

PDPW MANAGERS memo

November 12, 2010

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- Visit beautiful Albuquerque and build your business momentum
- Is your password protected?

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Featured PDPW Member: Collins Dairy – Kevin and Lisa Collins

Kevin and Lisa Collins, Greenleaf, Wis., had their work cut out for them when they moved to their current location as the facilities acquired in 1993 had sat empty for a year and a half. The family keeps a photo album as a reminder of just how far they've come. Today, Collins Dairy's 600 cows keep its Slant 60 parlor humming. They also own about 400 heifers and farm 1,100 acres of mostly corn and alfalfa. They employ two of their five children, daughters Brittany and Ellie, with both girls working toward a partnership in the business.

To operate cost-efficiently and focus on doing a great job with the cows, Kevin and Lisa custom hire the field work. Taking efficiency to another level, they eliminate as much hand labor as possible.

Kevin says he likes the personal side of PDPW and the opportunities he gets to talk with and learn from other producers. He appreciates the way PDPW offers a healthy combination of education and family awareness. "They talk about having a balanced life. It's not just the business side of farming. They talk about family," he says.

PDPW is a professional network for Kevin and Lisa. Whether attending a one-day hoof-trimming clinic or two-day meeting away from home, Kevin says they make strong connections with other members: "We get to know a lot of other producers. After meetings, we might call them and ask if they're locking in milk or fuel, or what they're doing for crops. We've become friends with farmers from all over."

"We go to the Business Conference to get re-charged," Lisa states.

Kevin summarizes his Business Conference strategy this way:

1. At lunch each day, you sit by somebody different.
 2. You learn how others run their businesses.
 3. Later in the afternoon, you listen to—and learn from—outstanding speakers.
 4. Visit the tradeshow companies to see what is new and who is supporting dairy.
 5. At night, you network some more and call it a day when someone flickers the lights on and off, reminding us it's time to go home.
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For Your Dairy Business:

MIDDLE MANAGERS WILL GAIN THE SKILLS TO PERFORM AT THE TOP OF THEIR GAME all the time when they attend the PDPW-developed Middle Managers “Play to Your Strengths” workshop on Wednesday, Nov. 17, at the Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells, Wis. Dr. Craig McAllaster will help middle managers grasp why the climate in the workplace is like the weather—extremely predictive of the moods and willingness of people to work—and help attendees gain the knowledge and skills to create a climate that encourages people to do their best, put forth initiative, be creative and tackle each and every task to the best of their abilities. If you’re a middle manager, this is a “must attend” event. To learn more about the Nov. 17 Middle Managers Workshop or to register for the event, contact PDPW at 800.947.7379 or go online to www.pdpw.org.

CLASS #3 OF THE WORLD-CLASS WEBINARS is set for **Monday, Nov. 29**, from noon to 1 p.m. CST The topic: Benchmarking and best management practices that will make your business sustainable regardless of the economic climate or stage of the business cycle. The speaker: Dr. David Kohl. Like the two previous webinars, Class 3 will start with Dr. Kohl’s assessment of the domestic and global economies and then move to the topic of the month. At the end of the presentation, participants can pose questions and learn from questions asked by other participants.

Cost for the third webinar is just \$75 for PDPW members and \$110 for non members, with each registration covering one computer and unlimited viewers. Why not register and treat your staff to this webinar. To register, go to http://pdpw.org/event_form.php?id=44

PDPW’S COMMODITY MARKETING CLASS kicks off Thursday, Dec. 2, at AgStar Financial Services, Baldwin, with a FREE two-hour introductory class. During this free class, attendees will get a taste of the teaching style of lead instructor Carl Babler and will get a snapshot of the commodity marketing principles and fundamentals topics that will be covered during the next six class presentations. After the intro class, participants will decide if they want to sign up for the next six classes for \$450 which includes up to two people from the same farm or company. To learn more about this Commodity Marketing Class Opportunity and a detailed course topic list, visit www.pdpw.org.

ENGAGE, CHALLENGE AND SHARPEN YOUR BUSINESS SKILLS at the **Dec. 9-10 Dairy Profit Symposium, Madison**. This high-level business training workshop for number-savvy dairy producers and industry partners is bringing in first-class, in-the-know presenters who will address top-of-mind issues facing state and national policy. We’re talking 90-minutes to two-hour presentations and discussions with Dan Basse, AgResource; Dr. Freddie Barnard, Purdue University; Tim Swenson, Lookout Ridge Consulting Group; Dr. Michael Boehlje, Purdue University; and Dr. Mark Stephenson and Kevin Bernhardt, UW-Madison. Breaks and mealtimes will provide the perfect opportunity to query and network with fellow producers. This workshop will prepare you for 2011 and give you skills and knowledge that will carry through with confidence. Can’t attend both days? Attend just one. To learn more, go to www.pdpw.org.

MICROENVIRONMENTS is the word Ken Nordlund, DVM, UW-Madison, uses to describe individual calf pens within the calf barn, adding that ventilating the barn does not ensure adequate pen ventilation. In cold weather when the young calf is frequently exposed to temperatures below its thermoneutral zone, Dr. Nordlund says three key housing factors are associated with respiratory health: a solid panel separating each calf, deep straw bedding allowing the calf to “nest” and low airborne bacterial concentrations in the air in the pen.

His advice to reduce the concentrations of total airborne bacteria in the pens include making the pens larger, reducing the number of sides and eliminating covers from the pen, and, through the use of supplemental positive-pressure ventilation systems, directing small volumes of fresh air into the pens. Clinical experiences show these approaches are typically successful in achieving significant reductions of endemic calf pneumonia frequently found in modern naturally ventilated calf barns. To read Dr. Nordlund’s research paper in full, go to http://www.extension.org/pages/Housing_Factors_to_Optimize_Respiratory_Health_of_Calves_in_Naturally_Ventilated_Calf_Barns_in_Winter.

