

First forum to focus on greatest farm resource: family relationships

By SHERRY BUNTING
Special for Farmshine

LANCASTER, Pa.—For those who attend the Pennsylvania Dairy Summit in February, a high point was the final speaker: Wisconsin dairyman Hank Wagner.

He inspired attendees to find and recognize opportunities, and he highlighted the importance of family relationships on dairy farms, of having a thankful attitude, and of being “proud of what we do.”

Wagner urged producers to become “opportunity hunters. Often, we don’t expect opportunities, so we don’t find them,” he said.

‘Experience the sharing...’ An open invitation to 2009 PDMP Forums

By ROD HISSONG
PDMP President

MERCERSBURG, Pa.—It is that time of year again. Time to get the corn planters ready, time to get the knives replaced on the discbine, time to get the manure pits emptied and time for PDMP to start promoting its 2009 line-up of educational meetings.

For me, one of the greatest benefits of a PDMP membership is the educational meetings and farm tours. They allow me to get a day away from the farm and rub shoulders with some of the state’s most successful dairy producers and learn up-to-date, pertinent information that I can take home to make my dairy more successful.

The first meeting, to be held on June 4 in Lancaster County, will focus on family relationships. Virtually all dairy farms in Pennsylvania, whether they milk 50 or 500 cows, are family operations. We all have seen instances where the family relationships have determined the success or failure of a dairy operation. In an effort to help us all better understand those relationships, The Rev. Dr. Carl T. Clark, nationally recognized family psychologist and trainer, will be our morning speaker.

You will want to be sure to bring family members and business partners to hear this speaker as we explore those relationships and how we all can work together effectively to bring success to our dairy operations. In the afternoon, Robert Rohrer and his family will host a tour of Rohrer Dairy Farms LLC, one of the most respected dairies in Lancaster County.

Never has the topic of family relationships been more timely. With the state of the dairy economy, all of our businesses have suffered financial hardships, and unfortunately as our dairies have suffered, so too can many of our

“We have to be looking for them and pursuing them. Under every single challenge is a cleverly hidden opportunity, but it won’t reach out and grab you. You have to be looking for it.”

He touched on family relationships and interactions between spouses, giving examples of things people can do to choose to bring their family atmosphere to a new and more positive level.

He also motivated producers to “make a purpose of being thankful. When I spent time in Africa, I saw people with a lot less than I had and who were a lot more thankful than I was.”

“The challenges will always be there in

what we do,” he said, “but if we work at being thankful and positive, it actually helps us get through these challenges to find the opportunities.”

On June 4, PDMP will provide a great opportunity for dairymen as they kick off their 2009 series of three Dairy Issues Forums. The topic for this first forum is “Family Relationships on the Dairy Farm.”

The program is being organized with the help of Dr. Charlie Gardner, Cargill Animal Nutrition Consulting Services. Cargill is one of nine PDMP Premier Partners.

Gardner helped organize the highly success-

ful and well attended PDMP Issue Forum on farm safety last November.

Lancaster County is the location for the Forum on June 4, and the morning speaker is the Rev. Dr. Carl T. Clarke, who conducts family and couples training sessions throughout the country through his non-denominational and non-profit Marriage Enrichment, Inc. The afternoon tour will be hosted by Robert Rohrer and his family at Rohrer Dairy Farms LLC.

For more information about this event as well as the August and November Forums, call PDMP, toll-free, at 877-326-5993 or visit www.pdmp.org



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Rod Hissong

family relationships. It is difficult to not bring the stresses of the barn into the house with you.

Dairymen are notoriously bad communicators and often avoid the topic of interpersonal relationships. Now more than ever, we need to educate ourselves how to better handle the stresses of our profession as we become better dairymen and ultimately better people.

PDMP will have two other educational meetings this year. One will be on August 6 in Juniata County. This meeting will focus on the “greening” of your dairy and will include a tour of the Reinford family’s dairy and their anaerobic digester.

With all the talk about anaerobic digesters, carbon credits and other environmentally friendly practices, PDMP will provide an edu-

cational meeting that will give you insights on how these “green” technologies and programs work and how they can fit into your business plan. You will hear from Pennsylvania dairymen who are using “green” technologies and about how they benefit from them.

The last meeting of the year, on November 5 in Cumberland County, will focus on dairy’s place in the world market. We all have heard, in the last few years, how exports have become such an important part of our milk check. At this meeting you will learn how dairy fits into the world markets and where dairy needs to be to compete in the world market.

Understanding how the system works is the first step to getting involved with how our milk is marketed. Given the current milk pricing,

this program will help you understand why 2009 is vastly different from the previous two years and how we can position our businesses and the industry to minimize the effects of low milk prices.

