

FARM SHINE

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March 14, 2025

Data-driven decision making reveals evolving competitive edge for dairies

By SHERRY BUNTING
Special for Farmshine

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — “There are opportunities in the data that you have on your farms today to make you more competitive in the dairy industry. I want to get us thinking about looking at data a little differently... and seeing the real opportunities in the data that we have,” said Dr. Jeffrey Bewley, Ph.D., PAS executive director of Genetic Programs and Innovation for Holstein USA, Inc.

He spoke on ways that small and mid-sized dairies can gain a competitive edge through data-driven decisions during the Kentucky Dairy Conference Feb. 25-26 in Bowling Green.

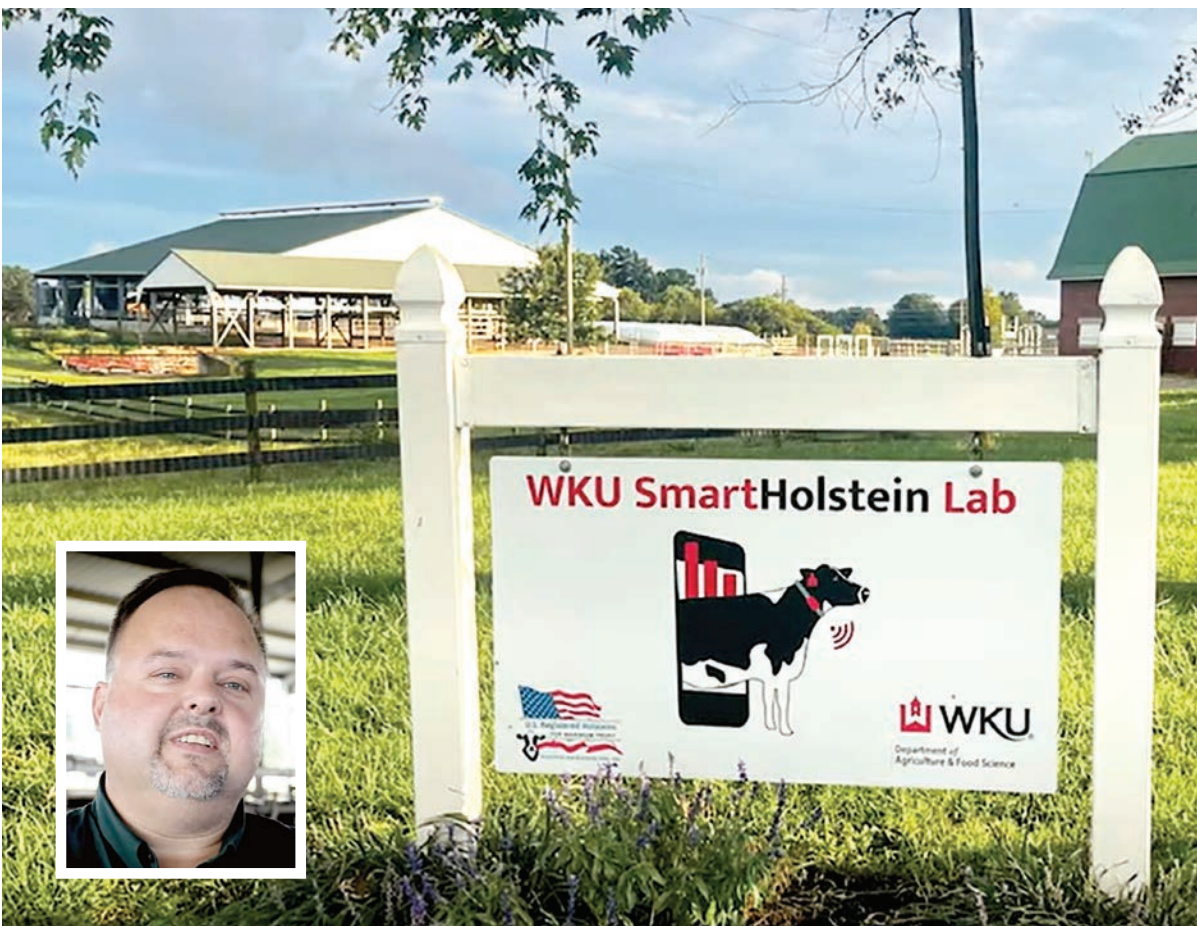
Bewley showed 200 in-person attendees, and an untold number by livestream, some things they would not normally see in typical data reports and introduced them to artificial intelligence (AI) and what will be possible in the future. But, it all comes back to basics, the Peter Drucker quote: “If you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it,” said Bewley. “On the dairy farm we have a lot of things we have the potential to measure, and we’ve been doing that for many years.”

Advanced analytics change the game for smaller dairies that do not have economies of scale for competitive advantage – instead using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure success, improve efficiency and profits, and continue high performance through real-time monitoring tools.

What is a small dairy? Bewley has seen this definition evolve.

“My eyes were opened sitting at a dairy one day, hearing 2500-cow dairies referred to as small dairies. There are a lot of really large dairies in our industry today,” Bewley related.

For data-driven decisions, it’s essential to first understand the underlying biology of the animals. “That’s where you have a huge advantage,” he said.



The distribution of production data by lactation tells more about the progress of a herd over time than a simple herd average comparison, says Dr. Jeffrey Bewley, (inset) head of the Smart Holstein Lab -- a partnership between Western

Kentucky University, Kentucky Ag Development Fund, Holstein USA Inc., and a growing number of project partners from industry. You can check it out at <https://www.smartholstein.com>

“We also have to understand the statistics. How they are “distributed” through your herd over time is more important than relying on herd averages.

“Averages lie,” he said. “Distributions don’t.”

He urged farmers to get to know the tools available in the marketplace and be careful not to overcomplicate things. “The important things are the important things. That means we focus on the big picture first, and then do a deeper dive into our data,” Bewley explained.

He also cautioned producers to think about variation and how the variation of one animal can skew the whole ‘average’ for the herd and to avoid ‘bias’ in the data, which happens when certain events are not recorded.

Today, herd management software programs are essential, with many good options available.

“These are powerful tools for how you manage your dairy and can really make a difference to break down the information at a deeper level,” said Bewley. The next level is feed management software. More dairies are adopting this to better manage that cost.

What is coming is integration. According to Bewley, companies are developing data integrators to pull in data, together, from different platforms to tell a deeper story on the herd.

Artificial intelligence is the next frontier. “ChatGPT for example is a large language model taking all the information on the internet and allowing you to communicate with it and ask it questions,” said Bewley, who uses ChatGPT almost every day.

“This type of technology is going to change our world,” he declared. “With a smartphone

or access to the internet, go to ChatGPT, and ask it a question. It will blow your mind.”

How can we use this technology in dairy? Bewley gave an example. He uploaded a herd summary and prompted ChatGPT to tell him the opportunities for improvement on that dairy. Within 5 seconds, it gave an automated response that identified two problem areas with supporting details and recommendations for the farm.

Bewley said herd averages do not reveal what the distributions show. “The distributions tell us more about how the herd is moving across time,” he said, noting that this can also be viewed by different milkweight categories and/or by lactation. Another example was the distribution of peak production trends across time, to see how different cohorts are performing.

Another big change today is what to focus on in production data. Bewley stressed that milk pounds is not the right way to look at this anymore – even in the fluid milk market – because components are becoming much more important.

