

Plan Ahead to Stretch Feed Inventory



New puppy owner supported Education Foundation



Corn byproduct distillers grain a ration alternative



Hoof trimming essential prior to warm summer months

When dairy producers fall short on feed, they have many options available to them to help them stretch their inventories. Byproducts or alternative feedstuffs are helpful in stretching feed inventory while making rations more cost effective, some even have added benefits such as increased milk production, when used right.

"We try to encourage our clients to assess their inventories right after they are finished harvesting," Lynn Davis of Nutrition Professionals, Inc. says.

Davis encourages producers to measure all feed inventory and take into consideration the number of animals that they need to feed soon after harvesting. Then, he likes to sit down with them to discuss what would be the best alternative for them based on the current economy.

"The reason for doing that at that time is many of the byproducts or alternative feedstuffs that we use have limited feeding rates so what we would want to do is start early with that," Davis says.

Byproducts can help producers stretch their feed inventory and can effectively replace about 10 to 25 percent of their forage. If a dairy is really short on feed inventory and starts feeding byproducts in the fall throughout the year, "you can really stretch forages significantly," says Davis.

"If they (producers) wait until this time of the year and say, 'whoops, I'm short of forage, I need to look at an alternative,' it becomes very awkward because the limitations with feeding rates come into play and

they're really not going to be able to do much extension," states Davis. "They're probably going to have to go out and buy some additional forages if they discover at this point in time that they are short."

When producers are considering the use of byproducts or alternative feedstuffs there are options on both the forage and concentrate side of the ration to consider.

Most lactating dairy diets that producers typically feed are around 30 percent neutral detergent fiber (NDF). There are many byproducts which contain a

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Live, Silent Auctions Raise Funds For Education Programs

Thirteen live auction items and 54 silent auction items at the Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin Annual Business Conference, March 17-18, in Madison generated more than \$33,000 for the PDPW Education Foundation. The money raised - \$20,775 from the live auction and \$12,855 from the silent auction - will be used for the organization's educational programs and initiatives such as PDPW's Youth Leadership Derby, mentor and internship programs, and Agriculture Community Engagement (ACE).

The Wisconsin Golf Package featuring gift certificates for five of Wisconsin's premier golf courses was the most popular live auction item. Bringing in \$3,355, this auction item went to a group dubbed "Friends of Dr. Dave Dickson" who purchased the package for the retired UW-Madison dairy science professor. The golf package was donated by the five participating golf courses, AgStar Financial Services and Stewart-Peterson.

Other live auction items included a semen tank and \$2,500 in semen donated by Select Sires; a registered Holstein calf donated by the Pete and Shellie Kappelman family of Meadow Brook Dairy Farms LLC; CP Feeds, Land O'Lakes Purina Feed Division and Land O'Lakes Milk Replacer Division; a registered Jersey calf donated by David and Patty Endres of Endres Jazzy Jerseys; Cooperative Plus Inc., Land O'Lakes Cows Match Jersey Blend, Standard Nutrition Consultant Tim Huffman, Wisconsin Jersey Breeders Association and Wisconsin Junior Jersey Breeders Association; a Labrado retriever puppy donated by Ganderland Quality Labradors; handmade quilt donated by Karla

Zimmerman; Door County getaway donated by Animart; WestfaliaSurge rotating cow brush donated by GEA WestfaliaSurge Inc.; original oil painting by Larry Schultz donated by Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board; Alliant Energy suite during World Dairy Expo 2009 donated by Alliant Energy; and a 10-person pheasant hunt donated by Diamond V Mills Inc.

Adam Timmerman, a former Green Bay Packer who earned two Super Bowl rings, kicked off the Tuesday evening, March 17, live auction following his keynote presentation and added two extra last-minute items to the auction: a signed football and a signed children's seed drill.

Silent auction items were on display throughout the two-day event, with individuals signing their names and noting their bids until the bell rang after lunch on Wednesday, March 18. Auction participants with the highest written bid when the bell rang went home with their items - and the Foundation secured even with more dollars for its educational programs

Live Auction doubles last year's mark as dairy producers and industry friends invest in "a legacy of learning."

and initiatives.

JoAnn Maedke, PDPW Education Foundation board member and coordinator of the live and silent auctions, pointed out that industry and producers donated numerous high-quality items to this year's auction.

"It is obvious that everyone who participated in the auction - donors, bidders and buyers - care about the future of our industry and see the value of education for the next generation of dairy producers," Maedke stated. "The quality of the donated items reflects the passion and professionalism we have in our industry."

Save the Date:
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Dairy's Bottom Line is published six times a year by PDPW with cooperation from Agri-View.



Using Probability to Your Advantage

with Ken Reiners, Badgerland Financial

"The race may not always be to the swift nor the victory to the strong, but that's how you bet." - Damon Runyon

Let me start by saying this is not an article that supports gambling. This quote simply highlights an important concept that most successful business managers have at least an intuitive understanding of and put into practice.

Concepts like "probability of occurrence"

and the "law of large numbers" used

consistently over time will improve your chances of success over the long-haul.

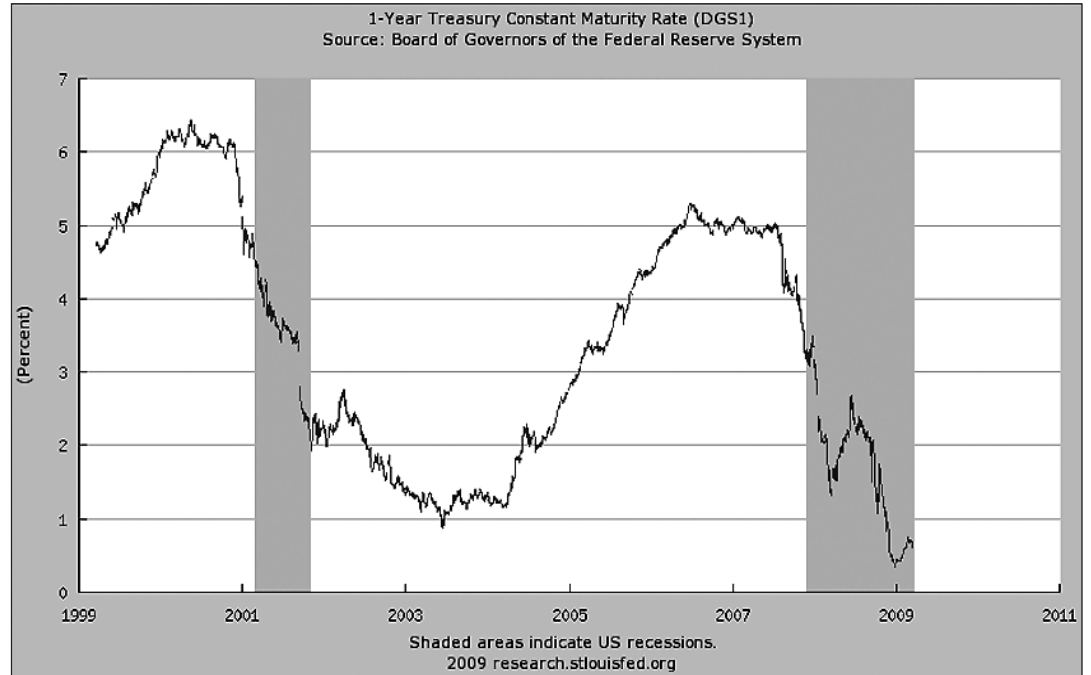


Ken Reiners

An example for reference is the accompanying 20-year corn price chart.

