

Participants in Pasture "Practices" Survey Sought

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

A few weeks ago we sent letters to a number of dairy producers to invite them to participate in a survey to **characterize production and grazing practices on dairy farms in Florida and Georgia**. This **practices survey** collects information on milk production, reproduction, grasses, forages, paddock management etc. Goal is to better understand how dairy producers in the Southeast utilize and manage their grass paddocks and describe seasonality in management. Financial data is not collected. The survey is conducted by a farm visit and should take no more than 1 hour to complete. Graduate student Fei Du and others call to make appointments for visits. During the visit, we will write down your answers. Every dairy producer **receives \$100** for a completed survey.

All answers to questions in this survey will be kept strictly confidential. Individual farm information will not be identified in any publication. When all practices surveys are completed, we plan to publish the summarized results in the popular and scientific press. The practices survey results will also help to improve dairy Extension programs and recommendations.

This practices survey is part of the project "Improving the Welfare of Southeastern Dairy Families through the Adoption of Sustainable Production Systems", funded by a grant from Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education.



Collaborators in the grant are the University of Florida, the University of Georgia and Fort Valley State University. More information about this project, including the survey form, can be found at <http://sedairiesproject.blogspot.com/>.

If you have not received an invitation letter yet, but are already interested in participating, please let us know. All dairy producers in Florida and Georgia, independent of how much grazing you have, are invited to participate. Contact Albert De Vries, devries@ufl.edu or (352) 392 5594 ext. 227.

In addition to practices survey outlined above, dairy producers interested in benchmarking their costs of production and financial performances continue to be invited to participate in the **financial survey** of the Southeast Sustainable Dairy Farms project. The first 60 producers in Georgia and Florida that sign up will **receive \$100** per year 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.

To schedule an appointment for financial data collection, or for more information about this project, dairy producers in Florida should contact Dr. Mary Sowerby at (386) 362-2771, meso@ufl.edu. Kory Sgrignoli, a student in the Food and Resource Economics program at UF, is assisting with data collection and analysis. Dairy producers in Georgia should contact Dr. Curt Lacy at (229) 386-3512, clacy@uga.edu. Albert De Vries, devries@ufl.edu, and Mohammed Ibrahim, ibrahimm@fvsu.edu, also lead the project. For more information about this project, see the Spring 2012 issue of Dairy Update at <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu/dairyupdate>.

Note: dairy produces could participate in the practices survey only, the financial survey only, or both. Thank you for participating in one or more surveys!

Experiences with the Southern Great Plains Dairy Consortium - Teaching Program

Kim Hencken, Lauren Mayo and Albert De Vries

The University of Florida is a cooperating institution in the Southern Great Plains Dairy Consortium-Teaching (SGPDC-T) program. The SGPDC-T is a teaching program for undergraduate (and some post graduate) students interested in dairy science and the dairy industry. It was first organized some 5 years ago to offer students attending schools on the Southern Great Plains (Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, etc.) an intensive and comprehensive curriculum in dairy science that no longer could be offered at each institution by itself. Currently, students from around the country can apply and enroll in the courses. In 2012, UF dairy students Kim Hencken and Lauren Mayo participated in the program.

Participating students spent 6 weeks full time during the late spring in Clovis, NM. Each week had a different theme led by a guest instructor. Themes were for example, herd analysis, nutrition, facilities, labor management, and air and

water quality. The mornings were typically reserved for lecturing and discussions held at the Clovis Community College. In the afternoon, the students visited a dairy farm or laboratory or plant associated



with the dairy industry to enhance the learning experience by demonstrating actual techniques and practices that were learned in the classroom.

The program is generously sponsored by the dairy industry and grants, so tuition and housing for participating students have been free. Students receive credit at their home institution, in our case the University of Florida.

Here is what Kim Hencken had to say about her experiences:

"As a graduate of the SGPDC, and a new veterinary school freshman, I can attest that the consortium allowed me to have one of the most amazing summers of my life. One of my favorite aspects of the consortium was how many learning experiences it provided outside of the classroom. Lessons were taught in class, but we were able to immediately apply concepts "on the farm". For example, we were taught the components of a basic health check, and were then able to practice assessing live animals. I practiced recording vitals, scoring body condition, and drawing blood with the help of the knowledgeable and patient professors and I now feel comfortable with the process.