“Based on current market conditions on fat percentage alone, we see a \$4.00/cwt swing in the value of that milk based on the fat percentage,” he demonstrated with a slide. “This is a huge economic opportunity that we have. We should not be talking about pounds of milk. We should be talking about pounds of fat-corrected milk. In some areas, we talk about energy-corrected milk where producers also get paid for protein. This should be our focus.”

The next level is determining how this affects the producer’s own unique milk price. The herd management software programs have tools that allow the producer to think about the economics of each cow, not just her production, like Money Corrected Milk.

Another platform can be layered into all of this as well to pull-in external data from the

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PERIODICAL • DO NOT DELAY

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Keep it coming!
 —B.C.C., Ohio

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Attention, please for avian flu call March 19, 1 p.m.

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Pennsylvania continues to monitor the cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in dairy cattle and poultry flocks across the United States. The Center for Dairy Excellence will host the next monthly Pennsylvania Agriculture HPAI Conference Call on Wednesday, March 19 at 1 p.m. for producers and stakeholders from all animal ag industries.

With the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) continuing to detect HPAI in commercial poultry flocks across the state, panelists will answer questions about required surveillance for dairy farms in the control buffer zones around an infected poultry or dairy premise. This is not the strain that has infected dairy cattle in California and other states. It is the strain that has been transmitted through wild geese in the Eastern Fly-Way Zones. This continues to be part of the quarantine order in an effort to exercise precaution to protect dairy farms and poultry facilities in that area.

Panelists will also answer questions about Pennsylvania's overall response efforts, the ongoing HPAI health situation, biosecurity planning, and more. During the March 19 call, panelists will include:

- Dr. Alex Hamberg, Pennsylvania State Veterinarian. He will share an overall update on the HPAI situation and the state's response efforts.

- Dr. Ernest Hovingh, director at the PADLS lab at Penn State. He will describe how testing is going.

- Seth Confer, biosecurity program specialist at PDA. He will answer questions about the process of creating and getting an approved biosecurity plan.

- Dr. Miriam Wamsley, Pennsylvania Department of Health epidemiologist. She will share reminders about PPE equipment available and other resources available to protect your operation/team.

Individuals who join the conference call will be able to ask real-time questions to each panelist. To ensure as many questions can be addressed as possible, questions can be submitted in advance of the call. Text 717-585-0766 to submit questions or email ctrdairyexcellence@gmail.com

Learn more about how to join the conference call on March 19 at 1 p.m.

- **How to join:**
 Dial +1 301-715-8592
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 Passcode: 833183

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They are 6th generation farmers with parents Edward and Lorraine at Thiele Dairy Farm, established in 1868 near Cabot, Pennsylvania, where they love working with nature, cattle, and crops, sharing the stewardship of 300 acres, 40 milk cows, and their youngstock, also sharing with the community what farming is all about through events at the farm and social media. Lorraine is known to paint round bales by the road to ‘put a smile on someone’s face.’

(Scan QR to qrc0.de/ThieleBales to read about it.)

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Second strain shows up in national milk testing**Global interpretations of bird flu vaccines affect U.S. strategies**

By SHERRY BUNTING
Special for Farmshine

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The status of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and the USDA strategy to protect poultry and dairy farms is changing. What's new is that a recent statement by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins suggested vaccines would be "pulled off the table," no longer be part of USDA's strategy.

According to RFD-TV's Market Day Report Monday, March 10, Rollins said USDA will focus on repopulation by prioritizing the biosecurity portion of her 5-point strategy.

Announced Feb. 26, vaccines had originally been a key part of the 5-point strategy, including \$100 million of the \$1 billion package devoted to vaccine research and deregulation. Rollins told Breitbart.com in the interview partially televised at RFD-TV that she had spoken with industry leaders and now believes vaccines have not been shown to work well in other countries, namely Mexico.

Add to this a recent statement by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to Fox News that federal health agencies are opposed to poultry vaccines.

At the root of this, however, is the fear of export market complications. Poultry industry leaders have said that vaccination in place of depopulation would impact the trade sta-

tus of U.S. poultry products. The bottom line is the way HPAI is designated globally. In poultry, HPAI is deemed a foreign animal disease to be eradicated, whereas in cattle it is a novel virus.

USDA has not issued a public statement of clarity on the role of vaccines, or lack thereof, in the HPAI strategy; nor have the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued statements. These agencies and their state veterinary and pub-

lic health partners had a closed conference call meeting Tues., March 11, which will perhaps clarify the national strategy.

According to APHIS, in just the past 30 days, 76 poultry flocks (33 commercial and 43 backyard) have been confirmed with HPAI, affecting 8.42 million birds in six states: Pennsylvania (6), Ohio (17), Indiana (15), Iowa (2), Missouri (2), and California (2).

Meanwhile, the APHIS updates for dairy cattle confirm HPAI detections in 19 dairy

herds in four states over the past 30 days. California accounts for 14 of these detections as part of the H5N1 B3.13 genotype that spreads from cow to cow, with the most recent detection on March 7th.

USDA APHIS does not clarify between H5N1 B3.13 and D1.1 genotypes in the other state confirmations for Nevada (3), Idaho (1) and Arizona (1).

The D1.1 detections in Churchill County, Nevada began in early January, with the most recent on Feb. 25. They represent the first detections of a genotype other than B3.13 in U.S. dairy cattle and the second known spillover from wild birds into lactating dairy cattle.

According to a recent USDA APHIS technical brief, D1.1 is different from the B3.13 genotype implicated in earlier dairy cattle outbreaks because D1.1 is the dominant strain widely circulating in migratory birds in all four North American flyways. It has also been linked to a few illnesses in humans, including one dairy worker in Nevada.

The spillover event in Nevada was detected through the National Milk Testing Strategy (NMTS) as Nevada is one of 45 fully enrolled states. This enabled detection in three of 11 silo samples collected on January 6 and 7, 2025. From there, it was sourced to two dairies, and the new genotype was de-

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APHIS updates for dairy cattle confirm HPAI detections in 19 dairy herds in four states over the past 30 days. California accounts for 14 of these detections as part of the H5N1 B3.13 genotype that spreads from cow to cow, with the most recent detection on March 7th.



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Farmshine Editorials

By Dieter Krieg
Farmshine Editor



'Well done is better than well said.'

— Benjamin Franklin

Let's all get to the fire hall for more than a free lunch

"We welcome everyone to hear the latest information on 97 MILK. Together we can make a difference," says Jackie Behr, the volunteer who designed and maintains 97 MILK's website. "Please join us on Tuesday, March 25, from 9:30 to noon (lunch provided) at the Durlach/ Mount Airy Fire Company, 880 Durlach Road, Stevens Pa.

Besides her time, Jackie also freely gives of her talents, working wonders. Wonderful wonders that bring truthful, useful and meaningful information about milk and dairy products to the attention of mothers, housewives, dieticians, pediatricians, parents and politicians. She has a following around the country and even across the wide oceans in distant foreign lands.

Closer to home, up in southeastern New York State, Jackie has indirectly made a remarkable impact through Duane Spaulding, one of 97 MILK's most enthusiastic and active supporters since its founding in 2019. His ongoing efforts triggered a ricocheting effect that keeps on ricocheting. And growing. Observing the results, Duane has repeatedly asked:

"Where are all the big folks ... organizations such as NMPF and DMI ... with all the money that they have? If we had them on board with us, we'd have this done!"

