

Retirement Luncheon for Dave Bray

David R. Bray will retire from the University of Florida at the end of 2011. In honor of his upcoming retirement, you are invited to celebrate Dave's contributions to the Florida dairy industry at a retirement luncheon to be held on: Tuesday November 29 at noon at the Holiday Inn, 3600 SW 38th Avenue, Ocala, Florida. The luncheon follows immediately after the SMI Board meeting.



A retirement reception is also planned for December 9, 2 to 4 PM, in the Animal Science building in Gainesville. Contact Joyce Hayen, mjha@ufl.edu, or call (352) 392-1981 for more information.

Dairy Extension Agenda

- The 2011 **Florida Energy Summit** is scheduled for October 26-28 at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando. Contact Ann Wilkie at acwilkie@ufl.edu or call (352) 392-8699.
- Wednesday, November 2, 2011, PCDART Workshop (9:30 AM) and **Southeast Dairy Herd Management Conference** (1:15 PM) at the Farm Bureau Building, 1620 Bass Road, off I-75 Exit 172 in Macon, Georgia. Contact Mary Sowerby, meso@ufl.edu, (386) 362-2771 or Steve Nickerson, scn@uga.edu, (706) 542-0658. Full program details at <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu>.
- Thursday-Saturday November 17-19, 2011, **Southern Regional Dairy Challenge**, Live Oak, Florida. The annual event is hosted this year by the University of Florida. Approximately 60 undergraduate students interested in dairy production from 12 schools in the southeastern US will participate in a dairy herd evaluation contest. To sponsor or get involved, contact Mary Sowerby, meso@ufl.edu or Albert De Vries, devries@ufl.edu.
- **UF/IFAS Regional Dairy Open House**. Hear and discuss the latest UF/IFAS dairy research updates on: Genetics, genomics, and sexed semen economics (Albert De Vries), Mastitis update (Dave Bray) and Reproductive strategies for dairy heifers (Jose Santos). Locations/dates:
 - Monday November 7, 2011, Okeechobee County Extension Office, 458 Highway 98 North, Okeechobee. Contact Courtney Davis, cbdavis@ufl.edu, (863) 763-6469.

- Tuesday November 8, 2011, Suwannee County Extension Office, 1302 11th Street SW, Live Oak. Contact Mary Sowerby, meso@ufl.edu, (386) 362-2771.

Both meetings run from 10 AM until 2:30 PM with a free lunch sponsored by Merck Animal Health.

- Tuesday November 29, 2011, **GA/FL Dairy Update meeting**, Brooks County Extension Office, Quitman, GA. Topic: Winter forage varieties and nutrient uptake. Contact Mary Sowerby, meso@ufl.edu, (386) 362-2771.
- Tuesday December 6, 2011, the multi-state **Dairy Heat Stress Road Show meeting** series stops at the Okeechobee County Extension Building, 458 Highway 98 North. Time 10 AM until 2:30 PM with a free lunch provided. Speakers from Texas A&M University and the University of Florida. Topics: Cooling strategies during heat stress; Strategies to improve reproduction during summer; Nutritional programs for the heat stressed herd; Economics of heat stress: Implications for management. These meetings are part of a large USDA sponsored program aimed to improve fertility in heat stressed dairy cows. Full details at <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu> and elsewhere in this newsletter. Contact Courtney Davis, Okeechobee County Extension, cbdavis@ufl.edu, (863) 763-6469, or Albert De Vries, devries@ufl.edu, (352) 392-5594 x 227.
- **UF/IFAS Dairy Unit Open House** for the general public, Saturday March 24, 2012. Location is the UF/IFAS dairy farm on 13200 NW 59th Drive in Hague, Florida (off US 441 between Alachua and Gainesville). Learn how milk is produced locally and the contributions the University of Florida is making to the efficient, affordable, and sustainable production of milk. Contact Albert De Vries, devries@ufl.edu, (352) 392-5594 x 227.

Born in the USA

David R. Bray

If the ICE Man has visited you or is on his way, you need to be prepared to revamp your labor force, which probably means that you will have to start hiring more local help. If you can remember back in the 1980s-90s before the influx of Hispanic labor, you might want to quickly turn the farm over to the kids, because this probably is not going to be fun. No matter what happens, you need to come up with a plan to get these hard working Americans integrated into your dairy's labor force.

