

New Year's Resolutions For 2012

David R. Bray

Happy New Year. It's time again to plan for another successful New Year on your dairy. This time of year is a good time for planning, not only for this year, but the future. This means how do we continue to improve the things we do well and what do we change or eliminate of the things we don't do well.

1. Revisit your business plan. Make sure you can take advantage of an upswing of the economy. Where can you best reallocate your resources to increase your profits? Continuing with cut-backs may not be the most profitable plan.
2. Set new performance goals for all enterprises or areas of your dairy. These should have employee inputs also as this is the road map for success. These will then set the goals for your employees to strive to meet the whole dairy's performance and safety goals.
3. Implement some sort of employee retraining program to ensure they understand their responsibilities in this quest for improvement to reach your goals.
4. These performance goals then are translated to employee job descriptions and compensation for their part of meeting the dairy's goals. These are to be explained at the employee performance review.
5. If you do not have Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) for your dairy, you need to have some. If you do have them, make sure they are up to date. Your veterinarian should be involved in writing them.
6. Go visit other dairies in the country, go to Extension and other dairy meetings; you might get some new ideas and reconnect with people you have not seen in a while.
7. Replace outdated worn out milking equipment if maintenance had slipped last year. The milking system is the only thing that makes you money on your dairy.
8. Milk clean dry udders and dip teats.
9. Dig out the back of your freestalls, add new sand.
10. Keep cows as clean, cool and comfortable as possible.
11. Inventory your blind quarters, replace missing leg bands, apply new bands to new found blind quarters, and cull those 2 quartered beauties. Nothing builds employee satisfaction like milking a bunch of 2 quartered cows.
12. Plan to get your SCC below 400,000 before you are forced to.
13. SMI members need to prepare for the Animal Welfare Audit, if you have not done so.
14. Keep mycoplasma at bay and pasteurize your calf milk.

David R. Bray Retired From UF/IFAS Dairy Extension

David R. Bray retired from UF/IFAS Dairy Extension last December. A native of New York, Dave started his career at Cornell in 1967 as part of the dairy research team. At Cornell, he carried out a project that demonstrated the value of combining teat dip and dry cow treatment. The results were



instrumental in having less than 15% of dairymen using the procedure to having it established world-wide as a standard operating procedure. He collected the data to allow the FDA to approve the first dry cow treatment product in the US. He also developed the tools and was the first milk machine researcher in the world to measure the true vacuum needs of a milking system. These results drastically reduced vacuum to suggested capacity of milking parlor systems.

Dave Bray joined the UF Dairy Science faculty in 1981. He encouraged more Florida dairy producers to use teat dip and dry cow therapy and place a greater emphasis on milk quality. He also introduced the concept of routine bulk tank culturing to the industry. Dave took results from earlier UF dairy research on shades to the field. He was involved in getting fan and sprinkler systems accepted by Florida dairymen. He also worked on systems to improve the free stall surfaces in dairies. Dave further helped write the national standards for sizing of vacuum pumps for the US.

Dave's work was never about advancing his career, but always about helping out others where he could. He answered numerous phone calls, made many herd visits to investigate problems, organized conferences, workshops, and was a mentor to those of us that did not know the industry as well as he did. He was a host to countless visitors who came to see some of the Florida dairy industry.

Retirement luncheons were held in Ocala and Gainesville to celebrate Dave Bray's contributions to the dairy industry. Dave and his wife Joan plan to remain in Gainesville.

I Want To Be A Dairy Farmer, Because I Want To Be My Own Boss!

David R. Bray

That may be the most ridiculous statement ever, but that was my dream as a child. Since I still enjoy meeting new cows over meeting new people, I just wanted to milk my Guernseys in the small stall barn in upstate New York. But my

father who enjoyed off farm employment as a Vo-Ag teacher or 4-H Agent decided I ought to move on.

Let me mind your business for you

Who's all minding your business for you? Everybody from your neighbors who say your place stinks and you are polluting their water and causing global warming, to the animal rights folks who say you are abusing your animals in your factory farms. Others think you are injecting hormones and antibiotics in their meat and milk. Other countries imply we have sub quality milk and don't want it, even though it goes to Miami.

Don't get used to it, because you can make it better

The only way we can make it better is to turn implications of sour milk into sweet milk and dairy products through good deeds and education.