Over the last 20 years, corn prices have averaged under \$3 per bushel, with a long-term trend line showing a slight upward pattern. When corn was at \$5 per bushel in the latter part of 2007, what was the probability it would go to \$6 or higher versus \$4 or lower? Based on historical prices, the probability based would suggest it was more probable that corn prices would fall rather than rise.

As you likely know or you can see from the chart, corn prices did move substantially higher from the \$5 level for a relatively short period of time. This leads me to point out the probability of a particular outcome does not mean it will play out that way with certainty. It does suggest, however, that, over a longer period of time, prices will average around the historical



trend line pattern.

A look at the interest rate trend of one-year U.S. Treasury Bills and of 20-year U.S. Treasury Bonds shows the volatility of interest rates over time, with the one-year U.S. Treasury Bills trend chart revealing extreme volatility. Based on historical trends, probability would suggest there is a much higher likelihood the shorter term interest rates will over time move up, perhaps substantially over the next few years.

Longer term rates have also trended downward until recently. Within the last four months, a check of the trend of 20-year Treasury Bonds suggests they may have bottomed in this cycle and also will be trending up—but perhaps not with the same level of volatility or magnitude of the potential movement of short-term rates.

Today, short-term rates are

considerably under long-term rates – what economists describe as a very upwardly sloping positive yield curve. This difference between short- and long-term rates often leads borrowers to “stay short” to save on interest. However, if you look at this from a historical probability point of view, it would suggest there is considerably more long-term risk by staying short rather than fixing at least some of the debt at a long-term rate—especially if you are borrowing to support intermediate- or long-term assets. Of course, the past is no guarantee the future will play out exactly that way though it tends to be a good indicator.

In summary, over the course of your business life, you will make thousands of significant decisions that will impact the long-term success of your business. The “law of large numbers” suggests those of you who make those decisions

on the basis of evaluating the probability of outcomes in combination with your financial ability to withstand that outcome will fare better over the long haul than someone who tries to outguess and time the market.

Here’s something for you to think about today: On what basis do you make your decisions?

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Badgerland Financial, in conjunction with the other Farm Credit associations serving Wisconsin, was the first-ever PDPW “Mission Sponsor” and remains committed to its vision to enrich rural lives and communities one relationship at a time.



Inventory

Continued from page 1

lot of NDF. The problem with the NDF, says Davis, is that it's not an effective fiber source so "it doesn't add to the cud chewing mass."

"Typically what we want to do is get a minimum of 21 of those 30 units of NDF from forage, an effective fiber source," he says, adding, "If we really stretched it, we could get close to one-third of the NDF from other non-forage components but we need about two-thirds of that NDF to come from forage components."

There is also some seasonality to the various byproducts available.

Currently, the byproducts that are available in Wisconsin and would extend forage include malt sprouts, soybean hulls, gluten feed, brewer's grain, beet pulp, whole cottonseed, cottonseed hulls, oat hulls and rice hulls. Beet pulp and cottonseed products aren't

nearly as cost effective in the current market as the other byproducts listed. Davis says the No. 1 byproduct right now is malt sprouts, a byproduct of the brewing industry that is produced more heavily now as breweries gear up for their seasonal flush of beer.

"All of these items except the cottonseed hulls, oat hulls and rice hulls have very high NDF digestibility," says Davis. When added to the ration of a lactating cow, if done correctly they can also enhance milk production, adds Davis.

Additionally, there are some other byproducts that are high in NDF where the NDF is not very digestible. These byproducts with low NDF digestibility can fit well in rations for non-lactating animals.

"I call them diluents—something that would dilute the energy density of the diet," says Davis. "Oat hulls and rice hulls

are very cost effective and very low energy feeds that work quite effectively to replace straw or low quality hay."

Producers can turn to certain byproducts to help replace some of the concentrate portion of the ration. These byproducts, Davis explains, can sometimes work into the diet effectively, lower feed input costs and even add some other components to the ration—such as more protein and higher fat levels—that corn doesn't add. The first byproducts that come to mind for Davis are the byproducts of ethanol production.

"There are plenty of these in our state and throughout the upper Midwest with the wet and dry distillers grain and a byproduct called condensed distillers solubles, another byproduct that comes out the ethanol industry," Davis states.

Both the wet and dry distillers grain can be used in lactating dairy cow diets. They are typically more cost effective compared to corn and soy alternatives. The condensed distillers solubles—some people call corn syrup—is a liquid feed that is very high in energy and can be used to a minor degree in dairy cow diets. Davis says, however, condensed distillers solubles is probably more suited for finishing steer diets and maybe some heifer rations.

Corn gluten feed, coming out of the corn sweetener industry, is also available both wet and dry.

Another byproduct available more recently is whey permeate which is sold as a liquid that is 20-40 percent dry matter and contains mainly lactose as well as some mineral.

"On a dry matter basis it has a similar composition to what shell corn would be from an energy standpoint and it's about half of the price but it takes special equipment and facilities for handling since it is a liquid product," says Davis.

While byproducts and alternative feedstuffs can be a

cost effective alternative, Davis strongly recommends working alongside your nutritionist.

"In many instances these byproducts can be used as some replacement of grain or protein sources in the diet for lactating cows but typically there are more adjustments that need to be made in the ration," says Davis. "For instance, in the case of the distillers grain product it's a fairly rich source of methionine, an amino acid necessary for milk production, but it is very deficient in lysine. If a dairy was using a soy-based product for a protein source and replaced it with a byproduct like this, it could end up resulting in a milk loss if the diet isn't balanced properly for amino acids."

Stepping back and really assessing your cow's ration is extremely important on all operations.