Here in the S.E. US we have lots of people, not a lot of industry, but hotels, restaurants and business associated with them so there are lots of potential workers. Many young people here in the S.E. choose the Armed Forces for a career, many also chose the Penal system for a career, and Pizza delivery is an option for those who still have a driver's license, but there also a lot of good workers available. Our biggest competitors for labor in this area are distribution centers for large big box stores, but there is still a 10% unemployment rate in this area and we struggle to get supervisory help for our dairy and we offer retirement, 40 hour weeks, health insurance, and vacations.

What's the future? If the Immigration situation continues to get tighter we may all be using more US labor on our dairies? Be ready for a culture shock: you have been used to labor recruiting you, when one employee leaves another appears and works for whatever you pay them, wants to work as many hours a week you will let them. The new employee is plugged in, trained by his peers and stays if he works hard, or leaves if not.

Recruitment of "new" labor. To obtain labor for your dairy you need to demonstrate to them what you have to offer them, especially since most all who apply are not going to be familiar with a dairy. You will get lots of applicants, most who have to, not want to, work for you. You need to make a good impression and present all the advantages of working for you. Most will not have an agriculture background. This is not like the good old days where dairy labor just moved from area to another and got hired because you did not want to milk that night.

Job application site. Have a spot where job applications are located. This should be clean. Some may use the office, others a break room. If you can have someone there to observe or help the person, you can find a few things out: if the person applying for the job is not filling out the applications, if the wife has to fill it out, maybe the man can't read and write. If you can observe who drove the vehicle to the dairy, if the applicant did not drive in, it could be the applicant does not have a driver's license, which may cause transportation issues getting to work. Or worse yet, you don't want an illiterate drunk, driving the feed truck and doing dry matter measurements.

What do you have to offer? To get high quality help you need to show your perspective employees what you have to offer them, especially since your pool of candidates may not be familiar with dairy farming. Just like any job in the business sector, you need to have a "Handbook of Rules and Regulations of your Business", the law of the land, what is acceptable behavior on this business? Hours and days you are expected to work, sick leave policy, other benefits, vacations and other rules of the dairy, tardiness, drinking on the job etc. This way everyone on the farm has the same rules and lists the consequences for failure to follow the rules. Also have the job description of this position and how this position affects the success of the dairy and rewards for meeting these goals. This should give the candidate an idea what he must do any why, just like a job "in town". Younger people have worked with computers, have smart phones, so if you use PC- Dart, Dairy-Comp etc. or computerized milking systems, this might spark the interest in this job, just like "in town".

To-do lists? There are lots of people out there who have lists of their own: here is what I "can't do" and here is what I "won't do"! Many of these contain: I won't work weekends, nights, holidays, etc. If this is a problem that has to be addressed, shift differential pay for third shifts, or staggering weekend and holiday work may have to be implemented.

Dairy's appearance. The dairy should be clean, tidy, provide uniforms. This not only looks good and everybody is clean at least at the start of the day, but also identifies that this person works on the dairy. This reduces the possibility of having security risks on your dairy from thieves or "animal rights terrorists".

The hiring process. After finding some suitable candidates, a farm tour gives you an opportunity to show off the dairy. Show them where they will work and meet present employees. If they run out of the parlor holding their nose you know this applicant might not be the one. A dairy is a nice place to work, working with cows beats working with people and if they can see the place and see the big picture of how from starting to work in the parlor they can move into another job with more responsibility and pay, it might be for them. If your place is a dump, you probably will end up with the old drive-by dairy drunk.

References. Always check references. A phone call to a previous employer may save you some grief. In this economy, lots of good people lost their job due to no fault of their own. Others were let go for a reason. You may not get a definite answer, but should get good ideas from a previous employer.

Training. Now you have hired the person. Training is a very important phase in this process. A trainer need not be the best milker. Remember "those who can't do, teach". The great milker often is a poor teacher. He jumps in and starts milking rather than training. If there is a transition from Hispanic milkers to a few resident milkers then the language barrier may need to be addressed.

Summary. If you "can't do or won't do" this, here is another option: Hire workers with more teeth than tattoos.

Contact Dave Bray at dbray@ufl.edu or call (352) 392-5594 ext. 226 for more labor advice.

BIOENERGY – 2011 Florida Energy Summit

Ann C. Wilkie

In 2006, the *Farm to Fuel* Initiative was created by the Florida Legislature to enhance the market for and promote the production and distribution of renewable energy from Florida-grown crops, agricultural wastes and residues, and other biomass, and to enhance the value of agricultural products and expand agribusiness in the State. In the five years since, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACCS) has hosted an annual "Farm to Fuel Summit", each of which attracted several hundred participants.

