

Jan Shearer Retirement



Dr. Jan Shearer, UF's Dairy Extension veterinarian, will officially retire from UF at the end of August 2009 after 27 years of service. In June, Dr. Shearer and his wife Leslie moved to Iowa where they joined the College of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State University. Dr. Shearer will be responsible for the development and delivery of veterinary extension programs designed primarily to meet the needs of Iowa's dairy farmers, veterinarians and allied agri-business industry. He will continue to focus on lameness and welfare programs. Dr. Shearer's contact information is jks@iastate.edu and phone (515) 294-3731. We wish Jan and Leslie all the best in their new positions.

It appears that the now vacant dairy extension veterinarian position at UF will be refilled again, including a clinical component. Good news for Florida's dairy producers.

It's Spring (Summer) Cleaning Time Again! #14

David R. Bray

If you have not already done so, now is the time to prepare for the long hot summer. I think it is more important this year due to these depressed times when we need to be more efficient and productive.

1. Clean out high organic matter dirt (MUD) in pastures and lots and add new dirt, especially in calving areas.

2. Clean out cooling ponds – pump out the water, and clean out the sludge and spread it in a place where the cows do not have access to it.

3. Let ponds sit dry for the sun to work on the bacteria. Mycoplasma and other nasty stuff live in ponds. You must clean them out at least once a year if you continuously add water to the pond. If you *DO NOT* continuously add water, you need to sample the ponds for Mycoplasma and pump and clean out the ponds once or twice during the summer.

4. Clean your barn cooling fans now, and whenever they look dirty. Dirty fan shields can reduce fan efficiency by 50%. If cows are in the barn or holding area, run fans 24 hours a day. This not only moves air to cool cows, it also helps to remove moisture and dry the place out.

5. Make sure your sprinklers, foggers, etc, work. It was a cold winter, many pipes froze and/or broke, and dirty nozzles don't add much water. Check timers for the proper time for adding water. Constant water is not as efficient as intermittent sprinkling and it saves water. Set your sprinkler thermostat at 75 degrees F or lower during the hot season. Sprinklers need to run at night because cows get hotter at night than in daytime on those hot nights. You need timers to control sprinklers at night, so they only run when cows are eating and standing at the feed line. Running sprinklers when cows are in the stalls will waste great volumes of water and raise the humidity in the barn.

6. Clean and rebuild your pulsators. Wash out and change the filters on your vacuum controller, (unless you have a variable speed drive). Make sure all ATO's work.

7. Replace all milk hoses, wash hoses, pulsator hoses and jetter cup holders. Replace all rubber hoses that may be in the milk house that may add water to the pipeline and/or bulk tank wash. These hoses harbor Pseudomonas and Coliforms and can raise your bacteria count. If rubber hoses are used to wash udders, change them also.

8. Replace all of your floor mounted cow wash sprinkler nozzles once a year. Spring is a good time to do this. They not only clean cows, they cool cows also. Several short wash cycles are more efficient and uses less water.

9. Check the pipeline and bulk tank chemical concentrations. If you change brands or suppliers, they may need to be checked.

10. Clean your condenser fins on your milk coolers. Dirty fans cut down cooling and efficiency and you get warmer milk at higher electricity costs.

11. Mow and spray careless weeds in pastures.

12. Cull your chronic mastitis cows now. It will lower your cell count and your help is sick of treating them.

13. Clean out the back half of your free stalls at least 10-12" deep and add new sand. Keep your stalls bedded every 4-5 days and groomed daily.

14. Clean your mind of stress and don't get depressed, take your family on a vacation trip to get away from the pressures, even visit other dairies to see what they are doing to cope with the times.

Contact Dave Bray at drbray@ufl.edu or call (352) 392-5594.

Hospital: Hospitality or Horrors?

David R. Bray

We have come a long way in our design of dairy facilities. The parlor is sized for the group sizes. We can milk our groups in one hour or less to allow the cows more time to eat and lay down. Our stalls are designed to have the correct size for cow comfort. We have mastered the fan and sprinkler placement to keep them cool and comfortable. The next step would usually be to add more cows to the groups and overcrowd them. We often use the space allotted for the hospital herd to house more milking cows. The hospital herd and fresh cows then get moved to a less desirable location which often involves mud, heat and other undesirable traits.

Transition and fresh cow care

We again have made huge strides in nutrition and care for these cows to ensure that cows get off to a great start into the lactation. This plan gets derailed if these fresh cows are in a place that does not get the delivery of their special ration or they have to share with a bunch of lame cows and mastitis cows.

Separation of fresh cows and hospital cows

Most people agree that the ideal situation would be to keep the fresh cows separated from the sick ones to prevent spreading of disease and to make sure nutrition is correct.

