FDA, and the various state departments of agriculture. These standards are used, along with in-house standards, to ensure that customers receive the most accurate results possible. Every lab analyzer is calibrated each week and following major repairs. The analyzers are also inspected throughout the year by regulatory agencies that include the USDA, the FDA, The Common Wealth of Pennsylvania, and New York State.

Calibration/Control samples are used at the start up of each analyzer and then again every half-hour. If results of these samples are not within the accepted ranges milk testing is halted. The lab staff then takes corrective measures, which includes re-testing all samples since the last check out calibration sample.

The employees of the Dairy One milk laboratories realize how important accurate results are to our dairy producers. It is our main objective to ensure that these results are received as quickly and accurately as possible to assist in the management decisions of our customers.

Time To Tweak Your Crop Management

Now is the time to tweak your seed order, review your crop nutrition and pest control needs and make sure all of your machinery is ready for peak performance. Anyone who has farmed for any amount of time knows the huge impact these things can have on corn silage yieldsof course, it helps if the weather cooperates. These things can also have a big impact on silage moisture and quality according to research by Dr. Bill Cox at Cornell. Below is a summary of some of his findings.



- 1. Hybrid Maturity** – Silage will be ~1% wetter and yield will increase ~ ½ ton per acre as relative maturity increases by 5 days, ie a 100 day hybrid will be ~ 1% wetter and yield about ½ ton more silage than a 95 day hybrid if planted & harvested on the same day. There should be no effect on quality if both hybrids "make it".
- 2. Plant Population** – The best balance of yield and quality occurred between 30,000 and 34,000 plants per acre at harvest. NDF increased and CP decreased as harvest population increased but there was no difference in fiber digestibility. Silage yield increased by about 1 ton per acre for each 5000 plant increase up to harvest populations of about 36,000 plants per acre. Silage was ~ 2% drier at 30,000 plants per acre vs 20,000 plants per acre. There was no added effect above 30,000 plants.

- 3. Row Spacing** – Narrow row corn (15 inches) was ~1% drier and yielded ~5% more than 30-inch row corn at the same plant population but there was no difference in quality. Dr. Cox concluded that farmers owning a Kemper head should consider purchasing a narrow row planter when it is time to buy a new planter.

- 4. Nitrogen Management** – Dr. Cox observed optimum silage yields, NDF and IVTD at ~150 pounds of total N. Silage was ~ 2% wetter if Nitrogen was inadequate and ~ 1% wetter if too much nitrogen was used. Nitrogen had no effect on fiber digestibility. Crude protein increased up to 200 pounds of N but so did residual soil N. Dr. Cox concluded that 150 pounds of N was needed for optimum yield and quality.

- 5. Weed Management** – Season long weed pressure and delayed post emergence herbicide application reduced yields by 25% or more, retarded plant development and increased moisture at harvest by 3-4%. Early season weed control (by the 3rd-4th true leaf) was needed to maximize corn silage yield and avoid delayed maturity.

- 6. Cutting Height at Harvest** – (See table 1 below) Increasing cutting height from 6 to 12 inches reduced silage moisture by ~¾%. It decreased yield by 11% but increased fiber digestibility and starch and reduced NDF thereby improving quality. Dr. Cox concluded that farmers should balance yield, quality and moisture effects when choosing the best cutting height. If yields are high and bunk silo space is limited, consider cutting high. If yields are low, cut low. If silage is immature and too wet, cut a bit higher.

Your corn silage will never have more yield potential than it does right now when it is still in the bag. Many years of research by Dr. Cox at Cornell and by other agronomists have shown that optimum silage yield and quality can only occur when farmers pay attention to the details. These details will help you capture that yield potential and the kind of quality you need to optimize milk yield per acre!

TABLE 1
Cutting Height Effects On Milk/Ton,
Silage Moisture and Silage Quality (Cox 2001-2002)

| Cutting Height | Ave. Milk / T | Ave. Moisture | % NDF | % IVTD | % NDFD | % CP | % Starch |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|-------|--------|--------|------|----------|
| 6 inches | 2747 | 65.9 | 41.8 | 85.6 | 65.2 | 8.0 | 17.3 |
| 12 inches | 2828 | 65.1 | 41.3 | 86.4 | 66.8 | 8.0 | 17.8 |
| 18 inches | 2960 | 64.5 | 40.8 | 87.2 | 68.5 | 8.0 | 18.6 |