What he means by 'done' is getting whole milk back into the nation's schools. That effort has been ongoing for well over a decade but was repeatedly stonewalled by Democrats in the Senate, namely (then) Majority Leader Debbie Stabenow of Michigan and (then) USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack. Further, no President from the Democratic Party has ever supported having whole milk served in public schools, or any institution with even the thinnest government ties.



Duane, who sold his cows after 40 years of dairying in Schoharie County, N.Y. and then entered a new career delivering feed to dairy farmers, has witnessed and heard a lot. "We've lost hundreds of dairy farms in our area," he laments. "And when we lose farms, we also lose the infrastructure such as feed mills and equipment dealers," he reminded.

Like Jackie, Duane volunteers his time for whole milk through 97 MILK, as do his friends Ann Diefendorf and Jay Hoyt who is also a retired dairy farmer. Ann is noted for painting scores of home-made "baleboard" messages that promote whole milk.

Without doubt, all of the volunteers and donors supporting 97 MILK's efforts share the passion of correcting the massive wrong that dates back to the Obama Administration. They're 100% committed to achieving their goal of keeping whole milk in America's kitchens, cafeterias and institutions. One way is to talk with consumers at fairs. "The most rewarding thing you can do is work at a booth," Jay shares enthusiastically.

Due to their vigorous volunteering, tireless travels and commitment to doing what's right, Duane and Jay deservedly earned the reputation as a "dynamic duo."

Volunteers are always welcome and indeed needed. Jackie Behr's invitation to the March 25 meeting is not only to share information. It's also a call for reinforcements.

It's a plain-to-see and understand fact: If you have a sufficient number of 'dynamic duos, you'll end up with an even more dynamic team.

Such has been the case with 97MILK, the original dynamic duo of which were Nelson Troutman and Bernie Morrissey. Then, right on their heels, came Jackie Behr and Sherry Bunting. Together, they've created a phenomenal platform for dairy education and good will.

Let's keep it going strong. If you'd like to help, please give GN Hursh a call. His number is 717-286-8166.

P.S. Please take a look at Sherry's map of how the *Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act is on the Moooooove Again*, pages 12-13.

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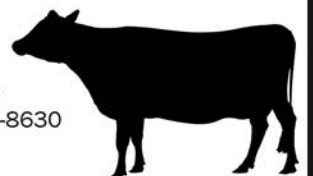


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Revisions for the show ring circuit unanimously approved

MADISON, Wis. — The Purebred Dairy Cattle Association (PDCA) Board of Directors unanimously approved changes to the PDCA Show Ring Code of Ethics, the PDCA Showmanship Guidelines and Dairy Cow Unified Scorecard during their board meetings which were held in December, 2024.

“These changes are the first that have been made in a decade,” stated outgoing PDCA Board President, Neal Smith, who represents the Jersey Association. “These guidelines are useful tools not only for our dairy youth exhibitors, but also the individuals who serve as official judges. Changes to the Unified Scorecard, used as a unified teaching tool, reflect the desired characteristics of each of the seven dairy breeds,” he went on to explain.

Appreciation was extended to Smith as he completed his term as PDCA president. Amy Fletcher, representing the Ayrshire Breeders Association,

will assume the presidency for 2025-2026, per the breed rotation assignment.

Notable revisions and updates to the referenced documents include:

PDCA Show Ring Code of Ethics:

- Topline hair length increased from 1” to 1.5” allowed
- Teat setting, over bagging and misrepresentation of animal’s lactation were each addressed specifically

PDCA Showmanship Guidelines:

- Refined language regarding how leadperson is to hold halter strap
- Specific direction for leadpersons as they enter the show ring, set up their animal

once in the show ring and switch animals during competition

PDCA Showmanship Evaluation Card:

- Slight discrimination for “sidesteps when leading calf” has been changed to moderate discrimination on the Showmanship Evaluation Scorecard as has “failure to stop and set up your animal appropriately at the judge’s request.”

Dairy Unified Scorecard:

- Rear Feet and Legs category, allowed 20%, will now be Feet and Legs – 20%
- Equal weight will now be given to rear udder and fore udder with equal point values of seven points each
- Mature Cow in Milk Average Weights

have been adjusted to align with current breed characteristics

- Holstein, Jersey and Milking Shorthorn True Type images were updated

These changes are effective March 1, 2025. The updated 2025 editions of the Show Ring Code of Ethics, Showmanship Guidelines, Showmanship Evaluation Scorecard and Unified Scorecard are available on PDCA’s website: www.purebreddairy cattle.com

To see the context within which changes were made and specific language that was modified, click on the copies of each document named “Revisions Highlighted,” also found on PDCA’s website under the literature tab.

Global

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terminated through on-farm bulk milk supply tests.

Clinical signs were not observed in the cattle prior to detection, but have been reported since. The affected dairy producers also reported large wild bird die-offs near the dairies. Investigations are ongoing to fully characterize this event as cow-to-cow transmission has not yet been established for D1.1.

USDA APHIS points to the benefit of the mandatory NMMS, leading to quick identification and quarantine of the affected dairies before signs were seen and before cattle movements could further spread it.

According to the USDA technical brief, “This is the first instance where sampling of milk at processing plants - - rather than individually or directly on farm -- has detected a high consequence disease, demonstrating silo monitoring as an efficient method to monitor HPAI in the national dairy herd.”

Of the 45 states fully enrolled in the NMMS, only three have reached “unaffected” status, which means ongoing testing and surveillance activities demonstrate absence of disease in dairy cattle in these states: Pennsylvania, Colorado and Mississippi.

Six states are still in “affected” status, which means ongoing testing and surveillance activities demonstrate presence of disease in dairy cattle in these states: California, Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Texas, and Michigan.

The remaining states are “provisionally unaffected.”

Producers and stakeholders in the dairy and poultry industries wanting further updates can tune into the Center for Dairy Excellence call on Wed., March 19 at 1 p.m. EDT, where the Pennsylvania State Veterinarian Alex Hamberg will be on the panel to share state and national updates.

For details to join this call by phone or zoom link, please see separate article on page 2 or go to <https://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/about-the-center/upcoming-events/event/hpai-calls/>

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Auction Guide

MARCH 15, 10:30 a.m. Spring-time Jubilee with Duckett & Abbott, Union Bridge, Md. Sale co-managed by Bordervue Genetics and MD-Hillbrook.

MARCH 18, 11 a.m. Spring Opportunities at Pine-Tree II, Brown Swiss & Jersey Edition, Wooster, Ohio. Sale managed by Modern Sales Stables.

MARCH 19, 10:30 a.m. Dairy Cow & Heifer Sale, New Holland Sales Stables, New Holland, Pa. Sale managed by New Holland Sales Stables.

MARCH 19, 12-1 p.m. Visscher Dairy Complete Online Dispersal, Stapleton, Ga. Sale managed by Kreeger and Associates.

MARCH 20, 10 a.m. Special Dairy Cow & Heifer Sale, Brubacker's Quality Dairy Sales, Shippensburg, Pa. Sale managed by Brubacker's Quality Dairy Sales.

MARCH 21, 1 p.m. Monthly Dairy Sale, Belleville, Pa. Sale managed by Kish Valley Dairy Sales.

MARCH 22, 9 a.m. Large Farm Equipment Auction, Manchester, Pa. Sale managed by Rentzel's Auction Service.