"Targeting of high quality forages to the appropriate group of cattle is probably No. 1 in controlling costs," Davis relates. "No. 2 is stepping back and reassessing everything in the diet."

In tight economic times it's important that the feed dollar is spent on items that are going to give the greatest likelihood for return in the form of milk production or milk composition."

Davis also cautions producers to not take a lot of risks during these tight economic times.

It's real important that producers work closely with their nutritionist in those areas so that they don't try to save feed dollars, which is easy enough to do, but ultimately can result in lower production," says Davis.

Davis emphasized the need for producers to be "vigilant on input costs all of the time, not just when prices are low."

Byproducts need to be explored whether milk is \$10 a hundredweight or \$20 a hundredweight," he stated.

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By Kelsi Hendrickson

Producer Profile

Deric Lindstrom, Durand, is a fifth-generation farmer who operates Breezy Point Farms in Buffalo County with his parents, Randy and Becky Lindstrom. Expansion plans will have the dairy's 600 grade Holstein cows (530 milking 3X) increasing by another 300 this summer. Heifers will continue to go to a custom-raiser after five months, returning a couple months before freshening.

Lindstrom's younger brother, Andrew, and sister, Nora, work on fulltime on the farm along with nine non-family, full-time employees and a couple part-time workers.

Facilities at Breezy Point Farms include two six-row barns with curtains, fans and sprinklers. The new barn will be six rows and tunnel-ventilated for "better cooling, more consistent air flow and better air quality in the winter." This

"To me that's where the most value comes from belonging to PDPW—through education."

30-year-old dairyman said the tunnel ventilation should also help "keep alleys thawed" in the winter. The current double-eight parlor will be added onto to become a double-14, expandable to a double-18.

Breezy Point Farms substitutes liquid whey for corn in rations, with cows getting about 12 pounds of liquid whey per head per day. The whey, which is stored in a 10,000-gallon on-farm tank, is hosed on top of the TMR. Lindstrom says the cows are "performing well" on the whey. He adds that feeding liquid whey is also cost savings and has the cows "eating a little more."

Lindstrom says he's been



active in PDPW for as long as he can remember and recalls attending the organization's Annual Business Conferences right out of high school. He's also taken advantage of PDPW's management meetings and production seminars.

"It's been great for me," Lindstrom states. "The organization's seminars have been the source of a lot of my learning.

"To me that's where the most value comes from belonging to PDPW—through education."

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Remember Your ABC's of Successful Nutrition Management

A large portion of a dairy farm's expenses go toward raising calves and heifers into potentially high-producing cows. With it costing upwards of \$2,000 by the time an animal freshens, Dr. Ric Grummer, professor of dairy nutrition at UW-Madison, advises dairy producers to maintain cow health and production so return in milk receipts can be maximized.

Dr. Grummer offered 10 tips to help producers review and improve cow management protocols and increase herd production:

1. TRANSITION COWS

"The most important thing to remember with transition cows is to avoid stress," Dr. Grummer states. "Stress causes cows to go off feed and increases the likelihood of metabolic disorders." He says transition cows should have adequate pen space, bunk space, ventilation and water, and above all,

producers should avoid changing the transition cow's environment.

2. DRY COWS

Cows should enter dry off at a proper body condition score (BCS) of 3.5 on the range of 1 to 5 with 1 being extremely thin and 5 being excessively overweight. Since this 3.5 BCS should be maintained throughout the dry period, producers should avoid overfeeding or underfeeding.

"Overfeeding may cause fat deposition internally as well as externally which can lead to reductions in feed intake during the transition period," Dr. Grummer says.

3. FRESH COWS

Monitor, monitor, monitor—that's the mantra for fresh cows. And, because fresh cows do not necessarily need a separate diet or environment from other lactating cows, they must be monitored.



Maintaining cow health and production is essential so return in milk receipts can be maximized.

"If this mandates a separate pen to assure those cows are monitored, then so be it," Dr. Grummer notes. He suggests that producers look over their fresh cows daily for alertness, appetite, temperature and any signs of illness.

4. FEED AND NUTRITION

While a lot of attention has been paid to the importance of dry cow and pre-fresh transition cow nutrition, Dr. Grummer says nutrition in an animal's life cycle

See ABC's on page 9

SEE MORE THAN JUST NUMBERS SEE THE DATA THAT MATTERS

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Computer Model Can Help Producers Make Culling Decisions

To cull or not to cull? Sometimes, that really is the question. Often, though, the answer is not easy to arrive at.

Enter the OptiCow Model, a computer model or economic spreadsheet developed at the University of Pennsylvania to help dairy producers make the "best" culling and breeding decisions.

One of the primary developers of the model is Dr. David Galligan, a professor of animal health economics at the University of Pennsylvania and director of its center for animal health and productivity.

"The fundamental economics of culling a dairy cow are dictated by what is the value of the decision to 'keep' the cow—based on her future production and eventual culling—against

the value of the decision to 'immediately cull,' which is determined by the productivity attributes of an average replacement heifer," Dr. Galligan says.

"A cow's future productivity value is primarily a function of her production status in the herd—milk level relative to that of her herdmates, her age, days in milk and current reproductive status. As long as her projected value—adjusted to time and the probability of occurring, etc.—is higher than that of an immediate replacement's value, she should be maintained in the herd."

Many times, farmers decide to cull a particular animal after something has happened to provoke the issue.

"In the dairy setting, the

culling decision is made after the animal has succumbed to an issue that has an immediate impact on production and poor prognosis of productive recovery, or when an open cow has an extended lactation and the producer is concerned with the decision to continue breeding attempts, thus agreeing to 'keep' the cow," Dr. Galligan says. "These extended-lactation cows can potentially decrease the overall efficiency of production in that they take the place, on average, of a more-profitable replacement animal."

That's where spreadsheet models like OptiCow come in, as the program allows a producer to plug in numbers for many factors. Then the program weighs the pros and cons of keeping or culling and offers the farmer its decision.

Dr. Galligan points out that OptiCow calculates the retention payoff (RPO) value of dairy cows in different lactation numbers and months, with different milk production levels, pregnancy statuses and survivabilities, and it can calculate the costs per extra day open.

"OptiCow uses the RPO values, a unique approach to calculate the costs per extra day open that assumes optimal decisionmaking of the producer," he adds. He then explains that a cow's RPO value is the additional profits a farmer can expect from trying to keep the cow until her "optimal" age. This takes into account the chances of her being removed from the herd prematurely, compared to the chances of her being replaced immediately.

Each cow's RPO value is expressed as an economic index, Galligan tells. This, he says, "makes it possible to rank animals according to their future profitability."

