

## From cost to income: August 6 Issue Forum sees 'green'

By SHERRY BUNTING  
Special for Farmshine

MIFFLINTOWN, Pa.—In the current political and economic climate, making changes to nutrient management, waste handling and other practices that relate to the environment may have a low priority among dairy farmers at the moment. But there are significant emerging opportunities to capitalize on

farm practices in ways that truly benefit the dairy's bottom line.

Discussions about farming practices and the environment often spark the thought: "What's it going to cost me now?"

The Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania (PDMP) have planned their August 6 Dairy Industry Issue Forum to provide the tools and information to change that thought to: "How much can I make from

smart environmental thinking?"

With the program theme focused on "The Dairy Industry and Emerging Environmental Markets," featured speakers Rick Naczi from Dairy Marketing Inc (DMI) and Peter Hughes of Red Barn Consulting, Inc. will pack the program with useful information on a variety of practical solutions that result in profit for dairy farms.

Naczi will talk about "creating value

and profitability from cow to consumer," and Hughes will discuss "seeing the green movement as an income stream rather than a problem."

For example, attendees will learn about how to conduct and use a farm energy audit to prioritize their decisions about what to repair or improve according to the payback they can expect in real dollars. This is particularly important as electricity costs are increasing due to de-regulation.

Speakers will discuss how to use the infrastructures that are already in place to create income streams with moderate changes on the farm.

The producer panel will include Steve Reinford, whose 500-cow dairy farm and methane digester will be toured in the afternoon, and Bill Kilby of Kilby's Inc., a 600-cow family dairy farm in Cecil County, Maryland. These producers will tell how their innovations are profiting their dairy farms.

PDMP's August 6 Issue Forum begins at 8:00 a.m. at the Mifflintown Fire Hall. Lunch will be served after the morning program, followed by a tour of Reinford Farms beginning around 1:00 p.m.

PDMP encourages producers and industry suppliers to attend this timely Forum. To help those who do not hold PDMP membership, the organization continues its offer allowing a non-member to attend one Issue Forum at the member rate of \$25. The standard non-member fee is \$75 per person.

For more information, or to register for the Forum, call 877.326.5993 or visit PDMP's website: www.pdmp.org.

## More than a learning opportunity; Upcoming Forum is time to get together, gain perspective

By Rod Hissong  
PDMP President

As we look forward to the upcoming PDMP Issue Forum on August 6 in Juniata County, I'm reflecting on the overwhelming response we had for the June Forum in Lancaster County. With more than 200 attending, it was a perfect example of why we do these educational meetings: to get a dairymen together to share ideas and get a perspective on things. That's something we can all use right now in the current situation in the dairy business.

Even weeks after our June Forum, I heard from people who said how much they learned from it, and they were able to take things home to use on their own dairy farms. But even more than the topic for that forum, or the one coming up in August, producers say they appreciate this opportunity to get together with like-minded dairymen and talk to others about what's going on in our industry.

The discussions during breaks and lunch, as well as the farm tour that always follows the morning program, are of just as much value to all of us as the program topic itself. This is an atmosphere we strive to continue at every Issue Forum PDMP plans for the industry.

The bottom line is that even if you are not looking at doing anything different in the manure handling on your dairy farm, the August Forum will not only prepare you for how to take advantage of emerging markets for the technologies and practices we put in place, it also will help you walk away feeling re-invigorated for what you are doing on your dairy farms.

Just being among your peers is more important today than ever before.

As for the topic on emerging environmen-



We hear a lot about methane digesters, but as the upcoming Forum will show, there are a lot of other things going on for us to learn about also.

This is not just another digester meeting. This is a comprehensive topic that goes beyond methane digesters.

Looking at the last five years of advancements in technology, there are a lot of neat things coming down the road that were not options when we built our facility. There are more options to sort through, and the opportunities are only getting better as environmental awareness has become

even more important.

We need to learn about and take advantage of these opportunities to be reimbursed for what we do to better the environment. This meeting will help us all understand those opportunities and how to take advantage of them.