MARCH 22, 10 a.m. Houser Tractor/Farm Equipment Auction, Middletown, Pa. Sale managed by Harry H. Bachman Auctioneer.

MARCH 22, 10 a.m. Northeast Ohio Equipment Consignment Auction, Leavittsburg, Ohio. Sale managed by RES Auction Services.

MARCH 22, 10:30 a.m. DVU Green & Gold Spring Spectacular Sale, Doylestown, Pa. Sale managed by Pa. Holstein Association.

MARCH 22, 11 a.m. Spring Premier All-Breed Dairy Sale, Hosking Sales, New Berlin, N.Y. Sale managed by Hosking Sales.

MARCH 26, 12-1 p.m. White Oak Farms Complete Online Dispersal, Sweetwater, Tenn. Sale managed by Kreeger and Associates.

APRIL 4, 11 a.m. GTPI-Type Sale, Leola, Pa. Sale co-managed by Landis Marketing & Daniel Brandt Pedigrees & Marketing.

APRIL 4, 6 p.m. Special Feeder Cattle Sale, New Holland Sales Stables, New Holland, Pa. Sale managed by New Holland Sales Stables.

APRIL 11, 1 p.m. Monthly Dairy Sale & Special Spring Heifer Sale, Kish Valley Dairy Sales, Belleville, Pa. Sale managed by Kish Valley Dairy Sales.

APRIL 12, 11:30 a.m. Pride of Posthaven Reduction Sale, Hobart, N.Y. Sale managed by Hosking Sales.

APRIL 12, 7 p.m. Franklin County Youth Dairy Club Calf Sale, Chambersburg, Pa. Sale managed by Franklin County Youth Dairy Club.

APRIL 19, Annual Spring Machinery Auction, Hosking Sales, New Berlin, N.Y. Sale managed by Hosking Sales.

APRIL 19, 8 a.m. Special Easter Horse Sale, New Holland Sales Stables, New Holland, Pa. Sale managed by New Holland Sales Stables.

MAY 3, 10:30 a.m. Bradford County Calf & Heifer Sale, Troy, Pa. Sale managed by Pepper's Auction Service.

MAY 9, 6 p.m. Horse Sale, Kish Valley Dairy Sales, Belleville, Pa. Sale managed by Kish Valley Dairy Sales.

MAY 16, 7 p.m. Monthly Dairy Sale, Kish Valley Dairy Sales, Belleville, Pa. Sale managed by Kish Valley Dairy Sales.

JUNE 14, 12 p.m. Cheers To Thirty Years Of Hosking Sales, Hosking Sales, New Berlin, N.Y. Sale managed by Hosking Sales.

JUNE 20, 7 p.m. Monthly Dairy Sale, Kish Valley Dairy Sales, Belleville, Pa. Sale managed by Kish Valley Dairy Sales.

JULY 11, 6 p.m. Horse Sale, Kish Valley Dairy Sales, Belleville, Pa. Sale managed by Kish Valley Dairy Sales.

Dairyman's Datebook

MARCH 15, 8-10 a.m. Wayne County (Ohio) Farm Bureau Member Appreciation Breakfast at The Connection Conference and Event Center, 1034 Country Club Drive, Wooster.

MARCH 15, 7 p.m. Bucks County Holstein Club Potluck Dinner, Deep Run Mennonite Church East, 350 Kellers Church Road, Perkaspie, Pa.

MARCH 18, 9:30 a.m. Farm Succession Workshop, presented by PA Farm Link at 625 Evan City Road, Butler, Pa.

MARCH 18, 9:30 a.m. Penn State Extension Pasture Workshop, Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce Building, 511 Mile Road, Tunkhannock.

MARCH 20, 9:30 a.m. Penn State Extension Pasture Workshop, Agricultural Heritage Building, 185 Franklin Farm Lane, Chambersburg.

MARCH 20, 9 a.m. Allied Milk Producers Cooperative meeting (western region), Village on the Green, Martinsburg, Pa.

MARCH 21, 10 a.m. Susquehanna County Ag Day at a new location - Montrose Area High School, 75 Meteor Way, Montrose, Pa.

MARCH 21, 6 p.m. Maryland Holstein Association banquet, New Windsor Fire Hall, 101 High Street, New Windsor.

MARCH 25, Lancaster County Holstein Association Spring tour, pick-up options are Wilson Eberly's farm, 295 South Farmersville Road, Ephrata, 7 a.m. and Manheim LCBC Church at 7:45 a.m. Please see details on page 7.

MARCH 25, 9:30 a.m. 97 MILK meeting, lunch included; Durlach-Mt. Airy Fire Hall, 880 Durlach Road, Stevens, Pa.

MARCH 25-27, Annual meeting of Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers, Liberty Mountain Resort, 78 Country Club Trail, Fairfield, Pa.

MARCH 26, 9:30 a.m. Penn State Extension Pasture Workshop, Ebensburg Borough Office's Community Room, 300 West High Street, Ebensburg.

APRIL 1, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Animal care workshop at the Crawford County Extension Office, 1099 Morgan Village Road, Suite A, Meadville, Pa. Optional dairy farm tour: TBD

APRIL 3-5, National Association of Milk Bottle Collectors (NAMBC) 43rd annual convention, Comfort Suites Hotel, 945 Baltimore Pike, Gettysburg, Pa.

APRIL 8, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Animal care workshop at the Belleville Community Center, 95 N. Penn Street, Belleville, Pa. Optional dairy farm tour: Kish View Farm.

APRIL 15, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Animal care workshop, Troy Fire Hall, 88 Firehouse Drive, Troy, Pa. Optional dairy farm tour: Gorrell Dairy LLC.

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\$20 for one year, which comes to only 39 cents per week. A slightly better deal is offered if you subscribe for two years at a time: \$38.

Whether you'd like to be a new subscriber or are up for renewal, please use the handy order form at the top of page 2 to keep *Farmshine* coming to your mailbox every week.

We thank you for your consideration and support.

Twelve \$3000 scholarships offered

HARRISBURG, Pa. – Twelve \$3000 scholarships are available through a partnership between the Pennsylvania Dairyman's Association, the Dairy Excellence Foundation, and Tröegs Independent Brewing for the 2025-26 academic year. Applications must be submitted online by May 1.

To qualify for the scholarships, students must demonstrate a commitment to working in the dairy industry. Recipients are selected based on academic performance, interest in a dairy-related career, evidence of leadership, character and integrity, and application compliance.

Pennsylvania residents who are full-time undergraduate students currently enrolled in a qualifying field of study or high school seniors who are planning to enroll in a qualifying field of study are given consideration

for this scholarship. Qualifying fields of study include dairy and animal science, agricultural marketing and business, nutrition, food science, agriculture and extension education, agricultural communications, agricultural engineering or related fields.

Students can receive the \$3000 scholarship twice during their undergraduate academic career. Students employed by the Center for Dairy Excellence as an intern or in another capacity are not eligible to apply during the period in which they are working for the Center.

To submit an online application or to learn more about the scholarship opportunities, contact Michelle Shearer at 570-768-8316 or by email at mshearer@centerfordairyexcellence.org or visit www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/scholarships

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Bright future is ahead according to NMPF CEO Gregg Doud

By SHERRY BUNTING
Special for Farmshine

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – The annual Kentucky Dairy Conference included a full lineup of speakers on a variety of progressive dairy topics, including a surprise appearance by National Milk Producers Federation CEO Gregg Doud to close the session with a positive message during the awards banquet on the second day, Feb. 26, at the Sloan Convention Center in Bowling Green.