"The higher the RPO, the more valuable the animal," he

continues. "A value below zero means that replacement is the most profitable choice.

Replacement payoff represents the maximum amount of money that should be spent in trying to keep the animal in case of reproductive failure or health problems."

Using an Excel spreadsheet, OptiCow lets a producer plug in various milk production levels, the value of milk and various lactation curves.


Most dairy producers can use the OptiCow Model as they simply need a computer equipped with Excel 97 or higher. To open the OptiCow model, the computer's "macros" function must be enabled.

You can learn about the OptiCow culling and breeding model at <http://dgalligan.com/culling> where a manual describes the computer model and how to use it.


By Ron Johnson

"PDPW helps me pay more attention to detail—on the cow side and on the personnel side. Between the workshops, Annual Business Conference and various communication pieces, I am better armed to manage my dairy and improve its bottom line."


~ Kirk Stibbe, Junction View Dairy, Richland Center, Wis.



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ABC's

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is equally important.

"In my opinion the fresh cow diet is most important and most related to cow health," he states. "Clearly there is a fine balance between feeding sufficient effective fiber to prevent acidosis or lameness and feeding too much effective fiber which causes excessive negative energy balance, fatty liver and ketosis."

He advises producers to work with a skilled consultant to obtain a proper balance.

5. FOOT/LEG HEALTH

While cows should be observed daily for signs of lameness, Dr. Grummer advises producers to determine if the problems are a result of diet, facilities or both. He says a well-trained hoof trimmer can implement a regular foot trimming schedule which includes getting each cow's hooves trimmed once during the far-off dry period and once at approximately 100 days in milk.

6. BODY CONDITION

Dr. Grummer underscores the importance of cows entering their dry-off period at a reasonable body condition score. He says late-lactation cows should not show under-conditioning (BCS less than 3.5) as it can be extremely difficult for cows to add BCS during the dry period. Under-conditioned cows also will not peak in milk production the next lactation.

7. HEIFER MANAGEMENT

Managing for cow health and production doesn't always start after a cow has her first calf. Heifer management can also affect productivity of an animal's subsequent lactations.

"To maximize lactation performance, you should target heifers to calve around 24 months of age," Grummer states. He urges producers to monitor growth and to consider environmental factors when adjusting heifer diets. His list of environmental factors include

temperature, wind speed, hair coat and mud, as he says these factors can influence nutrient requirements and the type of diet needed.

8. CALF MANAGEMENT

To obtain effective immunoglobulins and achieve maximum absorption of these immunoglobulins, a newborn calf should be fed high-quality colostrum within one to three hours of birth. The colostrum of choice: fresh dam-to-calf colostrum.

9. REPRODUCTION

Dr. Grummer emphasizes that reproductive performance is highly related to energy balance, with energy balance determined by the cow's energy requirements. The most important factor influencing energy requirements is the amount of energy being consumed in relation to milk production.

"For successful reproduction, focus on maximizing energy intake and don't blame reproductive failure on high milk production," Grummer states.

10. AVOID NUTRITION CUTS

While producers are always looking for effective ways to cutting costs, the nutrition side may not be the best place to initiate those cost-cutting measures. Why? Because metabolic disorders, poor immune function, poor reproduction and low peak milk yield can often be traced to negative nutrient balances, and these negative nutrient balances can come from improperly formulated diets or poor management practices that lead to low feed intake.

"While diet cost may be reduced, I suggest producers work with a nutritionist to make sure nutrient requirements are being met," Dr. Grummer states. "Don't cut corners that compromise cow comfort and a cow's desire to eat."

By Kayla Buske



Peggy Rau of Dorchester, Wis., (left) purchased a John Deere grain drill at a March 17 Live Auction benefitting the PDPW Education Foundation. The toy implement was signed by former Green Bay Packer Adam Timmerman (right), who used his first \$15,000 earnings from the NFL to buy a grain drill for his family's home farm in Iowa.

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Calling Dairies, Students: Summer Internship Opportunities

PDPW's Enhanced Internship Program connects dairy producers interested in hiring a summer intern with college students who want an on-farm summer internship—and it connects college students wanting a summer internship with dairy producers offering a summer internship.

"The Enhanced Internship Program is definitely a two-way street, with both the producer and the student gaining from the experience," states Evan Schnadt, programs coordinator. "Some student interns can even receive academic credit for their internship. On the producer side, dairymen have access to an impressive pool of potential interns; the program is free to PDPW members and its great

way to have qualified help during the busy summer months."

Schnadt explains that each internship is unique and tailored to meet the individual needs of the farm.

"No matter the internship, student interns will participate in a diversity of duties associated with the day-to-day operation of the farm, and employers are encouraged to allow students exposure to business planning and personnel management," Schnadt states. "It's a great eye-opening experience that exposes students to modern dairy production systems and can stimulate their career planning with production agriculture as an option."

Dairies interested in participating in PDPW's Enhanced Internship Program are required to complete and submit an application to PDPW. Once a dairy is approved, PDPW lists the opportunity online and approved prospective student interns are encouraged to send their application packet to potential employers. From there it's simply a matter of the dairy interviewing and pinpointing the "best" intern for their business.

College students interested in participating in PDPW's Enhanced Internship Program must also complete and submit an application, along with contact information for two or more references, to PDPW. Approved students are then required to access the online listing of available internship opportunities and to apply for any of those posted by sending a cover letter, resume and application form directly to the

potential employer.

"Compensation is between the employer and the intern," Schnadt states. "We do ask, however, that students offered an internship contact PDPW to share which internship they have accepted, and, upon completion of the internship, that they write and submit a one-page summary of their internship."

"Students who complete on-farm summer internships through PDPW's Enhanced Internship Program receive a complimentary registration at PDPW's Annual Business Conference March 16-17, 2010.

Additional information about PDPW's Enhanced Internship Program and application forms for producers and student interns are available at www.pdpw.org/internship.htm. Program Coordinator Evan Schnadt, can be contacted via email at eschnadt@pdpw.org or by phone, 920-324-5825.

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2009 Youth Leadership Derby, Nov. 7-8

The dates and place for PDPW's 2009 Youth Leadership Derby have been set: Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 7-8, at Milton High School. This annual two-day, fun-filled lock-in, which allows youth to explore all aspects of the dairy industry, will be packed with hands-on labs, unique tours and valuable, interactive workshops. Its positive learning environment is also a great place for youth to meet and learn from each other.

Mark your calendar now for Nov. 7-8 and look for details about the 2009 Youth Leadership Derby in upcoming issues of Dairy's Bottom Line.