In 2011, the Florida Legislature moved the responsibilities of the Florida Energy and Climate Commission



to DACS, creating the Department's Office of Energy. With this new addition, DACS is expanding its role in the energy sector. As such, the Farm to Fuel Summit has been expanded to the Florida Energy Summit in order to encompass not only agricultural-based fuels, but also all renewable energy and energy conservation activities in the state.

The *2011 Florida Energy Summit* is scheduled for October 26-28 at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando. The new summit will broaden the energy focus from "biofuels" to all forms of renewable energy and will serve as a launching point for future energy policy in the state of Florida. Leaders from the agricultural, utility, solar, government, academic, technology, and financial communities will gather to report on their activities, consider the next steps forward, and share their progress in pursuing conservation goals and in reaching the commercial production of renewable and next generation energy in Florida. For the 2011 Summit agenda and registration information visit the website:

<http://floridaenergysummit.com>

For questions or issues about bioenergy, contact: Dr. Ann C. Wilkie at acwilkie@ufl.edu or (352) 392-8699. Ann Wilkie is in the UF/IFAS Department of Soil and Water Science.

UGA, UF and FVSU Seek Participants for New Dairy Cost Study

Curt Lacy, Mary Sowerby, Mohammed Ibrahim, and Albert De Vries

High feed and fuel costs have placed a strain on most dairy operations, despite current milk prices. For these and other reasons, many dairy producers are interested in examining the economics of pasture-based dairying versus more conventional methods. However, there is not a lot of good data on this topic in the Southeastern US.

Fortunately, researchers and extension specialists at the University of Georgia, University of Florida and Fort Valley State University recently received funding from Southern SARE to address this issue. The title of the project is "Improving the Welfare of Southeastern Dairy Families through the Adoption of Sustainable Production Systems." The objectives of this project are to: 1) work closely with individuals and groups of pasture-based and conventional dairy producers to identify production and financial management practices that will improve their sustainability; 2) establish a database of benchmark information for participating dairy producers; 3) determine the relative profitability of conventional versus pasture-based dairying; and 4) identify barriers to converting from a conventional dairy to a pasture-based production system.

The cornerstone of this project will be a benchmarking service that will be provided to interested producers. By providing anonymous individual production and financial information to the project team, milk producers will be providing crucial data that can be utilized to identify the most profitable management practices and production systems in the Southeast. The first 60 producers in Georgia and Florida that sign up will receive \$100 per year (that is right, we pay you when we collect your data) for the three years of the project. In addition to the compensation for their time and

effort, dairy families will receive individual farm and risk-management assistance with their operation.

For more information about the benchmarking service or the other parts of this upcoming project, milk producers in Georgia can contact Dr. Curt Lacy in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Georgia in Tifton. His phone number is (229) 386-3512 and his e-mail is clacy@uga.edu. In Florida, interested producers can contact Mary Sowerby at (386) 362-2771, meso@ufl.edu, or Albert De Vries at (352) 392-5594 ext. 227, devries@ufl.edu. Mohammed Ibrahim, ibrahimm@fvsu.edu, from Fort Valley State University also leads the project.

Heat-stressed Dairy Cattle Prompt Traveling Road Show

STEPHENVILLE, Tex. / GAINESVILLE, Fla. --- Heat stress not only affects people; it's hard on cattle too, said a dairy industry expert. The Dairy Heat Stress Road Show, a multi-institutional effort, will hit the road this fall and next spring to help producers cope with the problem.

Dr. Todd Bilby, associate professor and Texas AgriLife Extension Service dairy specialist at Stephenville, said heat stress on dairies not only affects cow comfort, but also lowers milk production and fertility which costs the dairy industry millions of dollars annually.

"The Dairy Heat Stress Road Show, financed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in collaboration with several universities, is a series of educational programs that will travel to four states and Puerto Rico," Bilby said. "The effort's purpose is to teach producers how to overcome some of the negative effects of heat stress by implementing strategies such as nutritional changes, hormonal treatments and facility improvement."

The road show is free and open to the public, Bilby said. All sessions will run from 10 a.m.- 2:45 p.m. with a free lunch provided. The dates and locations this fall will be:

- Dec. 6, 2011: County Extension Office, 458 Highway 98 North, Okeechobee, FL.
- Dec. 8, 2011: Camuy, Puerto Rico, to be delivered in English and Spanish.
- April 3, 2012: Southwest Regional Dairy Center, Stephenville, TX
- April 4, 2012: Clovis Civic Center, Clovis, NM.
- April 6, 2012: Consumer Education Pavilion, Vet Medicine Center, Tulare, Calif.

