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**PROFESSIONAL DAIRY
MANAGERS OF PENNSYLVANIA**
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The Kulp family will welcome fellow dairy producers to their dairy farm (above right) Thursday, August 5 after the morning session at PDMP's next Dairy Industry Issue Forum in Blair County. Phil Kulp (above left) was a speaker at the 2010 Pa. Dairy Summit. Phil and Becky Kulp are co-owners of the dairy, which has grown to over 2000 cows. In 1972, Phil's parents, Larry and Mary Ann Kulp, relocated their dairy business from Bucks County to Blair County. With Phil at the helm as general manager, the construction of a 700-cow dairy complex in 1999 launched ten years of progressive growth with the goal of creating an enjoyable environment for employees and cattle. Today, Kulp Family Dairy spans four locations, which are home to more than 40 employees, 2,630 mature cows and 2,350 heifer replacements. The overall herd average is 27,500 pounds, and cropping includes 2200 acres of corn silage and 1200 acres of alfalfa.

(At left) Mike Peachey (left) of Acuity Advisors and CPAs, Mike Hosterman (right) of AgChoice Farm Credit, and Jeff Mamett (not pictured) of Pfizer Animal Health will give their insights on change ahead in the dairy industry. A panel of three producers in the Top 20 from the Farm Credit Progressive Dairy Benchmark Study will also discuss their "strategies for thriving in good times and bad."

Photos by Sherry Bunting

Optimism will be found at Aug. 5 Issue Forum in Blair County

By **SHERRY BUNTING**
Special for Farmshine

MARTINSBURG, Pa.—Optimism. Look up the meaning of this word and two more define it: hopefulness and confidence. After a year like 2009—and the way 2010 backed off its earlier gains—optimism is something a dairy producer needs.

There are two things that breed the hopefulness and confidence that lead to optimism: Learning and fellowship. Throughout 2009, the Dairy Industry Issue Forums—provided three times a year by the Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania (PDMP)—attracted large attendance by members and non-members.

They didn't just come for the topic at hand, they came to fellowship and learn with and from each other.

For the 2010 series of Forums, dairy economics were high on the priority list as the PDMP board, in December, selected the topics and locations.

In June, the topic was understanding your milk check, followed by a tour of the Hertzler family's Moo Echo Farms, a grazing dairy in Perry County.

The next Issue Forum—scheduled for Thursday, August 5 in Blair County—will take the next step in the discussion to explore strategies for "how to make money at dairy farming," which will be followed by a tour of Kulp Family Dairy, a 2000-cow dairy operating from several locations based in the Cove near Martinsburg.

The younger generation of dairy producers tend to be more hopeful as they grow in confidence, but they also tend to find it harder to get away from the farm for meetings. According to Joel Krall of Furnace Hills Holsteins near Lebanon, getting away for a PDMP Forum, whenever possible, is time well spent.

"I wasn't quite sure what to expect at the June Forum, but the topic of understanding the milk check was something I wanted to learn more about, and I really wanted to see the dairy farm," he reflects.

One comment stuck with him from the various speakers that day: "When Brad Hilty (Penn State Dairy Alliance) said we as farmers are often asking if we should ship to another milk company, and yet looking at the milk checks, there is often more variance within a company than between companies."

What did that mean to Joel? "Take advan-

tage of all the premiums and price advantages you can within your own cooperative or the company you ship to," he relates. "Because the grass on the other side of the fence is not always greener."

Even more than the educational programs, a big benefit of PDMP membership for a young dairyman like Joel is "learning from other progressive dairymen.

"I feel that a lot of the more progressive minded dairymen are members of PDMP," he says. "So if I want to be better, this is an organization of people constantly working on that."

In other words, the fellowship between dairy producers, who are continually striving to improve, is a building block for hopefulness and confidence that leads to optimism.

"I enjoy seeing the different farms, and the friendships you make," Joel continues. "With so many things going on today, I also like that PDMP aligns with a lot of the same interests I have. There's a benefit to having them lobbying for my interests as a dairy producer because it would take so much time for me to stay up on this information myself."