Utilizing On-Farm Nutrient Sources to Cut Commercial Fertilizer Costs

Wet and rainy weather isn't the only hurdle Wisconsin producers will have to overcome this spring planting season. Producers will also need to overcome high input costs for fertilizer to produce crops economically in these tough times. But take heed, as Paul Kivlin, a nutrient management specialist with UW-Extension, offers tips to lower nutrient input cost while utilizing your on-farm assets.

When looking to cut commercial fertilizer costs, which have been on an uphill climb, producers may overlook one key byproduct on their operations: manure.

"Manure is a fantastic byproduct when we look at providing nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium to our crops," Kivlin says.

Before applying liquid or solid manure to your crops, Kivlin suggests following a few key steps to follow.

Most importantly, he says to start with a soil test to determine what nutrients are needed for the crop and about what already exists in the soil.

Information on how to take soil samples is available at county Extension offices, or the service can be provided by private consultants or cooperatives.

After conducting a soil sample test, Kivlin advises producers to pay attention to two key sources of nutrients on their operation. One is taking proper nitrogen credits for legumes that will be put back into the soil. The most common is alfalfa, which will provide a nitrogen credit between 40 to 190 pounds of nitrogen, depending on soil and alfalfa characteristics.

"For example, an alfalfa crop that is going into next year's corn crop on medium or fine textured soil will add a minimum of 90 pounds of nitrogen," Kivlin says.

The second source to pay attention to is an operation's manure credits which starts with an analysis of the manure's nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium content. Kivlin says producers must consider the difference between liquid and solid manure.

For daily haul of solid manure, Kivlin suggests producers use the "book values" for nutrient content. The book values are averages compiled from a number of laboratories and account a number of different species, including dairy, beef, etc.

Producers who have liquid manure should have samples analyzed in a laboratory. Kivlin recommends taking three samples: one at the beginning, third, middle and end when emptying the pit. Thorough manure pit education is very important.

After manure analysis is complete, Kivlin says producers can now consider the benefits of using manure as a fertilizer on their crops. For example, he notes that for every 1,000 gallons of liquid manure that is incorporated into the soil, about 10 pounds of nitrogen, 5 pounds of phosphorus and 16 pounds of potassium will be available to the plant.

"After conducting the soil report, a producer will know his nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium needs. He can then take that crop need and subtract what he's already adding, whether it's through legumes or manure. If he needs more nutrients, the remainder is the amount of commercial fertilizer he'll need to put down," Kivlin says.

To calculate application rate for liquid manure, producers can simply take the number of loads per acre applied to a crop and multiply that by the capacity (in gallons) of the manure spreader to determine how many thousands of gallons per acre are being applied.

For solid manure, the spreader is typically weighed to determine how much manure it holds. Today, some equipment manufacturers are designing and selling manure spreaders for solid/semi-solid manure with scale systems built into them. The main point, Kivlin says, is that producers must know what their manure application rate is.

A common application rate of solid dairy manure is 20 tons to the acre which is a "fairly light

application" and is worth approximately "\$170 an acre in terms of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium," adds Kivlin.

If producers have manure custom applied to their cropland by an outside source, Kivlin points out, "there must be communication between the producer and the custom applier to know how much manure to apply and where it's supposed to go."

This year, some producers are skipping potash applications on alfalfa fields due to the extremely high prices. As an effective supplement, producers can top dress fields with manure after any crop. The key is to apply a light application of manure with in a couple days after harvesting to prevent burning new growth. "It all comes down to timing," Kivlin explains. "And it's best to target older fields since they tend to be grassier and can utilize the nitrogen."

To properly utilize an operation's manure output and

legumes as a means of nutrient management Kivlin says producers need to know four numbers.

1.) Know the crop needs in terms of nutrients.

2.) Know what a legume crop supplies in terms of nitrogen credits

3.) Know what the manure supplies in terms of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium credits.

4.) Subtract legume and manure credits from the crop needs to determine the commercial fertilizer needs.

"Utilizing manure and legumes efficiently can really cut down on a producer's crop fertilizer expenses," Kivlin notes.

For more information on legume, manure credits, or nutrient management practices, visit www.ipcm.wisc.edu and search for the publication titled "Nutrient Management Fast Facts."

By Brianna Ditzenberger



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Maximize Your Hoof Care Program

Karl Burgi, coordinator and main instructor of Dairyland Hoof Care Institute Inc., has a goal, and that goal is for dairy producers to lessen the incidence of lameness within their herds. With a Minnesota Freestall Barns Lameness Prevalence study pinpointing the average cost of lameness per case at \$404, attention to hoof care and maintenance could reap major benefits.

If hoof trimming has been an irregular occurrence on your operation, this spring is an ideal time to get your system in place. After all, research shows it is important to trim in May or June before animals will be standing more often, and for longer periods, in the higher heat months of July and August.

"If trimming is done on a regular basis, it is much more successful because you are

maintaining," Burgi states. "If dairymen wait too long, sometimes the changes we have to make are so dramatic that the whole structure of the claw or leg has to be adjusted again. This plays into coordinating a regular trimming schedule."

Burgi stresses that every animal that has a calf should have the best possible hoof condition at time of calving. He recommends trimming three to eight weeks prior calving and having the hoof properly balanced, with proper claw shape, the day that they calve. To that end, he points out that most claw horn lesions are associated with the time of calving.

"It has been documented that, if a cow is lame in the first 30 days of lactation, most times she ends up leaving the herd before she is 100 days in milk,"



Hoof trimming is especially important in May or June prior to when animals will be standing more often, or for longer periods, in the higher heat months of July and August.

Burgi states.


The hoof specialist says second trimmings depend on the producer's type of facility:

- Sand Freestall: trim mid-lactation, around 120 to 160 days

into the lactation.

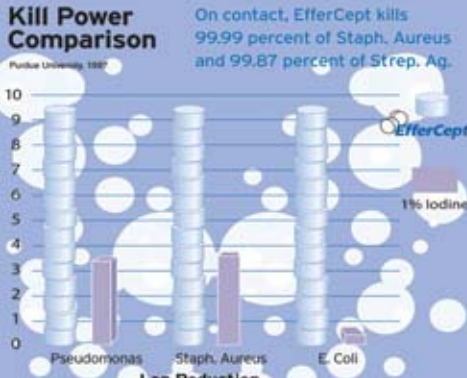
- Mattress Barn: trim between 80–100 days and again at 200 days. Why? Because researchers

See Hoof Care on page 15



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PRODUCER MEMBER – \$100

Voting member - One member per dairy entity covers all managers, operators, spouses and employees. While each dairy has one vote in making member decisions, every person within the dairy (operator, spouse and employees) enjoys the benefits and member rate at PDPW events.