Another one of my favorites was the Reproductive Physiology lab. Not many students get the opportunity to dissect actual reproductive tracts and use expensive ultrasound machines to detect pregnancies and stage of gestation, therefore I felt very fortunate to be able to add those lessons to my education.

Equally memorable was the "down time" spent with fellow classmates. Trips to bowling alleys, lakes, and parks created strong bonds, and I met so many wonderful people. We had a huge diversity of students enrolled in the program (representing every state from New York to Alaska) and everyone provided a unique perspective to the group.

I learned many valuable new skills, but I also learned to better appreciate dairy as it relates to both a national and worldwide scale. Milk and its products are an integral nutrition source for people around the world, and it is up to farmers and scientist to make sure that we can meet the growing demand in the future.

I personally did not take the consortium for credit, but what I ended up gaining was so much more valuable. The new contacts that I have made, and the hands-on experiences that I have gained, have made me more confident and passionate about my career path. I would not hesitate to recommend the program to anyone else who has an interest in learning more about the Dairy Industry."

And this is from Lauren Mayo:

"The Southern Great Plains Dairy Consortium (SGPDC) Advanced Large Herd Management Program is taught in the middle of the third largest milk shed in the U.S., in Clovis, NM. It is a 6-week program in which world known professors teach topics each week regarding the Dairy Industry including: Nutrition, Reproduction, Business Management, Herd Health, etc. The overall experience is one that I will never forget! Each week was filled with lectures from nationally known instructors, visits from industry companies, sponsored dinners, weekend agricultural tours and much more! The SGPDC was one that made sure its students understood the information being taught and then directly applied to milk production with daily farm visits. While in Clovis, NM we visited over 20 large

dairy operations. With that being said, there are many experiences to be gained within 6 weeks that most students probably wouldn't experience in one school year.

As a current senior at UF majoring in Animal Sciences specializing in Dairy Industry and with a minor in Agricultural Communications, the SGPDC was truly a step beyond the classroom. In preparing for the consortium this summer, I was nervous at first that I wouldn't know anyone and other students would know more than I did. It was the complete opposite. I attended the consortium with a good friend, Kimberly Hencken who is now a first year vet student at UF. Dr. De Vries and Dr. Brendemuhl worked hard to make sure that both of us had funding in order to travel and pay for course credits upon our return. When we arrived in Clovis we were happy to find that there were 40 other college students from all over the country that all had different levels of experience in the dairy industry. At the end of the six weeks, we easily made 40 new friends that we keep in touch with and will be visiting for the rest of our lives.

This is definitely a program that I recommend for anyone with the slightest interest in the dairy industry. Kimberly participated in session 1 where there were more broad topics like reproduction, genetics, nutrition, mastitis, etc. I had the opportunity to participate in session 2 which was more focused on the management and business side of dairy production. I really enjoyed being able to take the things I had already learned about dairy to the next level. We had some great opportunities including hearing about the impacts

of a new or revised farm bill from Dr. "Outlaw" who actually helps advise the congress and president on the issues. We also visited and were able to see parts of a USDA up and coming study with Bovine Respiratory Disease, learning from a USDA vet and NMSU graduate assistants. Not many people will ever get the chance to experience what we were able to.



Lauren Mayo (left) and Kim Hencken

However, fortunately for students interested can go through a very simple application process to SGPDC and end up in Clovis, NM for 6 weeks! We must be the change we want to see in the world in order to feed over 9 billion people in 2050! Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or want to hear more about the SGPDC at lmayo@ufl.edu!"

I (Albert De Vries) was the guest instructor for four days of "Advanced Herd Evaluation". I was impressed by the interest and quality of the students, the organization by Drs. Mike Tomaszewski and Robert Hagevoort, and the support of the local dairy farmers and the larger dairy industry. More information about the SGPDC-T can be found at their website <http://sgpdct.tamu.edu>.

The SGPDC-T offerings are great additions to the dairy program at UF and are suitable for students interested in learning more about dairy science and the dairy industry. At

UF we continue to offer courses in dairy science such as Biology and Management of Dairy Cattle, Dairy Cattle Practicum, and Dairy Herd Evaluation. Dairy is also part of courses in genetics, reproduction, and nutrition. Other dairy opportunities are the UF dairy club, judging, and Dairy Challenge. For more information, contact Albert De Vries, devries@ufl.edu, or (352) 392-5594 ext. 227.