PDMP president Glenn Gorrell agrees. "As dairy producers, we can get isolated, but being part of this organization and going to the meetings makes your world more 'whole,'" he explains. "I learn by using that time to visit with other producers and the industry representatives."

As for the upcoming August 5 Forum in Blair County, Gorrell looks forward to the producer panel and speakers on tap. "We'll hear from industry people and fellow producers, so we can drill down into what they did and how they did it," he notes.

The event promises to be another round of good information producers can take home and use.

The morning program, moderated by Mike Peachey of Acuity Advisors and CPAs, will kick off at The Park at Morrison's Cove at 8:30 a.m., with registration beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Mike Hosterman, AgChoice Farm Credit ag business consultant, will deliver the "five

keys to profitability, followed by a panel of top producers from the Farm Credit Progressive Dairy Benchmark Study, who will talk about their "strategies for thriving in good times and bad."

The producer panel will feature dairymen Sean Jones of Lester Jones & Sons Inc., Massey, Maryland; John Knopf of Fa Ba Farms, LLC, Canandaigua, New York; and John Mueller of Willowbend Farm, Clifton Springs, New York.

The morning session will conclude with a "look ahead" by Hosterman and Peachey, along with Jeff Mamett of Pfizer Animal Health. They will conduct an audience participation session on "dealing with changes on the horizon."

Just before lunch, Phil Kulp will give an overview of Kulp Family Dairy, where attendees will go for a farm tour after lunch.

Phil and Becky Kulp have been growing the family dairy business since their first major expansion in 1999. In February, they were a showcase farm at the 2010 Pennsylvania Dairy Summit. Phil's presentation was identified by many Summit-goers as a high-point of that two-day event.

Future-minded, for sure, Kulp is already looking at what will be the challenges for his six children should they want to continue in the dairy business? And how can he work toward positioning the dairy for those challenges?

His goal is to create an enjoyable environment for employees and cattle, and in recent years, Kulp has concentrated on satellite dairy opportunities, where he can match the growth of the family business with the readiness of his employees to take on new challenges, while at the same time working with producers who wanted to transition out of the dairy business.

Maximizing opportunities and synergies is another form of optimism: The tendency to expect the best and see the best in all things.

From his experiences in athletics to his education in business to the optimism of

family life, Kulp keeps it all in perspective. The dairy tour will inspire fellow producers, whether they have been dairying for decades or are young producers just getting started in the dairy business.

PDMP sponsor support makes it possible for the organization to consistently offer high quality, timely meetings for the low registration cost of \$25.00 for members and \$75 for non-members. Lunch is included.

To attend the August 5 Forum on "how to make money at dairy farming" along with the tour of Kulp Family Dairy, producers are encouraged to sign up by July 30.

Registration forms can be downloaded at www.pdmp.org, or call 877.326.5993 for more information about the Forum and the benefits of membership in a state organization that is geared to progressive minded dairymen with operations of all types and sizes.

Don't Miss PDMP's next Dairy Industry Issue Forum

"How to Make Money at Dairy Farming"

Thurs., August 5 in Blair County, Pa.

PDMP's August Dairy Industry Issue Forum will tackle profitability issues head-on. You won't go home with just concepts, but with detailed and practical information you can put into action.

Featured speakers:

Mike Hosterman, AgChoice Farm Credit
Michael Peachey, Acuity Advisors & CPAs
Jeff Mamett, Pfizer Animal Health

** PLUS Three Top-20 Producers from the Progressive Dairy Benchmark Study*

Topics:

- ▶ **Five keys to profitability**
- ▶ **Strategies for thriving in good times and bad (includes producer panel)**
- ▶ **Dealing with changes on the horizon (interactive session)**

Brochure, details and registration available online at www.pdmp.org
Call 877.326.5993

Email info@pdmp.org



Glenn (president) and Robin Gorrell



Joel Krall, member