ASSOCIATE INDIVIDUAL MEMBER – \$150

Non-voting member - Membership is open to any individual interested in the dairy industry who does not qualify as an individual or a corporate membership.

CORPORATE MEMBER – \$300

Non-voting member - Open to any group, company or organization interested in the dairy industry. With one corporate membership, every person within the company/organization enjoys the benefits and member rate at PDPW events.

Send this form to: Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, N5776 US Hwy 151, Suite 1, Fond du Lac, WI 54937
Or become a member online at www.pdpw.org, or call us at 800-947-7379, or contact us via e-mail at mail@pdpw.org.

PDPW: An Organization For Dairy Producers Like You

WHAT IS PDPW?

Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin (PDPW) is the largest producer-led dairy organization in the nation. PDPW has grown from our humble beginnings in 1992 when a small group of dairy producers saw a need for education and information that would help Wisconsin producers improve profitability. Today we are a network with thousands of dairy businesses from throughout the nation who have the same passion for the future of the dairy industry. That passion helps us lead the success of the dairy industry through education.

WHO IS PDPW?

PDPW membership represents the gamut of dairy producers. Every type of dairy producer and every size operation is represented and welcomed in our membership. This breadth of our members is represented by the attendees at the PDPW Annual Business Conference, dairy's premier event. PDPW began as a Wisconsin-only organization. Today we have grown to a network of thousands of producers and industry leaders covering the country. In fact, we have producer members from fifteen states, representing dairies from coast-to-coast. These producers from across the nation seek business programming and resources only found at PDPW. We offer a wide variety of educational programming designed to meet your specific needs and present new, innovative information that is useful to you. One idea, solution and approach doesn't work for everyone – each is unique. We are dairy producers – just like you.

Different operations, unique businesses, one vision: to lead the success of the dairy industry. No matter the type of your dairy or the size of your herd, PDPW embraces the entire industry and lives its mission "to share ideas, solutions, resources and experiences that help dairy producers succeed."

PDPW is all about connections. Connecting you with:

- Resources to improve and grow your business
- Advice and answers
- Other dairy producers who share the same experiences you do
- Industry leaders and experts
- World class scientists and researchers
- The next generation of dairy producers who are excited about their role in the industry
- Industry's preferred suppliers

Hoof Care

Continued from page 12 have learned that cows on mattresses tend to stand more if they are lame because they have a tougher time getting up and down. This can also make recovery worse, because the animals will stand more than they lay—it is not 50/50 like on sand.

• Stanchion Barn/Tie Stall: treat these operations similar to the sand freestall, with two trims per lactation.

“When we routinely functional trim, lameness should be reduced in the herds where it is done well,” Burgi states. “But we things vary from dairy to dairy, and sometimes it requires quite timely schedules to ensure our cows are in proper shape when they go through a stress period.”

When studying farms with low incidence of lameness, Burgi says these farms treat lameness like a case of mastitis, taking care of the lameness that day or the next. While he understands

this level of attention can be challenging on a small farm, he contends that any operation with more than 150 head should have a person assigned to addressing signs of lameness.

“We need to be more on top of things,” Burgi says. “An example of a realistic goal would be less than 5 percent lameness per year due to claw horn lesions and infectious lesions.”

Burgi says producers need to hold their hoof trimmer accountable by observing their herd post-trim and either bringing issues to the attention of the hoof trimmer or addressing the issue in a timely manner themselves.

He also advises producers and hoof trimmers to continue their education, learn the pros and cons of footbaths, network within the industry and talk to veterinarians, nutritionists and other trimmers. He maintains that a producer should know the difference between a “good job”

and a “bad job” in hoof trimming.

“All trimmers make some mistakes, but, in general, if mistakes are made, we shouldn't lose cows over it,” Burgi states. “And I always warn producers that if the job is not done right, they are better off not to do it at all.”

Burgi offers these action steps to reduce lameness and increase milk production:

- Locomotion score cows twice per year or before every hoof trimming.
- Identify and treat lame cows daily.
- Have every cow functionally trimmed a minimum of two times per year.
- Keep hooves as clean as possible to prevent infectious diseases.
- Use a footbath regularly.
- Give every cow a chance to lay down in a comfortable stall for a minimum of 12 hours per day.

• Feed a consistent diet 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Post trimming, he suggests producers notice these areas—and talk to their hoof trimmer if an event is amiss:

- Lameness recover promptly.
 - Blocks are used to treat claw horn lesions.
 - Trimmed cows are not lame three to 10 days following the trimming.
 - Understanding that functional trimming entails assessing the needed for trimming and trimming should only occur on the claws in need.
 - Treatments used for infectious lesions like hairy warts and foot rot are effective.
- “We have to do a better job that first lactation animals are not getting lame. With lameness increasing at 8 percent per lactation, we need to pay more attention on our heifer lots as well,” Burgi summarizes.

By Ali Schultz

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Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin Elects 2009 Officers

The Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin have a new slate of officers to lead its 1,500-plus members. At its first meeting following its Annual Business Conference in mid March, PDPW Board of Directors elected Doug Knoepke, More-To-Do Farms, Durand, to serve as president; Eric Hillan, Rusk Rose Holsteins, Ladysmith; vice president; Marion Barlass, Barlass Jersey Farms, Janesville; secretary; and Walter Meinholz, Blue Star Dairy, DeForest, treasurer.

Other PDPW Board members include Mark Diederichs, Lake Breeze Dairy, Malone; Patty Endres, Endres Jazzy Jerseys, Lodi; Gary Ruegsegger, Maple Ridge Dairy Business, Stratford; and Keith York, Merry Water Farm, Lake Geneva. York and Meinholz were elected at the 2009 Annual Business Conference in mid March and are the newest members on

PDPW's Board.

"PDPW's Board is strong and extremely focused on driving positive change within the industry and providing first-rate educational programs that help fellow dairy producers make stronger, well-informed decisions in their operations," states Shelly Mayer, executive director of PDPW. "It will be quite exciting to see what educational programs, networking opportunities and other events this Board recommends be developed the coming year for the dairying community."

In addition to having a dedicated Board of Directors, Mayer adds that PDPW relies significantly on grassroots membership involvement on a number of committees. Through these committees, members actively participate in program planning and lead valuable industry initiatives.