This program will be held in Cumberland County, concluding with an exciting tour of the Giant Distribution Center in Carlisle.

Don’t miss this opportunity to understand your consumer and have the opportunity to speak directly to those who are responsible for selling your milk to the consumer.

As you can see, PDMP leadership has spent a great deal of time developing a wide array of educational programs that are timely for Pennsylvania’s dairy producers. These programs are all set and speakers are being confirmed... now all we need is you.

I often hear the reason from dairymen that they don’t have time to attend meetings... the cows still need milked and the calves fed. However, we all know most dairymen can find a day away during hunting season, and guess what? ... The cows get milked and the calves get fed! If we make it a priority, we find a way to attend.

Whether you are a PDMP member or not, I strongly encourage you to make a PDMP educational meeting a priority. You won’t regret it. You need to attend to experience the sharing and networking that goes on at a PDMP meeting. Today, we need and deserve these networking opportunities, more than ever.

Milk prices won’t change if you take a day away to attend. Get out and gain a new perspective that will help you not only deal with these difficult times but will make you a better dairyman, ready to thrive when times are better. Bring your neighbor, and we will look forward to seeing you on June 4.

PDMP member gives producer perspective in national media interview

By SHERRY BUNTING
Special for Farmshine

CHATHAM, Pa.—The Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania (PDMP) made national news last week as member Walt Moore, general manager and owner of Walmoore Holsteins near here, was interviewed by Sue Kirchhoff of USA TODAY for a dairyman’s perspective on the plunging milk prices.

Moore was quoted throughout Kirchhoff’s March 24 article, “Farmers’ incomes dry up as milk prices plunge about 50%”, available in the

newspaper’s on-line archive at http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/food/2009-03-24-dairy-farms_N.htm?loc=interstitialskip.

Walmoore Holsteins, a 4th generation dairy celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, is home to 750 milking cows, about 525 young-stock and 1150 acres of crops.

Along with the article, is a well-produced three and one-half minute video showing Moore on his farm, talking about the current dairy market and how difficult the price volatility is for dairy producers, but also expressing

his positive outlook for the future. The film footage accurately and positively portrays the day-to-day operations of the dairy.

In the video, Moore describes the previous three to four years as very volatile for milk markets, hitting their highest highs and lowest lows. Yet he goes on to express his belief that there is a bright future ahead because dairymen produce a great product for which demand continues to steadily increase.

He also stressed the importance of keeping our domestic food production viable so that we can continue to produce the cheapest and safest food supply in the world and of making sure that consumers are fully aware of this.

“The last thing we want is to have more of our food shipped from overseas,” he said. “We’ve got some of the best soils in the world here. We’ve got the infrastructure. We make the safest and cheapest food in the world and we need to be able to continue to do that.”

In the article, Moore noted that, “This is an unprecedented time. In the 20 years I’ve been in



Walt Moore

this full time, I’ve never seen anything like it.”

At the same time, Moore shared his conviction that dairymen love their way of life, enjoy working with the cattle, and want to continue to produce a wholesome product for consumers.

PDMP was originally contacted by Kirchhoff, a Washington-based reporter for USA TODAY. She told PDMP she was doing an article on the dairy industry with a focus on the falling milk prices and wanted to spend time with a dairy producer. PDMP was able to arrange with her to visit Walmoore Holsteins and talk with respected dairyman Walt Moore.

The March 24 USA TODAY story also used information from many other sources: Pennsylvania’s Center for Dairy Excellence, USDA Economic Research Services, National Milk Producers Federation, Advanced Economic Solutions and the International Dairy Foods Association.

PDMP thanks Moore for being a spokesperson in this article and for giving readers of this national newspaper a down-to-earth glimpse into the daily life and work of a progressive family dairy farm.

The story has generated 174 reader comments to-date. Though some of the comments were insightful, many of the comments, not surprisingly, underscore the need for consumer education and illustrate the importance of PDMP’s advocacy role.

**Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania
SCHEDULE 2009-10—Call 877.326.5993 for Details**

JUNE 4, 2009 — Lancaster County — Family Relationships on the Dairy Farm (includes tour of Rohrer Dairy Farm LLC)

AUG. 6, 2009 — Juniata County — The Green Movement and the Dairy Industry (includes tour of Reinford Farms LLC dairy and anaerobic digester)

NOV. 5, 2009 — Cumberland County — Dairy’s Place in the World Markets (includes tour of Giant Distribution Center)

MARCH 2010 — Dairy Tour location changed from Mexico to Northeast U.S.