400,000 SCC regulation proposals

The 400,000 SCC proposals may or may not be a reality but it is in the news and gives the implication that if we don't comply we have an inferior quality product to sell. With the coming of the SMI bonus plan, it gives one an incentive to produce quality milk. If you are successful you not only get a bonus, you don't have to pay for someone else's. If you have not yet prepared, you better start improving. Because the bonus plan is based on SCC, SPC, LPC and PI counts you need to keep your cooling efficiency up, monitor water temperature, chemical concentrations and proper chemical usage. You may be money ahead by hiring your dealer or a specialist to monitor these at least monthly, since gaining of the bonus will more than pay for the outside monitoring.

SMI animal welfare audit

This may not seem important to you but it's important to our processors and since they are buying your milk you need to have a passing grade. Like everything else, there is always a cost involved. This may be upgrading your cow wash system to have more than clean udders. If your cows are outside you may need to trade out mud for fresh dirt in pastures, gate areas and calving areas. You will end up with cleaner cows and less mastitis. Body condition scoring is not a new idea but it should be a common tool for any dairy to use. If it's not in use in your dairy, it should be a normal part of a management scheme. Lameness is a big problem in our industry and the use of locomotion scores is a way to determine if your cows are healthy. Lame cows will not be profitable cows so you need to prevent them, not just try to fix them.

Standard operating procedures

If you are going to have a successful operation you must have rules and procedures to follow in all phases of your operation, from herd health to calves. These procedures should have input from your veterinarian, nutritionist, crops specialist etc. They should tie into your labor management

program which rewards employees for their part for the improvement in the dairy which are spelled out in their job descriptions.

The bottom line

There a lot of times in life that decisions are made for us that we don't like or don't agree with that they are beneficial to us. In the dairy business we are producing food for our people and have the opportunity to feed other parts of the world. We have had to spend a lot of money to protect our water. We need to be prepared to improve our milk quality and also answer our critics that we do produce the best quality milk. We do treat our animals humanely and we can prove it with third party animal welfare audits. We do not have unwanted hormones or antibiotics in our milk. You do have the right to have milk in your bulk tank at 745,000 SCC but you processor has a right not to buy it, and consumers don't have to drink it.

To learn more about being a dairy farmer, contact Dave Bray at drbray@ufl.edu.

Got Manure? Enhancing Economic And Environmental Sustainability

Ann C. Wilkie

Interest in manure digester systems and bioenergy production continues at an all-time high. Also, as greater attention becomes focused on greenhouse gas emissions from livestock production, it's more important than ever to learn about the latest developments in anaerobic digestion of livestock manures. For 2012, in lieu of its annual conference, AgSTAR is co-hosting a national conference – *Got Manure? Enhancing Environmental and Economic Sustainability* – with Cornell's PRO-DAIRY Program, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service. The conference will be held in conjunction with a trade show organized by PRO-DAIRY at the Holiday Inn Syracuse-Liverpool, New York on March 27-28, 2012. This conference is recommended for livestock producers and others interested or involved in the design, financing, operation, or regulatory oversight of animal waste management systems, or in the development of alternative sources of energy.

The over-arching goals of this two-day national conference are to provide state-of-the-art information about integrated manure management systems that can incorporate anaerobic digestion so farmers can make informed business decisions about manure collection, treatment, storage and application techniques, and so non-farm attendees are better enabled to assist farms to maintain and enhance their economic and environmental sustainability. The conference will highlight the latest projects, technologies and financial incentives for manure digestion, and will include technical presentations, networking opportunities, and exhibits. The conference will also include an optional one-day tour on March 29 of select New York on-farm integrated manure handling/treatment

systems utilizing anaerobic digesters. Registration for the conference is free of charge. However, there are optional meal fees of \$140 for the conference and \$20 for the on-site tour. To register and learn more about the conference, visit the AgSTAR Conference web page at:

<http://www.epa.gov/agstar/news-events/events/conference12.html>

AgSTAR is an outreach program designed to reduce methane emissions from livestock waste management operations by promoting the use of biogas recovery systems. These technologies produce energy and reduce methane emissions while achieving other environmental benefits. AgSTAR is a collaborative effort of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Energy. For additional information, visit the AgSTAR website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/agstar>.

For questions or information about manure bioenergy, contact: Dr. Ann C. Wilkie at acwilkie@ufl.edu, (352) 392-8699, or visit the website Biogas – A Renewable Biofuel at <http://biogas.ifas.ufl.edu>. Ann Wilkie is in the UF/IFAS Department of Soil and Water Science.