Professional Dairy Producers



The Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin's nine-member Board of Directors for 2009-2010 are (front row, left to right), Marion Barlass, Janesville, secretary; Patty Endres, Lodi; Keith York, Lake Geneva; and Walter Meinholz, DeForest, treasurer; (back row, left to right) Gary Ruegsegger, Stratford; Mark Diederichs, Malone; Doug Knoepke, Durand, president; Russel Strutz, Two Rivers; Jeff Riechers, Darlington, one of four PDPW advisors; and Eric Hillan, Ladysmith, vice president.

of Wisconsin is a dairy-producer founded organization that provides educational programs and services to fellow dairy

producers. PDPW's mission is "to share ideas, solutions, resources, and experiences that help dairy producers succeed."

Meinholz: Man of Few Words, But Great Wisdom

Walter Meinholz, Blue Star Dairy Farms, DeForest, was newly elected as a Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin board member at the organization's recent Annual Business Conference in Madison. Meinholz shares information about his operation and his vision for PDPW and the future of the dairy industry in Wisconsin.



Walter Meinholz

Description of the dairy business.

Blue Star Dairy Farms is a family-owned partnership involving Walter and his brothers, Louie and Arthur, as well as two of Louie's sons, Craig and Brian. Two additional

nephews, Walter's son-in-law and another family member work for this family-owned and operated dairy, which consists of three milking facilities in DeForest, Arlington and Middleton, with approximately 2,600 cows among the three.

Most of the partners' wives are involved in the farm, with Walter's wife, Nancy, serving as relief calf feeder. The couple has four grown daughters, a son in high school and two grandchildren.

The Middleton farm, which was Walter's home farm and is now managed by Arthur, has 525 cows, the fewest cows of the three facilities. The DeForest operation, which was started in 1971 after Walter graduated from high school, has 750 lactating cows and 300 dry cows while the Arlington operation, which is operated as "one dairy" with the DeForest farm, has an additional

1,100 milk cows.

Calving is done at DeForest, with replacements raised in-house at Middleton and DeForest.

Blue Star Dairy milks mostly grade Holsteins. The Middleton facility, however, has what Walter calls "a fair amount of registered cattle" that were former 4-H and FFA projects. Cows at all three sites are milked 3X a day.

Blue Star operates approximately 3,800 acres and buys haylage and corn silage off another 1,200, with Blue Star doing the harvesting. Crop operations are headquartered at DeForest. Crops are corn, alfalfa, soybeans, winter wheat and winter rye (for cover for corn silage ground and heifer feed). This operation also handles manure in-house utilizing dragline system or tankers.

In addition to family, Blue Star has around three dozen full-time

equivalent non-family employees.

"We do all field operations and heifer raising in-house," Walter states. "That's our style of doing things."

Describe off-farm involvement, including in PDPW.

Walter comes to the PDPW with significant board experience, having served on a Farm Credit board as well as on the board of Alto Dairy Cooperative. Currently, he's also chairman of the Vienna Township planning committee. The farm is also frequently a stop on industry tours.

Walter has been active in PDPW since its inception in 1992 and has been a speaker at several PDPW seminars. He's now looking forward to his new role as a board member.

See Meinholz on page 22

York Excited About PDPW, Community Leadership

Keith York of Merry Water Farms, Lake Geneva, is one of two dairy producers newly elected to the nine-member Board of Directors of the Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin. The election took place at the recent annual business conference in Madison.



Keith York

Description of the dairy business.

Merry Water Farms is a family-owned Walworth County dairy owned and managed by Keith, 57; his twin brother, Ken; and their cousin, John Tueting. The dairy has 15 full-time non-family employees and appreciates the involvement of the York brothers' parents, Mary and Walter, who feed the calves.

The herd includes 1,100 Holsteins (970 milking) that are milked 3X a day and have a herd average 29,000 pounds-plus. Cows are milked in a double-16 parallel parlor, expandable to a double-24.

In 2001, Merry Water Farms increased from 600 to 1,000 cows and is now expanding to 1,500 head. Keith says this number should be reached by the end of 2010. Plans also include adding another barn next year and expanding the parlor.

The family-owned dairy has 14 million gallons of lagoon storage and hires application of liquid manure, which is all injected. Their three-stage flush-flume manure-handling system includes sand separation lanes which are cleaned out daily with the sand reused for stalls. Water from the third stage is pumped and flushed into the flume system.

Facilities consist of a trio of barns: an older 200-cow barn with 8-foot sidewalls, which was originally insulated but which they "opened up," and two six-

row barns for 400 cows each. Expansion plans includes adding a 400-cow, four-row transition barn for calving and post-fresh cows and a small parlor so fresh cows can be milked separately.

About 1,000 head of youngstock is raised in-house at two different sites.

Keith, who is general manager and dairy herd manager, reports that sexed semen has been used on all the dairy's heifers and about 5 percent of the cows for three years. Designated females are Aled with sexed semen until confirmed pregnant, averaging two services per heifer.

Keith says the dairy prefers the assurance of better calving ease with heifer calves and figures that they get 250 more heifers a year over what they would with unsexed semen—and this allows the dairy to more quickly expand their herd from within.

Describe off-farm involvement, including in PDPW.

Keith has served on several PDPW committees prior to his recent election to the board. Keith says he has long been attending PDPW's "great educational meetings" where he also found "great" networking opportunities with fellow producers.

"The organization—as a whole—has such a positive attitude about the industry. It gets you inspired about your own industry," he states.

The dairyman says it was PDPW who prompted him last year to undertake his first public speaking engagement since he was a state FFA officer in '72. That experience occurred at last year's PDPW Annual Business Conference where he talked about his expansion process, permitting and community relations.

What impact has PDPW had on the dairy industry?

Keith points out that PDPW was in the forefront on the initiative to document the humane treatment of

our livestock.

"We, as an organization, know that there is a need to prove to the consumer that we make the treatment of our animals the No. 1 concern of the farmer," Keith states. "We will need to inform the consumer of our great concern for the cows' health.

"I think we need to invite our neighbors from the city to come out to our dairies and see how well we treat our animals and explain to them how our farms work. The Internet may be a way of introducing the consumer to our farms."

What is this new board member's vision for PDPW?

Keith says he would like PDPW's education emphasis to continue as it helps members stay on the cutting edge of new technologies.

"I think there is a great opportunity for our organization to help the industry grow by tackling issues of public concern," he continues. He adds that increasing environmental awareness has not been a negative for the dairy industry as it has allowed the industry to point out that it has "always been involved in improving our environment."

As for manure management, Keith has a very direct response: "The dairy farmer has always known the value of our manure and has used it for generations as a source of nutrients for the land. Now, with the continued research to support the use of manure as nutrients as well as a source of energy, we, as an educational organization, can let farmers know what else we can produce."