**Prediction of the Future Florida Mailbox Price:
October 2012 - September 2013**

Albert De Vries

Using the Class III future settle prices of October 9, 2012 and a 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 prices for October 2012 to September 2013 as follows:

Month	Year	Class III settle price*	Predicted Florida mailbox price
October	2012	21.01	23.71
November	2012	20.95	23.66
December	2012	20.60	23.39
January	2013	19.79	22.29
February	2013	19.28	21.90
March	2013	19.02	21.70
April	2013	18.74	21.06
May	2013	18.51	20.88
June	2013	18.52	20.89
July	2013	18.67	21.39
August	2013	18.53	21.29
September	2013	18.47	21.24

* Class III settle price as of October 9, 2012.

Dairy Extension Agenda

- Thursday, **October 11** at 7 PM, Suwannee Valley Feed Office, 617 NE Lancaster St., Trenton, FL. Dairy and Feed Outlook, presented by Dr. John Van Sickle. To join the meeting on-line: <http://ufifas.adobeconnect.com/dairy/> Contact Mary Sowerby at meso@ufl.edu or 386-362-2771.
- Tuesday + Wednesday, **October 16 + 17**, Department of Animal Sciences and the Straughn Extension Center, Shealy Drive, Gainesville, FL: Florida Beef Excellence Institute. The Department of Animal Sciences and the Florida Beef Council invites cow-calf producers (and dairy producers) to attend this event to develop a greater understanding of the steps of the beef production chain which largely occur outside the southeastern U.S. Presentations will include the state of the beef industry, food safety protocols from farm to fork, and practices that influence endpoint value. Gain hands-on perspective from live finished cattle evaluation,

observing the slaughter process, carcass grading and fabrication, and valuation of beef. More information and registration, visit <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu>.

- The Sunbelt Ag Expo is **October 16-18**, in Moultrie, GA. UF-IFAS is an exhibitor in their permanent building. For more information, visit www.sunbeltexpo.com
- Wednesday, **November 7**, at 10 AM. Dairy Grazing Conference, starting at Musgrave Dairy, 880 NW Palmetto Rd., Mayo, FL. Contact Mary Sowerby at meso@ufl.edu or 386-362-2771.
- Tuesday, **November 13**, Dairy and Feed Outlook, presented by Dr. John Van Sickle. Contact Mary Sowerby at meso@ufl.edu or 386-362-2771. Details TBA.
- Tuesday, **November 27**, from 10 AM to 3 PM, Okeechobee County Extension Office, Okeechobee, FL, and Wednesday, **November 28**, from 10 AM to 3 PM, Hatch Park Community Center, Branford, FL: UF/IFAS Dairy Open House meetings. Discover the latest dairy science research with practical applications from our UF dairy scientist. Topics: transition cow management, economics of different reproductive programs and pregnancy diagnosis for dairy cows, dairy cattle nutrition. Lunch will be provided. Contact Mary Sowerby at meso@ufl.edu or 386-362-2771 or Courtney Davis at cbdavis@ufl.edu or 863-763-6469.
- Tuesday, **December 4** at 11 AM in the Brooks County Ag Building, Quitman, GA. Dr. Curt Lacy, University of Georgia Livestock Extension Economist, will speak on "Practical Ways to Reduce Feed Costs". To make your reservation, contact Mary Sowerby at meso@ufl.edu or 386-362-2771, or contact Johnny Whiddon at jwhiddon@uga.edu or 229-263-4103. See flyer at <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu>.
- Tuesday, **December 11**, Dairy and Feed Outlook, presented by Dr. John Van Sickle. Contact Mary Sowerby at meso@ufl.edu or 386-362-2771. Details TBA.
- Tuesday + Wednesday, **February 5 + 6, 2013**. 24th Annual Ruminant Nutrition Symposium, Gainesville, FL. Details TBA. Visit <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu>
- Wednesday, **April 10, 2013**. 49th Florida Dairy Production Conference, Gainesville, FL. Details TBA.

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