Reality

If I had a choice to keep both fresh and sick cows in a clean, cooled barn with clean bedding, I would take my chances, rather than leaving one group outside the barn. Most of our mastitis in Florida is not contagious anymore except for mycoplasma. We have controlled the spread of mycoplasma in the parlor with post milking teat dipping and never using anything but a commercial mastitis tube in the udder. My only worry would be a respiratory outbreak which might be mycoplasma. These cows should be separated from the hospital herd anyway; a whole group of cows blowing snot should be in the woods or somewhere by themselves because they probably will be your mycoplasma mastitis outbreak in 2-3 weeks.

We have ranted about having enough water tanks in the exit lanes, so that every cow in the parlor can

drink when they leave. This will spread disease anyway even if we separate sick cows from the rest of the herd.

Part II – the parlor

We have devised milking schemes to milk clean dry udders to get the milking units on the cows about one minute from the start of stimulation to get maximum milk out. This allows the cows to get back to their stalls within our hour time limit.

Part III – the hospital herd production (no matter where the cows are housed)

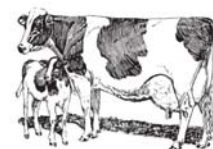
Everything changes when the hospital herd is milking. We must break the line so no antibiotic or bad milk gets into the tank. Wash the walls and the floors a little bit. Since the hospital herd often is far away and those lame cows don't move fast, we go out a little early to start the cattle drive to the parlor. They stand all bunched for an hour while finishing the herd cows. We then break the line, get the hospital list to see who is in the parlor and find the supervisor who leads the production.

With the cows finally in the parlor, the milking begins. A guy in a clean cap and shirt and pants enters the parlor with a clipboard, followed by some guy with dirtier clothes, followed by an exhausted guy who already milked a shift. They start with the first cow. Mr. Clean looks at his clipboard. The second guy looks at the cow and squirts a little milk out of each quarter and third guy squirts more milk. They all talk about how the cow is and what will be done. The same thing is done to the next cow. This procedure may take about an hour before the units are hung on this side. They move to side two where the same thing is done again. We now have hung a machine on a sick cow with no stimulation, so she is not going to milk out because this does not resemble her milking routine. Now they go back to these cows and do treatments.

Results

Lame cows get lamer because of standing on concrete for two hours. The mastitis cows are not milked out because they had no let-down. These cows have to return to their part time home and lay down because they are exhausted, hot and miserable. They don't eat and then get digestive problems. The guy with the clean hat goes back to his air conditioned office. The second guy goes home and the third guy has to clean the parlor and pipe line. DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR HOSPITAL HERD ROUTINE IS?

Contact Dave Bray at drbray@ufl.edu or call (352) 392-5594.



Free Forage Sample Analysis

Joe Vendramini

The Forage Extension Laboratory at the Range Cattle Research and Education Center in Ona, FL is analyzing forage samples for dairy producers free of charge. The SMI Dairy check-off program funded the extension program "Increasing Producer Awareness of the Importance of Forage Testing in Florida" and 200 forage samples will be analyzed for free under the grant provisions. The results provided by the Forage Extension Laboratory are DM, NDF, ADF, TDN, and CP. Turn-around time is approximately 2 weeks. The objective of this program is not only to provide forage testing results for dairy producers, but also to build a databank with information from forages used in Florida. If you have any further questions about this program, please contact Joe Vendramini, jv@ufl.edu, (863) 735-1314. *Dr. Joe Vendramini is a forage specialist at the UF/IFAS Range Cattle Research and Education Center in Ona, FL.*

Bioenergy – 2009 Farm to Fuel Summit

Ann C. Wilkie

In 2006, the Florida *Farm to Fuel* Initiative was statutorily created 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. Since then, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has hosted three "Farm to Fuel Summits" in Orlando (2006; 2008) and St. Petersburg (2007), each of which attracted several hundred participants.



The fourth Florida Farm to Fuel Summit is scheduled for **July 29-31** at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in **Orlando, FL**. The 2009 Summit will provide further opportunities for industry leaders to discuss Florida's energy future and join in shaping the future of biofuels and renewable energy in the State of Florida. This high-profile event will feature speakers and panelists representing international, national and state perspectives on issues of research, production and distribution of biofuels, including biodiesel, bioethanol and biogas.

For the 2009 Summit agenda and registration information visit the Farm to Fuel website: http://www.floridafarmtofuel.com/summit_2009.htm

Also, there will be a special pre-summit meeting on

July 29th from 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm at the Rosen Shingle Creek, entitled: *Biofuels Strategic Meeting: Moving Biofuels into Production in Florida*. This strategic meeting will discuss and explore the opportunities and obstacles the State of Florida faces in infrastructure development of biofuel facilities. The goal of this Strategic Meeting is to begin centralizing the initiatives between public and private enterprise and to develop a vision for the future, thus setting the stage for a successful roadmap to biofuels production. A separate registration is required for the Biofuels Strategic Meeting. See details at:

http://www.floridafarmtofuel.com/summit_2009_Agenda.htm.