During the afternoon tour at Steve and Gina Reinford's farm, of course the highlight will be their methane digester, where we can learn about the things Steve is doing to enhance the profitability, other than just putting his manure through it.

We look forward to another great opportunity to learn together and support each other. It will give us all something positive to focus on and an opportunity to get together and share.

tal markets, there are so many different opportunities and new technologies today for handling waste and nutrient management, that it can be difficult to sort through it all.

Today's business climate has certainly changed some of our priorities, but there are certainly things out there that can be positive to our bottom line. That's the purpose the PDMP board had in mind when choosing this topic for the August meeting back in December.

In our case at Mercer Vu Farms, we have a pretty extensive solids separation program right now, but we are not taking advantage of nutrient or carbon credits. I'm hoping to learn more about that at the August Forum, so we can plan how to benefit from credit trading.

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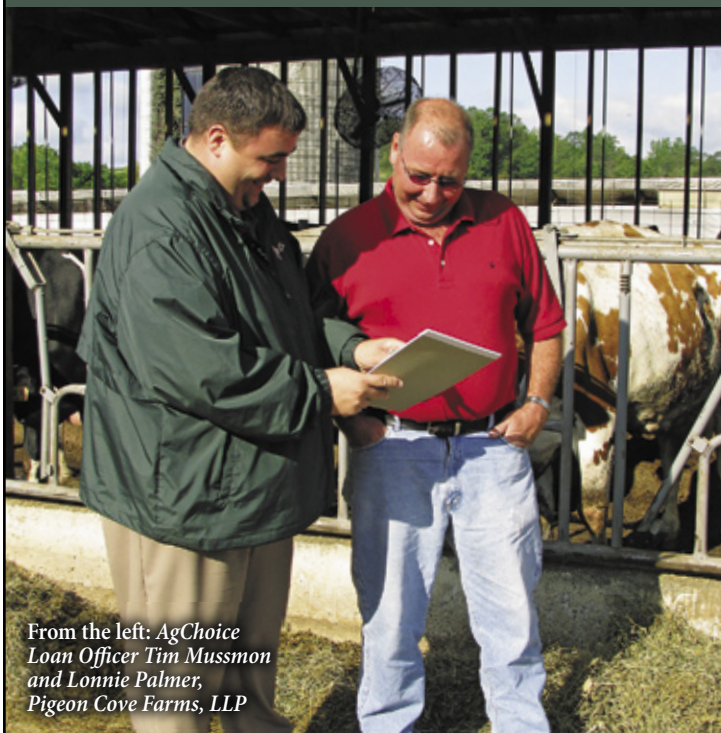
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From the left: AgChoice  
Loan Officer Tim Mussmon  
and Lonnie Palmer,  
Pigeon Cove Farms, LLP

## About the Aug. 6 Forum's featured speakers

### Richard Naczi

introduced this topic of 'sustainability' and the dairy industry's place in emerging environmental markets during the 2009 PA Dairy Summit in February.

As Executive Vice President of Strategic Industry Analysis and Evaluation at Dairy Management Inc. (DMI), he is primary liaison to U.S. Department of Agriculture, working with them to streamline current contract management processes.

Naczi is managing an industry-wide sustainability project for DMI. He is also Chief Executive Officer of American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Inc., headquartered in Syracuse, NY, where he directs the association's programs in retail category management, dairy promotion, nutrition education, and advertising on behalf of dairy producers.

**Peter Hughes** grew up on his family's 2,500 acre dryland wheat farm in Washington State. After working with Brubaker Consulting Group, Ephrata, as project leader and manager of the company's geographical information system and nutrient management division, he formed Red Barn Consulting Inc. in 2001 with his wife Molly, a professional engineer.

Serving agricultural clientele in Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, North Carolina and Texas, Red Barn Consulting has more than 600 farm clients located within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The core mission of Red Barn Consulting is assisting farms in exceeding water quality standards through on farm nutrient control.

