

This article appeared in *Farmshine* on August 1, 2008



## PDMP member advocates for truth and unity

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Special for Farmshine

LEBANON, Pa.—As a member of the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania (PDMP) and a committee leader of American Farmers for the Advancement and Conservation of Technology (AFACT), Tom Krall is devoted in his efforts to promote truth and unity, to reach consumers and retailers with the facts about modern dairy production, and to reach out to other farmers about securing the future of agriculture technologies.

He's not alone. Sustainability is an ongoing concern across the country, and for PDMP as an organization with a mission of advancing the dairy industry in Pennsylvania.

"The main thing is we need to come together," says Krall, who hosted an AFACT advocacy workshop at his family's dairy farm in Lebanon on July 10. "A divided industry cannot stand. We must focus on truth and seek out solutions—together—on energy conservation, efficiency, and production, while advancing quality of life and productivity."

Through membership in PDMP and AFACT, Krall believes strongly that "if everyone does a little, we can accomplish a lot. We can't just go about our business thinking someone else will do it," he says. "Together, there is strength in membership, strength in the collective effort. We need to get the truth out there and tell our story so we can focus on the real challenge ahead of us: energy."

Tom's son Joel runs the day-to-day operations of the 100-cow dairy, with a rolling herd average of 32,000 pounds (3x). While Tom still does the third-shift milking, he and his wife Shirley find time to devote to farm tours and other opportunities to clarify mixed messages in the media and educate a thirsting public.

Those who attended the AFACT workshop, described the experience as "enlightening" and "energizing." The event attracted dairy farmers and industry representatives and even a beef cow/calf producer who saw the meeting notice in *Farmshine*.

During the workshop, Kansas dairyman and AFACT co-chair, Carrol Campbell, stressed the importance of reaching out not only to retailers and consumers but also to other sectors of agriculture who are “in the same boat” needing to connect with consumers and preserve safe, approved technologies that assure a safe, wholesome, abundant food supply for a growing population.

“It is important that we don’t lose tools that allow farmers to provide adequate care for their animals, increase productivity (milk/meat), and protect our natural resources,” notes Lynette Gelsinger. She grew up on a dairy farm and today has a beef herd and raises dairy heifers with her husband Troy. She is also a nutrient management specialist with the Lebanon County Conservation District.

Gelsinger attended the advocacy workshop because of her interest in protecting modern technologies that impact all types of livestock production. Her perspective shows concern extends beyond the rbST-related issues that first stimulated AFACT’s formation a year ago.

“I believe that farmers need to be willing to reach out to the public and share their story,” she says, adding that the workshop revealed ways to bridge the social disconnect. “Consumers need to have confidence that farmers are doing their best to provide healthy and safe food and to understand that farming is a way of life and a business.”

Advocacy by grassroots organizations like AFACT, nationally, and PDMP, state-wide, serve to bridge the gap between fact and fiction and between producer and consumer.

In October, PDMP, along with New York-based Northeast Dairy Producers Association, issued a joint statement supporting the responsibility of dairy producers and processors to provide accurate information and calling upon the entire supply chain—from producers, to cooperatives, to processors, to retailers—to work together to ensure consumer confidence in the safety and quality of all dairy products and to ensure that in the process of meeting consumer demand, dairy producers receive a fair value for their milk.