UF Hosted 6th Southern Regional Dairy Challenge, Drawing 50 Students From 10 Schools

Albert De Vries and Mary Sowerby

A total of 50 students from 10 southern colleges and universities participated in the sixth annual Southern Regional Dairy Challenge, which was held November 17 through 19, 2011, in Live Oak, Florida. The Southern Regional Dairy Challenge is an innovative two-day event designed by professionals from allied industry and university educators to bring classroom training to life in the real world for students preparing for dairy careers.

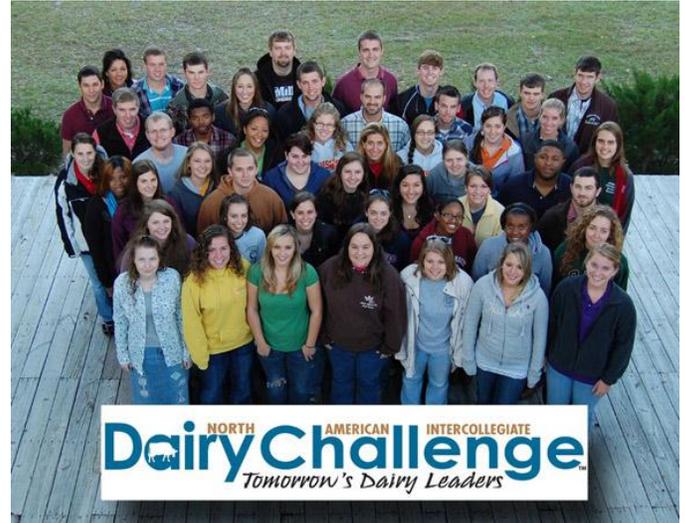
The University of Florida hosted the 2011 contest, drawing participants from Alabama A&M University, Berry College, Clemson University, College of the Ozarks, University of Florida, Louisiana State University, North Carolina State University, Santa Fe College, Virginia Tech, and West Virginia University.

"The regional Dairy Challenge, while offering a competitive format, educates undergraduate students about the dairy industry itself and allows them to apply the concepts they have learned in the classroom to a real farm situation, prioritize their recommendations, and then defend their practical recommendations," says contest planning committee chair Donna Amaral-Phillips of the University of Kentucky. *"Students, our sponsors, judges and coaches all learn a great deal in the process."*

One Star Platinum Foundation Sponsor, Southern Regional Committee member, and Southern contest judge Dave Whitlock with Select Sire Power added, *"Being a sponsor and attending the Southern Dairy Challenge allows me to see the future leaders of the dairy industry in action, gaining experience, and working together makes me excited about the future of our industry."*

A key objective is to present students with a real-life situation that stresses the importance of teamwork and professionalism. Teams of students from the different schools

were formed to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of a working dairy farm. Afterwards, teams presented their analysis and prioritized opportunities for improvement to a panel of expert judges and the dairy owners. Hosts for this year's Southern Regional Dairy Challenge were Keith Shiver, Shiver Dairy Farm, Mayo, FL and Ashley Bailey, Lafayette Dairy, Mayo, FL.



Students arrived at Camp Weed & Cervency Conference Center, in Live Oak, FL on the evening of November 17. After check-in and registration, participants were split into 12 mixed-university teams. Teams got to know each other over dinner and then participated in team-building exercises led by Dave Winston from Virginia Tech. Winston worked with students to discover their teams' strengths and capabilities, examine ingredients of effective teams, and evaluate team members' personality styles. Later that evening, teams received detailed production, financial, nutrition and reproduction records. The students had about an hour and a half to review the material and start forming their team strategies.

On Friday morning, the teams left for their farm visit to evaluate cows, facilities and management practices. After a two-hour farm visit, teams returned to the Conference Center to analyze their data and develop recommendations for improvement. Each team prepared a 20-minute presentation that detailed their observations and suggestions. The evening concluded with a dinner and Ag Olympics games at the Suwannee County Extension Office to provide the students a chance to relax show off their other skills. The dinner and games were organized by the University of Florida Dairy Science Club.

On the program's final day, each team presented its evaluation and recommendations to a panel of industry judges. Teams were ranked as platinum, reserve platinum, gold, or silver, based on how well they worked as a team and how effectively their presentations of strengths and opportunities for the dairy operation matched the judges' evaluations. When teams were not presenting, they toured the Dairy Production Systems – Branford dairy farm in Branford, FL. The Dairy Challenge ended with dinner, and awards ceremony at the Conference Center.