Doud sees a bright future for dairy, and he gave the over 200 attendees his insights into

the CWT program to work on multiple products to multiple markets, instead of its historical emphasis on cheese. Doud gave examples of extended shelflife (ESL) fluid milk products, butter to Mexico, and milk protein concentrates to Southeast Asia.

Having worked in the U.S. trade representative's office in the first Trump term, Doud understands this administration. He sees the tariffs as Trump's way to gain leverage.

"When he rattled cages before, what did we get? Many things were fixed in a trade deal with China as a result. (But Trump's term ended before all of it was implemented.)

Today, we have a \$24 billion agricultural trade deficit. We import more than we export. That needs to change," he said.

"Everybody wants access to the No. 1 consumer on earth. That's the U.S. consumer," Doud explained. "The President is giving a simple message to the world: 'No one gets access to U.S. consumers for free any longer.' You want access? You've got to play by the rules. It's really that simple."

Doud had praise for the new Ag Secretary. Of Brooke Rollins, he said: "She's smart, tough and a quick study." But he also stressed the need to continue educating the Depart-

ment and policymakers about what farmers do, how, and why.

Citing new investment in dairy processing across the country, Doud said: "Things are extraordinary on the dairy demand side," with "plenty of opportunities to grow in Kentucky and Tennessee" while at the same time noting that "the industry is shuffling around on the processing side, so we have to keep our heads on a swivel."

Following Doud's comments, several industry honors were presented, and dairies were recognized for production and quality. Please see separate article on page 15.



Gregg Doud

the happenings in Washington.

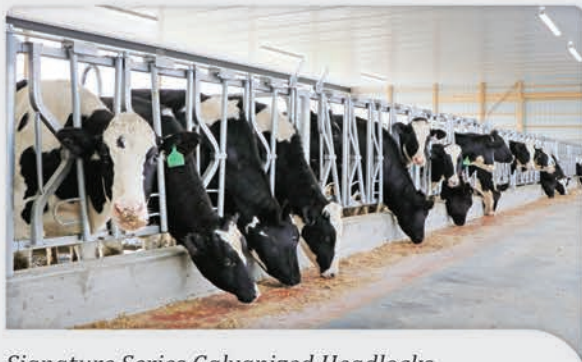
He said the top three immediate issues for agriculture are "labor, labor, and labor, especially for dairies. We are giving this enormous attention right now. The administration is trying to clean some things up, but we need people willing to work on farms, milking cows. We need to help them understand and make sure we have this right."

Doud also pledged top priority status for the bill to bring whole milk back to schools. He said FDA's labeling integrity also ranks high on the to-do list because some regulators don't even understand the nutritional differences between real milk and lookalikes. He further warned of new bioengineered milk lookalikes coming on the market in the next year, such as *UnReal Milk* with the marketing slogan of 'real whole milk without a single cow.'

"They can't do that. Not on my watch," said Doud. "It's illegal to call it real milk. This is synthetic. It's not real milk."

On the direction of nutrition and Dietary Guidelines under this administration, Doud said: "Dairy is right in the wheelhouse."

Trade is another top priority. NMPF has restructured



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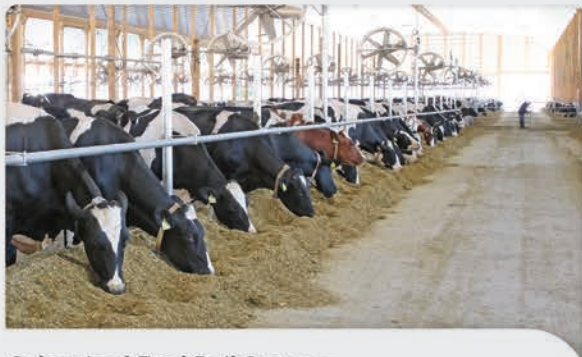
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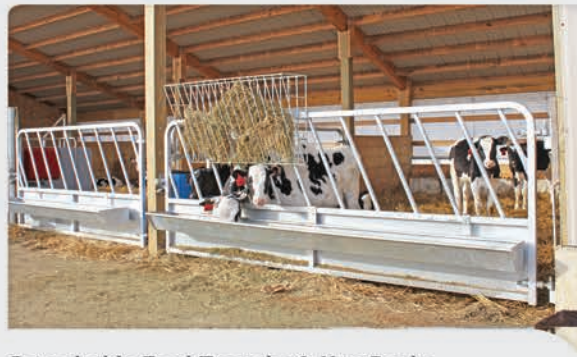
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Milk futures split

Milk futures split this week to continue the “process” of moving Classes III and IV closer together just 10 weeks ahead of the implementation of new Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) pricing formula rules. Class III contracts for 2025 were firm to 20 cents higher with 2026 contracts weak to 10 cents lower. By contrast, the Class IV contracts were weak to 20 cents lower across the board. It was tit-for-tat as Class III gained a dime on average and Class IV lost a nickel to narrow that spread, such as we’ve not seen in six years.

The 12-month average price on the close Tues., March 11 gained 10-cents/cwt at \$18.07 for Class III milk futures Mar25-Feb26. Meanwhile, the 12-month average for Class IV contracts slipped 5-cents/cwt at \$18.73. The Class IV over III advantage continues to narrow.

How interesting that the market pendulum has swung from a wider spread that favored processors under the current average-plus-74-cents method by which USDA sets monthly Class I base price movers – to now swing the other way just 10 weeks before the June 1st implementation of the



Milk Market Moos

by Sherry Bunting
agrite2011@gmail.com



USDA’s Federal Milk Marketing Order decision, which includes returning the Class I mover calculation to the higher-of method.

Farmers can’t win. They lost over \$1B in the six years that the average-of method was in effect. Now, it’s going the other direction, making the new ESL adjuster even more of a wild card if trade factors are managed in the new narrow trend we see taking hold in the “marketplace.”

Block cheddar, butter recover

Dairy products were mixed on the CME daily spot market as butter and 40-lb block cheddar recovered some of last week’s steep losses, while barrel cheese slipped lower to fall under the block price, and dry whey and nonfat dry milk

edged a penny lower than the previous week’s decline.

The spot butter price steadily advanced in very active trade, pegged at \$2.33/lb, up a nickel from the prior Wednesday with 50 loads trading over 4 days. Nonfat dry milk dropped another 2 cents at \$1.16/lb in moderate trade with 16 loads trading.

The spot cheese market split this week, with 40-lb blocks moving higher while the 500-lb barrel cheese moved lower to flip the scenario to blocks selling above barrels. The barrel price will no longer be included in the FMMO protein and Class III pricer formulas as part of the USDA decision package to be implemented June 1st. By Tues., March 11 blocks were pegged at \$1.67, up a little over a nickel on the week with 27 loads trading across 4 days. The 500-lb barrel cheese price dropped six cents on the week, pegged at \$1.6450/lb Tuesday, with 8 loads trading over 4 days.

Dry whey lost another penny at 48 cents/lb with only 2 loads changing hands.

Uncertainty prevails

On the one hand, the specter of a trade war is being raised with reciprocal vs. retaliatory vs. reciprocal tariff jostling. On the other hand, the U.S. dollar has declined in the shadow cast by this specter.

