

PDMP elects officers, installs 2010 board



Outgoing president looks back on 2009 and forward to 2010

By ROD HISSONG
Special for Farmshine

I knew this time last year when I became President of PDMP, due to board term limits, I would only be President for one year. While I have enjoyed my time as President, I must say 2009 can't end soon enough!

I look at this year as a really bad cut. You bleed a lot in the beginning, it really hurts (you may even say a few choice words if that's your thing), you stitch it up, and over time, it starts to feel a little better and eventually heals over, and you learn from your mistake and do what you must to prevent it from happening again.

This year has really hurt. Many of us our battered up, bruised and stitched. However, it will pass. We will begin to reflect on what we need to do and what adjustments we need to make to position our operations to be profitable again.

At PDMP this year we found no shortage of "opportunities." The obvious focus on the advocacy side this year was the dairy economic crisis. We all know how vast and overwhelming this issue is, but PDMP felt it needed to do something to at least share our thoughts and help give some direction.

As a result, we wrote and published a position paper, which stated four areas we felt needed attention to address the economic storm of 2009 and position our industry better to not repeat it again.

Writing and publishing the position paper was the easy part, but putting it into action is the difficult part. Since publishing the position paper on the long term viability of the dairy industry, we have held monthly board conference calls on putting the plan into action. As a board and a professional organization it is something we hope to continue moving forward with in 2010.

Logan Bower recently provided testimony to a Pennsylvania Senate Ag Committee hearing on milk price transparency. We have also kept our hand in other dairy related issues.

We also provided testimony to a Pa. House



Appropriations Committee and made visits to lawmakers concerning the state budget.

At a board meeting this year we opened a dialogue with the new dean of the College of Agriculture at Penn State and with the Director of Water Quality for DEP.

This year we have strengthened our network with lawmakers. We have worked to open the lines of communications with our lawmakers so that we not only can go to them with concerns, but they are comfortable to come with us with their questions about our industry.

We have also worked hard to be a part of and continue dialogue among all the Pennsylvania dairy organizations. We will strive to continue to look for opportunities to work together with the other Pennsylvania dairy organizations for the betterment of the Pennsylvania dairy industry.

Even considering the rough dairy economic climate, we saw some of the best attendances to our educational meetings that we have seen in years. We touched on many subjects that were timely for a year like this, and as always, provided the forum for open dialogue and discussion among members.

Our 2010 educational forums promise to be no different. We have three timely and exciting topics slated for next year. Our first

meeting on June 3rd will in some ways be a continuation of our November meeting, but we will take an intimate look "under the hood" of your milk check and how you are paid for your milk.

Our August 5th meeting will focus of dairy profitability and will be an open discussion on who made money in 2009 and how to make it in 2010. We hope to take the financial lessons from 2009 and look at what we can do to best position our businesses for future prosperity.

Our November meeting will look at the Chesapeake Bay initiatives and how they will affect your farm. With pending bills and legislation we are planning an informative meeting to discuss changes that are coming and how you can turn them into opportunities.

This winter brings one of the greatest educational opportunities yet: the 2010 Dairy Summit, February 3 and 4. I personally feel this year's Summit looks to be one of the best yet. We have a superb line-up of speakers and topics that will kick start the new year and get you out of the funk that was 2009.

My involvement and devotion to PDMP will not end with my term as President. It is an organization that I can say I am proud to be a member.

I honestly feel this organization has better prepared me for years such as 2009. Through educational programs, and through the networking opportunities, I have gained knowledge, experiences, and perspectives that have allowed me to become a better dairyman.

Through their advocacy efforts PDMP is looking out and working to make sure dairy businesses can compete in an ever changing and difficult world where we are the minority. These are services that are needed in all times—good and bad.

During their December board meeting in Camp Hill, the board of directors of the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania (PDMP) elected new officers and planned Issue Forum topics and other education and advocacy efforts for 2010.

Front Row (from left): Mike Hosterman, AgChoice Farm Credit, board member; Rod Hissong, Mercer Vu Farms, Mercersburg, outgoing president; Dina Zug, Zugstead Farm, Mifflintown, secretary; and Jeff Ainslie, Red Barn, board member.

Back row (from left): Glenn Gorrell, Gorrell Dairy, East Smithfield, incoming president for 2010; Dale Hoffman, Kar-Dale-Acres, Shinglehouse, vice president; Alan Novak, PDMP executive director; Keith Spicher, Kish View Dairy, Belleville, new board member; Tony Brubaker, Brubaker Farms, Mount Joy, new board member; Gary Kline, Y-Run Farms, Troy, treasurer.

Don't miss Summit scholarship deadline

LANCASTER, Pa.—Students and young adults between the ages of 17 and 25 may be eligible to receive financial assistance to attend the upcoming 2010 Pennsylvania Dairy Summit February 3 and 4 at the Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center, Lancaster, Pa. The Summit, hosted by the Stakeholders and PDMP, will feature an outstanding array of speakers from around the country, and provide practical and timely information.

Scholarship funding is provided by Pa. Dairy Stakeholders and the Pa. Dairywomen's Association. Young persons qualifying for the scholarship and the additional Work Force Development Board discount will pay only \$25 of the normal registration cost of \$200.

To be eligible, applicants must operate a dairy farm, be employed on a dairy farm or be enrolled in an agricultural degree program in a college or trade school. All applicants must agree to attend and pay the \$25 difference at the time of registration.

Scholarships are also available to offset hotel costs. Up to 25 one- or two-night hotel scholarships are available for Dairy Leader Scholarship winners. Each hotel scholarship has a maximum value of \$220 and may be used only on February 2 and/or 3, 2010.

The scholarship application deadline is December 31, 2009, and applications must be mailed to N. Alan Bair, Pennsylvania Dairy Stakeholders, 777 West Harrisburg Pike, Middletown, PA 17057. Applications and complete conference information are available at www.padairysummit.org.