The 12 teams were named after major Dairy Challenge platinum sponsors: ABS Global Inc., Dairy Farmers of America, Dairy Production Systems, Dairy Records Management Systems, DSM Nutritional Products, Farm Credit, Genex

Cooperative Inc., Land O'Lakes Purina Feed, Alltech Inc., Pfizer Animal Health, Select Sires Inc., and Southern States Cooperative.

The Southern Regional is one of four regional contests under the guidance and support of the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC). The NAIDC mission is to facilitate education, communication and an exchange of ideas among students, agribusiness, dairy producers and universities that enhances the development of the dairy industry and its leaders. The 2012 national Dairy Challenge contest will be held March 29-31 in Roanoke, Virginia. The 2012 Southern Regional Dairy Challenge will be hosted by Clemson University and held November 15-17.

Financial support for the NAIDC comes from generous contributions from dairy industry companies, association and foundations, and dairy business owners. NAIDC is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. Contributions to Dairy Challenge are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. For more information on sponsorship support, visit www.dairychallenge.org or contact Executive Director Molly Kelley at (217) 684-3007 or email: naidcmjk@aol.com.

- The 47th Florida **Dairy Production Conference** will be held on Wednesday March 21, 2012. Location this year is the new *Straughn IFAS Extension Professional Development Center*, 2142 Shealy Drive, in Gainesville. The Center is near the college of Veterinary Science and Department of Animal Sciences. Contact Mary Sowerby, meso@ufl.edu, (386) 362-2771, for program details.



The new Alto and Patricia Straughn IFAS Extension Professional Development Center, 2142 Shealy Drive, Gainesville, Florida 32611.

- Family Day at the Dairy Farm - **2012 UF Dairy Farm Open House**. Saturday, March 24, 2012, at the UF Dairy Unit, 13200 NW 59th Drive, Alachua. The general public will be welcome from 9 AM to 2 PM. 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.

UF/IFAS Regional Dairy Open House Presentations Available

Albert De Vries

The first UF/IFAS Regional Dairy Open House meetings were held in Okeechobee, November 7, and Live Oak, November 8, 2011. Topics included genetics, genomics, and sexed semen economics, mastitis update and reproductive strategies for dairy heifers. Lunch was sponsored by Merck Animal Health. Attendance was good, with over 50 dairy producers, employees, and allied industry participating. The slides are now available at the Florida Dairy Extension website at <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu>. Contact Albert De Vries, devries@ufl.edu, (352) 392-5594 x 227, for more information.

Prediction of the Future Florida Mailbox Price: February 2012 - January 2013

Albert De Vries

Using the Class III future settle prices of January 13, 2012 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 February 2012 to January 2013 as follows:

| Month | Year | Class III settle price* | Predicted Florida mailbox price |
|-----------|------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| February | 2012 | 17.08 | 20.20 |
| March | 2012 | 17.39 | 20.44 |
| April | 2012 | 17.31 | 19.96 |
| May | 2012 | 17.35 | 19.99 |
| June | 2012 | 17.44 | 20.06 |
| July | 2012 | 17.42 | 20.43 |
| August | 2012 | 17.46 | 20.46 |
| September | 2012 | 17.46 | 20.46 |
| October | 2012 | 17.20 | 20.77 |
| November | 2012 | 17.18 | 20.75 |
| December | 2012 | 17.19 | 20.76 |
| January | 2013 | 17.08 | 20.20 |

* Class III settle price as of January 13, 2012.

Dairy Extension Agenda

- The 38th Annual **Southern Dairy Conference** is planned for January 24-25, 2012. Location is the Embassy Suites Atlanta-Airport, in Atlanta, Georgia. This program is planned and presented to focus on issues and opportunities affecting the entire dairy industry of the Southern United States. Program details, including lodging and speaker information is found on <http://southerndairyconference.com>. Contact Mary Sowerby, meso@ufl.edu, (386) 362-2771
- The 23rd Annual **Ruminant Nutrition Symposium** is scheduled for January 31 - February 1, 2012. Location is the Best Western Gateway Grant in Gainesville, Florida. The Symposium is recognized as one of the premier conferences for gathering the latest information about advances in nutrition of dairy and beef cattle. For program details, visit <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu/rns>. Contact Jose Santos, jeptosantos@ufl.edu, (352) 392-1958.