"Composting, irrigating, digesting and burning are some of the new technologies that the dairy farmer can use to handle manure and create a source of income for the farm."

The Walworth County dairy producer says "sustainable agriculture" is another "timely topic" for PDPW and all of agriculture.

"We need to inform the public that we are producing a product in a more sustainable way," he notes. "The carbon footprint of today's dairy farm is much smaller than in the past. We, as dairy farmers, have increased—and will continue to increase—our efficiency, which is why we will be more sustainable."

Last but not least, Keith says he wants to help PDPW to continue to keep producers inspired about their industry and committed to it. He stresses that these are areas where PDPW shines.

What's your vision for the future of dairying in Wisconsin?

Keith says he sees a "great future" for Wisconsin's dairy industry - "not only with larger dairies but with smaller dairies creating their own markets with organic and grass-fed milk and beef." He notes that, with consumers wanting differentiated products, everyone has "a chance to make a living and do what they enjoy."

He sees "great opportunity" ahead for manure management, with digesters, separation and the ability to produce multiple products, burning manure and producing "green coal" for electricity and even selling methane direct to gas companies.

He says cooperative digesters will enable smaller dairies to take advantage of the opportunities in these new technologies, to have another income stream for their farms and to "help the environment, too."

Despite the recent downturn in the dairy economy, Keith remains optimistic. From dairying all his life and experiencing up-and-down price cycles, he says he's learned that the "sun always comes out" and there are "always better days" ahead.

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"We're a 500-cow dairy and appreciate the cross section of dairy producers who belong to PDPW. We also value the PDPW-sponsored educational events. It's good for us and our employees to attend these events as we hear a different perspective from those presenting and always learn something that we can apply at home."

~ Arne Peterson, Lera, Wis.

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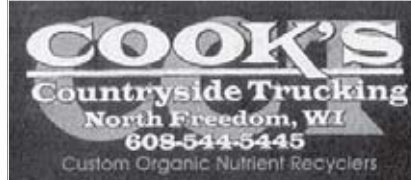


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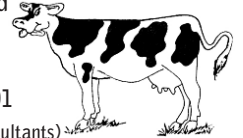
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Benefit From Looking Forward, Not in Your Rearview Mirror

"Low milk prices are a producer's choice," says Carl Babler, senior hedge specialist with First Capitol Ag. "The tools are there to avoid them."

Babler, who has more than 30 years of experience in commodity price risk management, along with dairying and cropping, has taught PDPW's Commodity Markets Class for the past two years.

So what advice does Babler offer regarding how to steer clear of low prices?

• **Create a culture.** Babler says successful dairies have created a culture of staying ahead of the curve when it comes to risk management and not becoming "victims" of low prices by implementing beneficial strategies. They have the mindset that they will not stand by and accept prices, but intensively manage their operation.

• **Look forward.** The biggest part of creating the culture is learning to look forward.

"You can't manage a business looking in the rearview mirror," Babler explains.

He reminds everyone that, in the midst of all the negative press and publicity of low dairy prices, some producers are thriving. These "thrivers" took the initiative to look ahead and protect themselves last year.

While managers should make it a habit to look and plan at least six to eight months out, many look out further.

"You can look forward almost two years," Babler says in regards to using futures markets. He notes that some producers are getting \$12, with MLIC payments and plant premiums right now because they planned ahead.

• **Save yourself.** Babler stresses that, in this day and age, the victorious producers don't

just sit back and wait for someone to save them. He points out, whether it is a co-op, government or some type of new program, manmade market manipulation has been attempted before with little or no response.

"It's your cows; it's your business," he states, interjecting that producers and managers are ultimately responsible.

• **Use tools available.** To manage your business, Babler advises producers to use the tools that are available. He adds that futures, options and forward contracting are not a "bad thing."

Babler reminds producers that milk is a commodity and it has a market. Like all commodities, price fluctuations are inevitable, and there will always be highs and lows. He says that while milk prices will eventually climb again, they can just as easily come back down.

"Some just won't take less than \$12," he explained, noting that producers have milk puts between \$10-15 now. He says producers have created budgets based on the expectation they will at least get \$12. If they receive more, it's even better, but at least they are protected on the low side.

Babler contends that producers should use marketing tools consistently and not try to "play" the market. He emphasizes that no one can predict where the market is headed perfectly. While there are always unseen bumps in the road, Babler maintains that producers are better off if they consistently execute their price risk management program.

• **Budget for milk management.** This hedge specialist says good managers have a budget for their price risk management and understand that price protection can cost 25-45 cents per hundredweight.

Babler says that, while this line item is non-existent or blank in current budgets for most producers, it is necessary to include when looking at price risk protection.

Babler admits that writing the check for price risk protection isn't always easy, but says producers get used to it and then properly budgeted for it. Some producers are writing a \$4,000 check per million pounds of milk, but they are also the getting a \$70,000 milk check this month, he says.

Meinholz

Continued from page 16

What impact has PDPW had on the dairy industry?

Walter says PDPW's producer education—which covers everything from the latest technologies and techniques to current issues—and the organization's producer-to-producer networking are "invaluable." He stresses that the organization has been a big part of helping revitalize the dairy industry in Wisconsin.

What is this new board member's vision for PDPW?

"I feel it's important that PDPW continues its tradition of education for producers," Walter says. In particular, he'd like to see the organization continue to help producers "figure ways to get the next generation involved" and "how to train middle managers."

"As we get larger, that's one of the weaknesses we have," he notes.

Other areas of importance, he says, include developing a managerial accounting educational program and continued communication with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on existing

• **Kick it into gear.** To avoid the next drop in prices, Babler urges producers to create a culture and act on it. He advises dairy producers to implement a "discovery process" whereby they meet with their management team, lenders, dairy consultants and brokers to create a plan that fits their needs from all standpoints including the budget, risk management and financial obligations.

By Sarah Young

issues of concern within the industry and any new issues that might arise.

What's your vision for the future of dairying in Wisconsin?

"We have to continue to capitalize on our lower-cost feed sources—relative to other parts of the country—to allow Wisconsin dairying to grow," Walter states. "We also have more available water, which is a competitive advantage." And he acknowledges that byproduct feeds from ethanol plants are also available.

Walter says dairy producers must continue to seek ways to minimize their impact on our neighbors and would like Wisconsin to minimize rural scattered development in prime agricultural areas of the state. Such development, he says, "affects our future ability to farm and especially to raise livestock."

"It's also important for industry—processors—to reinvest in plants and infrastructure," he says pragmatically. He's hopeful that the processing industry will continue to reinvest, "keep modernizing" and offering "what the consumer wants" in terms of products.

By Jane Fyksen



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