Speakers from the University of Florida and Texas AgriLife Extension Service will discuss Cooling During Heat Stress (Dr. Pete Hansen); Nutritional Programs for the Heat-Stressed Herd (Dr. Jose Santos), Economics of Heat Stress: Implications for Management (Dr. Albert De Vries), and Strategies to Improve Reproduction During Summer (Dr. Todd Bilby).

For more information on the Road Show meetings, contact Stephanie Prater at (254) 968-4144 or snprater@ag.tamu.edu. For Florida, contact Courtney Davis, Okeechobee County Extension, cbdavis@ufl.edu, (863) 763-6469, or Albert De Vries, devries@ufl.edu, (352) 392-5594 x 227.

UF to Host Southern Regional Dairy Challenge at North Florida Dairy Farms on November 17-19

GAINESVILLE, Fla. --- One of the perennial complaints about higher education is that it focuses too much on classroom teaching, not enough on real-world experience.

That notion may be accurate for some disciplines, but when it comes to dairy science there's an event that gives students a chance to immerse themselves completely in actual dairy business situations and see how they can help solve real world dairy problems.

It's the annual North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge competition, where teams of undergraduate students interested in dairy science investigate working dairy farms, draw up recommendations for improvement, and present them to a panel of experts.

For those serious about careers in dairy farming, it's a chance to hone their management, communication and business skills and develop a better chance of securing employment after graduation.



On Nov. 17-19 the University of Florida will host the 6th annual Southern Regional Dairy Challenge, one of four preliminary competitions that culminate in a national event held during the spring.

At the regional competition, over 60 students from 12 colleges and universities in the Southeast will gather at the Cerveny Conference Center in the Live Oak, where they'll be randomly assigned into groups of four and sent to one of two local participating dairy farms.



In one whirlwind day, the students, will visit a farm and learn everything they can about its operations, looking into such diverse topics as cow comfort, nutrition, reproduction, genetics, finance, labor costs and manure management. Afterward, the teams will have the afternoon to draft reports on what they've seen, and the data they have analyzed, indicating improvements that could be made.

The following day, the teams will make live presentations for a panel of judges from various arms of the dairy industry. The teams that best articulate and defend their recommendations, and in agreement with the findings of the judges, take home the top prizes.

The November event marks UF's first time hosting the Southern Regional Dairy Challenge, said Albert De Vries, an animal sciences associate professor with UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and one of the event organizers, along with Mary Sowerby, a UF regional dairy extension agent.

UF has been involved with the Dairy Challenge almost since its inception in 2001.

"This is an exciting event for students and really puts their abilities to the test," De Vries said. "And it's great for industry because we're helping to prepare the next generation of dairy science leaders."

Lauren Mayo, a UF student who participated in the 2010 Southern Regional event that was held in Tupelo, Mississippi, considers the event one of the highlights of her UF experience: "Unlike many dairy science students across the country, I didn't grow up on a dairy farm," Mayo said. "However, my team and I did remarkably well. We were a great team and still keep in touch to this day. I would encourage every student that has the opportunity to participate in the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge!"

The Dairy Challenge events are made possible through generous donations from dairy producers and the allied dairy industry. Sponsors have the opportunity to be closely engaged with the students that participate at the Dairy Challenge events and are invited to send their representatives to Live Oak in November.

To learn more about sponsorship opportunities, or how to become involved, contact Mary Sowerby at (386) 362-2771, meso@ufl.edu, or Albert De Vries at (352) 392-5594 ext. 227, or visit the Dairy Challenge website at <http://dairychallenge.org> (Southern).

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**Prediction of the Future Florida Mailbox Price:
October 2011 - September 2012**

Albert De Vries

Using the Class III future settle prices of October 21, 2011 and an updated University of Wisconsin formula based on historical prices for the association between the Class III settle price and the Florida mailbox price, we predict the Florida mailbox price for October 2011 to September 2012 as follows:

Month	Year	Class III settle price*	Predicted Florida mailbox price
October	2011	18.00	22.19
November	2011	17.65	21.88
December	2011	16.93	21.24
January	2012	16.52	20.25
February	2012	16.18	19.95
March	2012	16.21	19.97
April	2012	16.15	19.22
May	2012	16.12	19.20
June	2012	16.27	19.33
July	2012	16.57	20.97
August	2012	16.75	21.13
September	2012	16.94	21.30

* Class III settle price as of October 21, 2011.