MACHINERY REPAIR COSTS CAN BE REDUCED 25 PERCENT by improving routine maintenance procedures, according to a Midwest study. That means an \$80,000 tractor that would typically require about \$24,000 in repair costs during 5,000 hours of operation when receiving average maintenance can have the maintenance cost decreased by approximately \$6,000 with excellent service management.

Robert "Bobby" Grisso, Extension Engineer, Biological Systems Engineering Department, and Robert Pitman, Superintendent, Eastern Virginia Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Virginia Tech, maintain that timely preventative maintenance and inspection can help reduce major problems and downtime and help identify problems when they can be corrected with relatively minor repairs. "Equipment repaired during the winter can save money on service at mechanics' shops," they add. Grisso and Pitman underscore the importance of good farm machinery maintenance record keeping and suggest mounting a service record chart for each vehicle in a prominent area of the farm shop. They also suggest a small notepad be placed in each cab to record problems and observations as they arise.

For Your Business Mind:

EXECUTIVE TRAINING SPECIFICALLY FOR THE DAIRY INDUSTRY is yours at the **2011 Managers Academy, Albuquerque, N.M., Jan. 18-20**. And the big dogs will be leading the sessions and challenging your mindset. The presenters and the four business tours will expose you to unique business models and help you adapt to momentum from four directions: outward, inward, downward and upward. At the end of this executive training, you'll be armed with information and trained to be a quick and nimble mover who can lead your business to long-term success. Plus, you'll have fun and interact with valuable resources such as presenters Dr. Lowell Catlett, Dr. David Kohl, Dr. Buck Joseph and Dr. Chris Hinrichs as well as 99 other attendees like yourself. If you're a dairy owner, manager, industry director, processor, marketer or distributor, this training is for you. To learn more or to register for "Managing Momentum," go to www.pdpw.org. What better person to invest in than yourself or one of your management-level employees!

LISTEN WITH FULL ATTENTION. That's the advice of human resource expert Susan Heathfield. "When an employee or coworker approaches you for advice, inspiration, feedback or a discussion, listen to understand what the individual needs from you," Heathfield advises. "If you can't fully attend to the staff person at the minute for any reason, it is better to reschedule the conversation." The HR expert underscores the importance of making an appointment when you can "really listen to the person" rather than half way paying attention to the person when you are on your way to another task, struggling with another challenge or experiencing any other distraction. She stresses that employees can tell when they are not being heard and can be easily insulted when you are only pretending to be fully listening and comprehending their position or need. Worse, the employee walks away feeling that you don't care about his or her concerns. It is far better to reschedule the discussion when you have time to listen with your full and deep attention.

IF YOU'RE INVOLVED IN ONLINE CONVERSATIONS REGARDING THE DAIRY INDUSTRY, Cheryl Hayn, general manager of Southeast United Dairy Industry Association Inc., offers these tips: 1) respond to the information seekers and avoid responding to radicals whose minds you won't change no matter what facts are presented, 2) be respectful and polite, 3) use "one voice" consumer-tested messages provided by your organization and 4) support your comments with links and facts. Hayn stresses that it's OK to not comment if you're not comfortable making a comment. If you would like to learn more about communicating effectively online and/or in person, ask PDPW about **Visible Voice** communications training. Call PDPW at 800-947-7379.

KEEP YOUR PASSWORDS SAFE. With hackers doing their thing on a regular basis, here are four tips to help keep your passwords safe. Tip #1: Create different variations of your password for every financial site you use. This includes banking, brokerages and every place that you use a credit card. Tip #2: Say "no" to sites that offer to remember your password. While this may be convenient, you don't know how that site is storing your password. Tip #3: Don't share your password. Don't write it down and don't put it on a sticky note next to your computer. Tip #4: Watch for attackers trying to trick you through phone calls or e-mail messages requesting that you reveal your password.

BOOK REVIEW: COMMUNICATE WITH CONFIDENCE—HOW TO SAY IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME. Communications consultant Dianne Booher has compiled 1,042 tips—that come with supporting text—that can help readers develop the skill to win people over to their ideas, say “no” without hurt feelings, criticize without crippling, respond to insults, talk across gender lines and resolve conflicts without blows. Divided into 23 sections ranging from small talk and gender communications to the best ways to criticize, apologize and negotiate, “Communicate with Confidence” offers chapters such as “Negotiating so everybody feels like a winner,” “Listening until you really hear” and “Giving instructions so nobody feels like a fool.” This one book can serve as a single fast-access primer that can help you think on your feet, organize your ideas for impact, build credibility and loyalty and instantly answer questions from employees, coworkers, bosses and even family members.

PDPW Education Calendar:

November 17	The Middle Manager: How Do You Measure Up?, Wisconsin Dells, WI
November 29	World-Class Webinar Series Class III
December 2	Commodity Marketing Informational & Sign-up class, Baldwin, WI
December 9-10	Profit Symposium: Focusing on Dairy Financial Management, Madison, WI
January 18-20, 2011	Managers Academy, Albuquerque, NM
February 24, 2011	Agriculture Community Engagement (ACE) Education Seminar, Wisconsin Dells, WI
March 15-16, 2011	PDPW Business Conference, Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI
April 20 & 21, 2011	Hoof Care Sessions, Marshfield, Chilton, WI – Two One-day workshops

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