Meanwhile, U.S. dairy products are seriously underpriced vs. global market value at this time. That, and a weaker dollar, mean U.S. dairy goods are a cheap bargain for offshore buyers, which may help overcome new retaliatory tariffs that could accompany such sales.

Interestingly, China is requiring Walmart to pay the U.S. tariffs on goods they import, so that tussle is underway.

The upside is we all get a window of transparency into how the world works during these heavy-handed trade negotiations as to our food system and its global supply chains vs. regional foodsheds, or in the case of dairy – the milksheds.

Most of the \$8 to \$10 billion in new processing investment in the dairy industry 2023-26 is in the designated growth area of the Central U.S., with sights set on feeding the 95% of stomachs outside the U.S. as a low-cost producer.

Meanwhile, the rest of the world wants to sell to U.S. consumers as their No. 1 destination, and they get to do it cheap and with far fewer barriers than U.S. agriculture and industry face on the other side of that score.

This disruption could go either way, depending on the negotiations. Call it a game of ‘chicken’ on the global highway if you will.

However, it’s worth noting that interest rates are also soft-
turn to page 9

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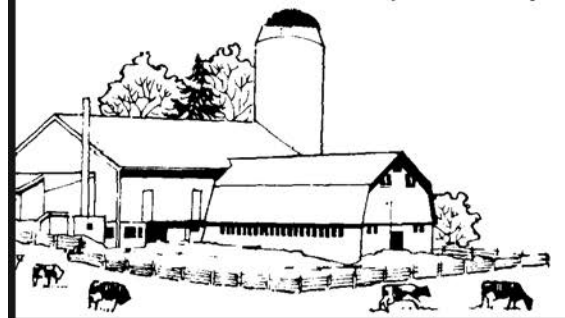
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Market Moos from page 8

ening in the shadow of the trade and tariff tussle as well as the losses on the stock market. The interest rate on the U.S. debt is currently \$1 trillion per year and gets renegotiated in a little over 2 years.

This is a big enchilada with very few ways to bite into, and eat it, and it's messy. Let's hope it's worth the effort.

USDA makes nutrition moves?

According to a report Tuesday, March 11 in EducationWeek online, USDA took steps to cut \$1 billion from the school lunch program, including cancellation of the \$660 million Local Food for Schools program for 2025. This program was started in 2021 under the Biden administration and USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack.

The reason given, like with many of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) cuts is that the programs "no longer effectuate the goals of the agency."

But what is behind the scenes of this move? Could the same goal of local food be accomplished differently with some changed parameters? We don't know yet.

Here's an example to think about... The Dietary Guidelines

for Americans outright RULE the school lunch program, as Farmshine readers well know after years of reading about it in relation to the USDA's prohibition of whole milk in schools.

Here's a greatly positive step taken by USDA and HHS this week following the March 11 inaugural meeting of the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission, which could change the trajectory of purchase power across the entire school lunch program. We hope.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. announced their continued work on the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (Guidelines), stating that their respective agencies and the commission will be giving the Scientific Report of the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee—released in 2024 by the prior administration—a "line by line review" before releasing final Guidelines ahead of the statutory deadline of Dec. 31, 2025.

Moving forward beyond 2025, HHS and USDA are looking to make holistic process improvements to ensure transparency and minimize conflicts of interest. Sec. Rollins said her role starts with updating federal dietary guidance. "We

will make certain the 2025-2030 Guidelines are based on sound science, not political science. Gone are the days where leftist ideologies guide public policy."

"We are going to make sure the dietary guidelines will reflect the public interest and serve public health, rather than special interests," HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. added in a statement.

These Guidelines impact all feeding programs where government funding or subsidies are involved, including school meals. They are the primary reason whole milk and 2% milk have been prohibited in schools since 2010, when Congress tied the Guidelines to feeding programs in the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act. That was the last time the Childhood Nutrition Act was Reauthorized.

USDA, under Secretary Vilsack at the time, took the additional step in the Smart Snacks rules to address beverages and prohibit sales of whole or 2% milk as a competing beverage while allowing other questionable choices from a nutritional standpoint.

The current Guidelines favor global Consumer Packaged Goods companies, not local food systems.

Dr. Charles Gardner has podcasts to enlighten



Charles E. Gardner

To Farmshine readers:

I like a quote that says: "Better to light one small candle than to curse the darkness".

I have been trying recently to light a small candle in the form of podcasts about veterinary practice and life in general. Many of the stories come from dairy practice, and whenever possible, I try to educate the public with positive and accurate portrayals about how modern dairy farms emphasize animal care and comfort.

Some recent ones that do that were published on March 12th, January 6th and December 3rd. You can find them by scanning the QR code below, or by searching *The Blessed Life of a Cow Doctor* on Spotify, Amazon Podcasts or Apple Podcasts. I hope you enjoy them.

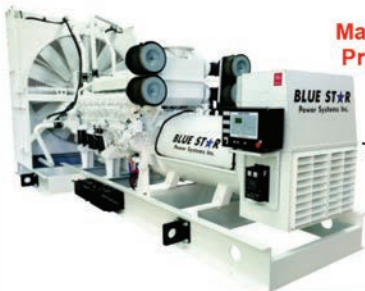
— Charles E. Gardner, DVM



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House Bill 649

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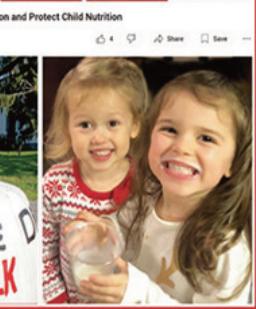
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Healthy Kids Act Committee 24-10

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PSU grazing workshops slated

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — Farmers can learn about improving and managing pasture growth, controlling weeds, and getting the most out of the grazing season by attending a Penn State Extension workshop that will take place in Wyoming, Franklin and Cambria counties in March. The registration fee for each is \$25.

- In Wyoming County, the “Pasture Production Workshop” is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on March 18 at the Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce Building, 511 Mile Road, Tunkhannock.

- The Franklin County workshop will occur from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 20 at the Agricultural Heritage Building, 185 Franklin Farm Lane, Chambersburg.

- The event in Cambria County will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on March 26 at the Ebensburg Borough Office’s Community Room, 300 West High St., Ebensburg.

The event is aimed at addressing some of the challenges producers face from year to year, while providing instruction on ways to consistently produce high-quality forages in pastures.

Organizers noted that space is limited, so preregistration is recommended. Participants can register for the Tunkhannock event through March 15, for the Chambersburg workshop through March 17, and for the Ebensburg session through March 23.

Attendees can earn one pesticide applicator recertification credit in each of the following categories: private, 01 and 18.


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Data-driven

from page 1

internet, such as weather, to see the impact on fat percentage.

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Dry period distributions are also worth a look to compare to thresholds and see the KPIs and how they change when based on 30- or 90-day dry period vs. 4-week milk, 8-week milk, SCC, etc.

Age at first calving can also be measured in terms of impact over time to be sure it is optimal and know where the limits are for the greatest lifetime opportunities.

Summer to winter ratios can also be measured, showing opportunities for heat stress improvement – knowing what it is costing the farm.

Somatic Cell Count is Bewley's favorite area to look at.

“Our paradigm has changed in the last 15 years as we've improved SCC,” he said. “Why should we still be looking at SCC? Cows with higher SCC milk less, are more likely to be removed from the herd earlier, are harder to breed, and have lower conception rates. He demonstrated with real data from real farms.

