“It is his Hands”  
by Lori Watson Yarbrough,  
a tribute to her father, Mr. Curly Watson

It is his hands I notice first  
Cupped around a cold cup of coffee  
They are easily the hands of an old farmer  
Gnarled, crooked and huge  
These hands do not gradually taper to wrists  
No, they are one solid unit  
More than one can of Bug Balm would be needed  
Before these hands could be softened  
He sits there on a stool by the parish counter  
Having his coffee  
They keep a cup just for him. After all he used to be their best customer  
It’s the cup that says “Farmers feed you three times a day”  
Well, they do!  
His son runs the farm now, he helps out when he’s asked  
Running wagons back and forth, feeding the calves and helping with the milking.  
That’s what he does now. My, how times have changed  
I remember him from when I was a little girl  
When I came in with Daddy, his huge frame would be leaning up against the counter.  
Clad in his green coveralls, Dekulb hat and barn boots  
The ever present pouch of Red Man in evidence  
He would tell me how purty I was and give me a penny for the gumball machine  
We’d all stand around the counter or sit on a bench of baler twine  
Listening to the old farmers talking about the old days, giving out advice  
and helping us all remember what farming is all about  
They were real characters, and the stories they could tell!  
We had nothing but respect for them and as they slowly left us their advice and memories stayed  
And now there he is, green coveralls, Dekulb hat and Red Man  
He winks at me as I walk in. Yep, I am as purty as ever  
And, how are the younguns?  
He’s telling that story of that big ole bull with the cock-eyed horn  
You know, the one whose stall was under the stairs  
So I pull up a bale of twine and have a seat  
We all hang on his every word. Sure the bull is a little fatter, meaner and even uglier.  
The details aren’t important. The story is. This is.  
These few minutes of hearing the breeze between milking and bailing  
I lean back and inhale the sweet smell of cow manure, hay and hydraulic fluid  
And try not to think of the day when this too is a memory  
I look at his hands and I smile  
They are easily the hands of an old farmer  
They are beautiful.

From the desk of Jamie Zimmerman, General Manager

In our previous edition of the Dairy One News last spring, I noted at the end of my section that it looked like we were headed into a weakened dairy economy relative to the past two years. Unfortunately, this became very true over the past few months with weak milk prices coupled with high input prices. In addition to the weakened dairy economy, producers in many parts of the Northeast experienced a very wet spring and/or floods during the summer. Fortunately it looks like there is improvement on the horizon for our industry bringing welcomed relief to the price/cost squeeze.

In times like these it is critical to make the best management decisions you can based on good information. Helping provide the best information possible at a good value has, and continues to be, a primary goal of Dairy One. With our DHIA services we provide a wide variety of services with a wide range of associated service fees, all delivered through well trained people. If you have been on the same DHIA testing program for a long time, it may be time to talk with your technician or Market Manager to discuss services that may provide an enhanced value. The Dairy One Forage Lab also has a wide array of analysis packages that provide the best value available in the industry today. I invite you to visit the Dairy One website to learn more about all of the services Dairy One provides to make a difference with your business.

In this edition of the Dairy One News you will see an article on the work our DMR group did with a veterinary practice to help them improve their skills using software so that they can better serve their dairy farm clients. This is a small example of the type of work the DMR group does regularly with veterinary practices, feed companies, consultants, and other industry “multipliers” to enhance the use of information in dairy businesses.

Also on the last page of this edition is a list of the Dairy One Milk Quality and High Herd winners. If these folks are your neighbors, please congratulate them on their great achievements. Their outstanding milk quality and high production represent the best of our family of over 5,500 farms in 13 states that make up Dairy One and the best in the country.

In another area of milk quality, Dairylea and Dairy Farmers of America recently announced enhanced milk quality premium programs for Dairylea and DFA members in the Northeast. If you need help pinpointing ways to improve somatic cell counts in your herd in order to take advantage of the new premium structure, please talk with your Dairy One technician or contact the DMR group at Dairy One.

Please have a safe harvest season. Thank you for your ongoing patronage and use of Dairy One services.
At the end of each year it is important to make plans and set goals for the next. One way to do this is to look at the data stating the yearly performance and set that as a goal to equal or exceed each month going forward.

Look at the Production, Income & Feed Cost Summary Box. The Test day average milk on all cows in the herd can be used to project the major source of income for the upcoming year. It is simple to understand and relates directly to bulk tank measurement each day. If a herd averaged 70 pounds per cow we could use that average and the number of cows in our herd to predict, budget or set goals for yearly, monthly and daily production. Add to this the normal difference between shipped and produced and you can evaluate some meaningful numbers.

Another production measure that is useful is the Test period Persistency Index, found in the Yearly Production and Mastitis summary box. This adds the dimension of what we expected the herd to produce as we compare month-to-month. Using this index will allow us to answer whether the change in production was good or not. We should expect that our management would at least maintain status quo as with 100%, or improve.

Reproduction has many measurements and is adequately summed up by looking at the Yearly Reproductive Summary Box. Specifically, look at average pregnancy rate for the year. Of course you may need to look at some breakdown if you are not happy with the data your management produced. Remember that pregnancy rate is calculating the % cows that become pregnant every 21 of those that are eligible. Correctly stating the Voluntary Waiting Period will increase accuracy in this calculation.

Udder health and milk quality measurements may seem to be the same but are actually quite different. Again, looking at the Yearly Production and Mastitis Summary box, we use the weighted average actual SCC to measure milk quality. The yearly average could serve us well as a reachable goal and tells us the overall quality of the milk produced by our herd and not just the quality of the milk we sell. Milk shipped that is lower in SCC than this average tells us there is opportunity to reduce the number of infected cows in the herd and then include them in milk sold. Milk Shipped is located in the Miscellaneous Herd Information box.

Monitoring udder health can be done by keying in on the percent of the herd that is not infected on test day. The % cows with LS 0,1,2,3 and %cows with LS 4 combined will give us that information. Herds with excellent udder health will see this yearly average at 85 or greater.

Have you checked out www.dairyone.com?
For those of you who have internet access, the Dairy One website can be a great resource to find out more about our products and services.

Look under the Publications tab to:
- View past newsletters and Improver page articles
- Download and view Dairy Comp 305 technical documents

Check out the Forage Lab area to:
- Order supplies (forage, manure and water kits)
- See one of the most comprehensive feed composition library’s in the Northeast
- Take advantage of 3 specific density calculators

Are you interested in job opportunities with Dairy One? Find out more under the Employment Tab. You can even fill out an application online! In addition, look in the Farm Services section to see our “Market Map” with contact information for all Dairy One market managers. Or, find more information on our software by going to the Dairy Management Resources section. These are just a few examples of the kinds of things you can find on the website. Check it out today!