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 Department of Soils and Water Science*

Dairy Proceedings Available on-line

Albert De Vries

Proceedings of the **20th Florida Ruminant Nutrition Symposium**, held February 10-11, 2009, are now on-line at the UF Dairy Extension website at <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu>. Papers related to feeding dairy cattle are:

- Feeding n-6 and n-3 fatty acids to dairy cows: effects on immunity, fertility and lactation
- Early life management and long-term productivity of dairy calves
- Feed-restriction programs for growing heifers
- Nutritional control of feed intake in dairy cattle
- Feeding ruminally-protected choline to transition dairy cows
- Managing milk fat depression: interactions of ionophores, fat supplements, and other risk factors
- Using dietary additives to manipulate rumen fermentation and improve nutrient utilization and animal performance
- The strategic use of ruminally protected amino acids in dairy nutrition

The **46th Florida Dairy Production Conference** was held April 28, 2009. Proceeding papers available at <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu> are:

- Surviving low milk prices
- Environmental challenges ahead for the U.S. dairy industry
- Anaerobic digester feasibility study and business plan road map for dairy farms in Florida
- The five key factors in transition cow management of freestall dairy herds
- Using reproductive records: basics of monitoring
- Toe lesions in dairy cattle

Futures Market Course

Mary Sowerby

Are you interested in managing your milk price and feed cost with futures markets? Then join Dr. John Van Sickle, Professor in the UF Food and Resource Economics Department at **7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 21, 2009**, at your **local Florida County Extension Office** via Polycom, a two-way voice and view method of communications. Dr. Van Sickle has been working with a group of dairy producers since last February. After the July 21st introductory session, you will be able to join them the following week (on Tuesday, July 28) and monthly thereafter in their ongoing discussions of future market movements and the best way to manage price risk on your dairy. Central to the whole discussion will be the use of FACTsim, a real-time program which allows participants to practice trades on the Future's Market without using real money. Whether you are seriously considering personally entering the Futures Market to manage your risk or hiring someone else to do so, this is a great program to help you understand how the Futures Markets work and can benefit your profit margin. There will be a \$25 fee for this on-going class. To enroll, contact Mary Sowerby at (386) 362-2771 or meso@ufl.edu, by **July 15** so Polycom arrangements can be made with your local extension office.

PCDART Consultant Workshop

Dan W. Webb

Dairy Herd Improvement Assn. is offering a one day training session on **August 18, 2009** in **Augusta, GA** on several new features offered by Dairy Record Management Systems to help with interpreting dairy records. Greg Bethard, PhD, will demonstrate and explain the Herd Detective Program, Pregnancy Rate Summary, and Events Summary. The new summaries and program should help you better serve your clientele. Veterinarian Credits will be offered from North Carolina State University. The workshop will start at 9:00 AM and end at 4:00 PM. Lunch will be provided. Topics include:

- Understanding the potential limitation of dairy variables: Lag, Momentum, Bias, and Variation, and their impact on common dairy variables.

- Accessing Dairy Herd Reproductive Performance:
 - What measures are appropriate?
 - How is the 21-day pregnancy rate calculated, and how should it be interpreted?
 - What are the uses and limitation of conception rate?
 - How should virgin heifer reproduction be measured?
- Tracking Dairy Performance by Analyzing Events
 - How are my fresh cows doing?
 - What are recent and rolling cull rates?
 - Are my first lactation heifer cull rates appropriate?
- Using Herd Detective dairy analytical software to access herd performance
 - Am I getting cows pregnant?
 - What are the reproductive opportunities in my herd?
 - Are too many fresh cows leaving?
 - Are fresh cows performing to their potential?
 - Do udder health data suggest an underlying problem with subclinical mastitis?

The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn, Augusta West I-20, 441 Park West Drive, Augusta, GA. Call the hotel at (706) 396-4600. Rooms are \$99.00 per night + tax. Registration fee is \$125 and payment is required at time of registration to *Southeast DHIA, PO Box 142460, Gainesville, FL 32614-2460*. Registration will close on August 10. If we do not make the minimum number of participants to hold the meeting, you will be notified and fees returned. Contact Christina Dore' at 352-392-5592 or dore@animal.ufl.edu for other details.

Dairy-Beef Meat Quality Workshop for Dairy Producers

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the "Dairy-Beef Quality Workshop: Focus on Culling Management" on **September 25 and 26** at the UF Animal Sciences Building in **Gainesville, FL**. This workshop will help dairy producers get the most out of animals removed from the herd. Topics include: culling strategies, residue avoidance, factors affecting carcass value, etc. This free workshop is sponsored by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, but limited to the first 25 registrants. Cost reimbursement will be available for a limited number of registrants. Contact Dwain Johnson (352-392-1922), Dave Bray (352-392-5594), Albert De Vries (352-392-5594) or Todd Thrift (352-392-8597) for details. More information will be forthcoming shortly.