Other KPIs to look at are in repro. A relatively new and important Reproduction KPI is percent of cows pregnant by DIM across

lactation. “Knowing this allows you to project calving patterns and the flow of calves, which may be especially useful for marketing beef-on-dairy.”

Transition cows have KPIs to track for conditions. Most important for profitability is the percentage of cows that survive 60 days in milk.

Body condition and lameness scoring as well as feed efficiency are other KPIs that are being integrated. “All of this allows the tracking of true genetic performance.”

Pulling data from a Kentucky herd, Bewley showed that a 1-pound PTA Milk (sire) = 3 pounds of actual milk. “The data in the herd showed the difference between a 1000 PTAM and 2000 PTAM female was 3000 pounds of milk in this herd,” he demonstrated. “Genetics matter and we have more opportunities to make improvements than ever before.”

Of importance, he cautioned producers not to rely on tracking just one KPI or to focus on averages, but to look at distributions and integration of various KPIs across the herd, and to make sure employees are involved in the tracking, especially when their jobs affect the outcomes.

“Traditional KPIs help us a lot, but the new ones with automation, and the predictive nature of integrated data, as well as artificial intelligence, will help dairies implement a data-driven approach to gain competitive advantage in the future,” Bewley asserted. He encouraged producers to build a culture for this on their farms by setting goals and scheduling the time to look at the data.



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Recognition of service and performance was a highlight

By SHERRY BUNTING
Special for Farmshine

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — The second day of the annual Kentucky Dairy Conference on February 26th included the presentation of many awards.

Kentucky Dairy Development Council (KDDC) Board member Dr. Charles Townsend, DVM, presented a special appreciation award to former KDDC Executive Director H.H. 'H' Barlow III, saying: "He was part of this organization since it started 20 years ago, along with Maury Cox, Gary Lane, Jim Sidebottom and others. They are the ones who really started this great work. 'H' has been a president, a board member, and was executive director for five years before stepping down in 2024. His passion is the dairy industry. He did a good job as executive director and passed the torch now to Tori (Embry)."

In receiving the award, Barlow recognized Kathy, his wife of 53 years. Together, they own and operate Barlu Dairy, milking 120 Jerseys near Cave City.

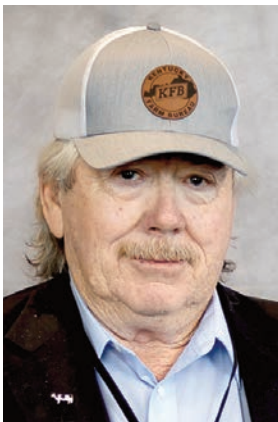
"My whole life has revolved around the cows. My life is described as 'because of a cow.' We've had some ups and downs, and it hasn't always been easy, which everyone in the dairy industry knows what that's like," said Barlow. "I love this industry, and the torch has been passed to some great people. The board of directors is really the key to this organization.

"Times do pass on, and new people take this on. It's in good hands, so keep it going," he challenged, saying that after hearing



Megan Komar of Coral Hill Dairy received the Kentucky Young Dairy Producer Award.

KDDC photo



Kentucky Dairy Promoter of the Year honors went to Glenn Sageser.

KDDC photo



Mitchell Richardson of Owen Transport was named Kentucky Quality Milk Hauler of the Year.

KDDC photo



Former president, board member and executive director H.H. Barlow III was recognized with a special appreciation award for 20 years of service to KDDC.

File photo by Sherry Bunting

and positive attitude with producers – going above and beyond.

Scenic View Dairy received the prestigious Dairy Proficiency Award, which considers a wide variety of herd data such as RHA, days to first service, average days open, average somatic cell count, calving interval and much more to reflect an operation's success in quality, production, profitability, and sustainability. Scenic View Dairy was also the top herd on the Gary Lane State Production Award list with an RHA of 32,055M 1292F 1013P.

Second in production was Robey Farms of Logan

County, with 31,593M 1203F 1053P. Third went to Kevin Coblentz of Todd County with 30,572M 1355F 791P.

Additional herds noted for DHIA RHAs of 30,000 pounds and over were Little Moo Dairy in Pulaski County, Darrel L. Horst in Lincoln County and H&H Dairy in Adair County.

Dairies were also recognized by herd size with the KDDC 2024 production awards, sponsored by Kentucky Farm Bureau. They are listed in order by their 4.0% fat-corrected RHA as follows:

- Herds under 50 cows -- 1) Amos Blank, Trigg County; 2) David S. Blank, Trigg County; 3) Amos S. King, Christian County.
- Herds 51-250 cows -- 1) Kevin Coblentz, Todd County; 2) H&H Dairy, Adair County; 3) Fairdale Farm, Owen County.
- Herds 251-500 cows -- 1) Scenic View Dairy, Lincoln County; 2) Riney Dairy, Washington County; 3) David E. Corbin, Taylor County.

Doud and the other speakers over the two days, he is excited about the future of the dairy industry. Smiling as he said: "The only thing I can say is I wish I was 20 years younger!"

KDDC executive director Tori Embry presented the Young Dairy Producer Award, sponsored by South Central Bank, to Megan Komar of Coral Hill Dairy in Barren County. This competitive award represents the future direction of the Kentucky dairy industry, Embry explained, adding: "Nominators spoke of Megan's involvement as a dairy advocate in the community, along with seeking innovative progress in her leadership role on the dairy farm."

Megan and her husband Josh own and operate the Coral Hill Dairy together, where they milk 2000 cows. Megan is very involved in managing the day-to-day operations on the farm and has been involved in KDDC Board leadership, representing District 3.

Elise Carpenter with The Dairy Alliance

presented the Kentucky Dairy Promoter of the Year Award to Glenn Sageser of Shelbyville. He was honored for his efforts and dedication to advance the state's dairy industry by supporting farmers, educating consumers, and especially for his work to support youth.

Sageser started the Cheese Auction at the Kentucky State Fair in 2018, and since then, \$115,275 has been raised to benefit Kentucky youths and fair participants.

Receiving the Kentucky Milk Quality Award were Darrell and Lois Horst of Lincoln County. This is a nominated award, which is then scored on milk quality test results.

Mitchell Richardson of Adairville was recognized with the Milk Quality Hauler Award, recognizing an individual for dedication and quality milk handling procedures. He has hauled milk for Owen Transport for 34 years. Two nominations were received highlighting Richardson's dedication to the job, attention to detail when taking samples on the farm

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Applications must be received by April 1

Ray LeBlanc honored with HF memorial scholarship

BRATTLEBORO, Vt. — The Holstein Foundation has announced the creation of the Raymond LeBlanc Memorial Scholarship, a college scholarship dedicated to honoring the legacy of Raymond LeBlanc while supporting a qualified student. Applications for this \$1000 scholarship are now open, with a submission deadline of April 1.

Ray LeBlanc was a dedicated cattleman and an influ-



Raymond LeBlanc

ential figure in the Holstein community, largely known for his role as a cattle salesman and ring man. He also volunteered his time to help mentor youth in the dairy industry, making this honor fitting.

“Raymond worked harder, made more calls, had more contacts and more bids than anyone going into a sale. No one was more honest than him and you could leave him a bid in strict confidence,” re-

members David Rama, auctioneer and owner of The Cattle Exchange.

This annual scholarship will support students who share Raymond’s passion for the dairy industry. To be eligible, applicants must be:

- A current U.S. citizen attending a U.S. university full-time
- A current Holstein Association USA member, adult or junior
- A freshman, sophomore, or junior pursuing an associate or bachelor’s degree
- Someone with dairy or agriculture-related experiences and career aspirations

The first Raymond LeBlanc Memorial Scholarship will be awarded at the 2025 National Holstein Convention. The scholarship application and additional details can be found on the Holstein Foundation’s website, www.holsteinfoundation.org, under “Scholarships.”

Applications should be submitted via email to Kelli Dunklee at kdunklee@holstein.com. The Holstein Foundation will confirm receipt of submissions, and applicants who do not receive confirmation should call 800-952-5200 ext. 4124.

About Raymond LeBlanc

Raymond LeBlanc took great pride in owning and operating Burton Hill Farm near Barton, Vermont, where he raised his family alongside his wife, Suzanne. In 1990, Raymond transitioned into a career as a well-known cattle salesman and ring man, becoming a trusted figure in the industry and assisting breeders worldwide.

Beyond his professional achievements, Raymond was passionate about mentoring young people in the industry. He was always willing to lend a helping hand and share his knowledge, making a lasting impact on the next generation of dairy enthusiasts.

Md. Dairy Shrine announces new awards

WEST FRIENDSHIP, Md. — During a meeting held here on February 22 at the Howard County Fairgrounds, it was announced that the Maryland Dairy Shrine will present two new awards at next year’s banquet, namely the Dairy of Distinction Award and the Young Dairy Leader Award.

The Dairy of Distinction Program was started in Maryland in 2010 by the Maryland Dairy Industry Association (MDIA); Maryland Dairy Shrine took over responsibility in 2024. Applications are due March 31.

The Young Dairy Leader Award will recognize an individual between the ages of 25-

40 who is actively engaged in and making significant contributions towards the promotion or improvement of the Maryland dairy industry. This can include but is not limited to dairy farmers, agriculture education teachers, extension and government officials, volunteers, and friends of the dairy industry ... any individual who is working hard to promote the future of dairy in the state of Maryland. Applications are due October 15th.

Applications for both of these recognition programs are available on the Maryland Dairy Shrine website.

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George Miller Memorial Scholarship applications are due April 1

BRATTLEBORO, Vt. — Applications for the \$1000 George Miller Memorial Scholarship are due April 1. The scholarship fund was created in honor of the late George Miller, who was an icon within the Holstein breed and dedicated to preparing youth for futures within the dairy industry.

Launched in 2023, the scholarship supports a student who serves as a leader within the dairy industry and their communities. Qualifying college students are invited to apply.

The scholarship fund is hosted by the Holstein Foundation, awarded by Holstein Association USA, and supported by Select Sires, who have been allocating funds for this

scholarship from semen sales of 7H015807 George Miller, a previous NxGEN® sire.

“It’s an honor to continue to preserve George Miller’s legacy through this scholarship,” says Diedra Harkenrider, director of development for the Holstein Foundation. “We encourage all eligible college students with a strong interest in dairy to apply.”

The George Miller Memorial Scholarship will be awarded at the 2025 National Holstein Convention in St. Louis, Missouri. Application information can be found on the Holstein Foundation’s Website, www.holsteinfoundation.org, under “Scholarships.”

Applicants must be a junior or adult mem-

ber of Holstein Association USA and currently enrolled in an associate or bachelor’s degree program. They must also be a U.S. citizen attending college full-time in the U.S. and pursuing an agricultural degree with dairy-related experiences and career interests.

About George Miller

George Miller made significant contributions to the dairy and A.I. industries throughout his lifetime. He exhibited an unmatched passion for good cows and the breeders he worked beside. George grew up helping on



George Miller

his uncle’s dairy farm, the birthplace of 7H058 Round Oak Rag Apple Elevation (EX-96-GM). George Miller was a pioneer for genetic advancement in the dairy industry and played a major role in the breeding decisions that produced Elevation.

George attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute, earning a degree in animal husbandry and a master’s degree in dairy science. He spent most of his career at Select Sires, joining the staff in 1973 where he worked as the cooperative’s marketing manager before retiring in 1991.

Grant application deadline is near

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the NASDA Foundation’s USDA Northeast Regional Food Business Center, has launched the first round of Business Builder sub-awards, designed to strengthen Pennsylvania and regional food systems by providing direct funding to small- and mid-sized farm and food businesses. Ten million dollars are available in this round, with awards ranging

from \$15,000 to \$100,000 to support businesses in scaling their operations, expanding markets and connecting segments of the regional food supply chain.

Grant applications will close on April 7. Awardees will be announced in July, and funded projects will begin in August.

For more details and to apply for the Business Builder subawards, visit the Northeast Regional Food Business Center website.

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Thursday, April 17, at Quietcove Holsteins, Wapakoneta, Ohio

Registration is now open for the National Judges Conference

BRATTLEBORO, Vt. — Registration is now open for the National Judges Conference, to be held on Thursday, April 17, at Quietcove Holsteins, Wapakoneta, Ohio. Participants must be at least 22 years of age by the day of the conference to attend.

The conference is designed to sharpen participants' judging skills, deepen their understanding of Holstein cattle evaluation, and promote consistency in the show ring. By providing expert guidance and hands-on experience, the conference de-

velops a trusted network of highly qualified judges that shows of all sizes can rely on when making judging selections.

The Judges Conference will include in-depth classroom sessions led by experienced judges. Attendees will also participate in hands-on learning activities, including placing classes of heifers and cows and giving a set of reasons. Participants will also listen to placing and reasons from both fellow attendees and officials.

Schedule for Thursday, April 17

- 7:30 – 8:00 a.m. – Registration
- 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. – Classroom Discussion
- 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. – Linear Discussion
- 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. – Lunch
- 12:30 – 4:30 p.m. – Class Evaluations

Registration and hotel details:

Register for the Judges Conference online at www.holsteinusa.com/shows/judges_conference.html using a credit card. The pre-registration fee is \$100. Pre-registration will close once all spots are filled or two weeks before the conference on Thursday, April 3, whichever comes first.

A block of hotel rooms has been reserved at the Holiday Inn Express and Suites for Judges Conference participants. Hotel rooms are available for the nights of April 16 and 17, and must be booked by April 3, while availability lasts. The easiest way to secure a reservation is by booking online.

People interested in attending the Judges Conference without receiving an official rating are welcome for the experience but will not be eligible for the Holstein Association USA Judges Lists. All attendees will need to register for the Judges Conference.

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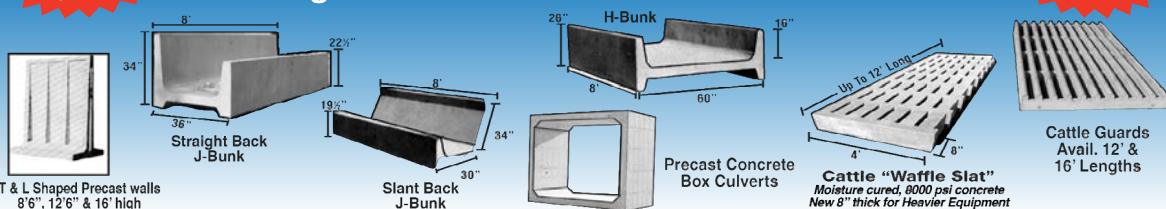
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