



The Center Spotlight

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Program Offers Grants to Offset Cost of Energy Audit

Editor's Note: This is part of a monthly series of timely articles and information from the Center for Dairy Excellence, a non-profit organization focused on strengthening Pennsylvania's dairy industry.

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Every day Gary Kline and his two partners — his father Ron and brother Glenn — watched the lights go on and off at their dairy, Y-Run Farms, in Troy, Bradford County, not really knowing how much it cost. That was until recently when they completed an energy audit on their farm.

“Who would have guessed that 58 percent of our energy costs was being used by the lights?” Gary Kline asked rhetorically. “That really surprised me.”

The Klins completed the energy audit last November after the local USDA National Resource Conservation Service office approached them. “The NRCS was offering cost share funding on the audit, and they wanted us to try doing one,” he said.

As a result of the energy audit, the Klins are replacing the low bay lights in their freestall barns with smaller new-style fluorescent bulbs.

“The audit identified an estimated \$8057 in annual energy cost savings if we install all of the lighting equipment they recommended,” Kline said. “It’s only a two and a half year payback on the lights. If we would have never completed the audit, we would not have realized that cost savings opportunity.”

Takes Time But Worth the Investment

The Klins worked with ENSave Inc., a company from Vermont to complete the audit, which included a phone interview, data collection including electric and natural gas expenses for the farm, and an on-farm visit to collect information about energy use.

“They broke our energy use down into five categories: milk cooling, milk harvesting, lighting, ventilation and general motors,” Kline explained. “The process did take time. They spent 5-6 hours walking through the facility.”

The results of the audit were worth the time investment, Kline said. “The report showed me how much electricity was being used by each category. We were already using variable speed milking pumps, plate coolers and pre-coolers, so they determined we were using the best energy efficient things in terms of milk harvesting.

“They didn’t recommend any changes to the milk cooling compressors either, because of low-running times and long paybacks,” he explained. “Mostly the recommendations centered on the lights in our freestalls, and the cost savings is significant.”

According to the audit, the recommended lighting changes could account for 20 percent of the Kline’s baseline energy costs. “What that means is we can save 20 percent on our annual energy cost just by changing our lighting fixtures.”

Kline would recommend more dairy farm families consider doing an energy audit. “We are all trying to be more energy efficient and be proactive in saving energy, especially with increasing electricity cost,” he said. “The audit uncovered an area where we can really save on our bottom line.”

Grant Covers 75 Percent of Audit Cost

USDA Rural Development, the Capital Resource Conservation and Development Council, the Center for Dairy Excellence and Penn State Cooperative Extension are partnering to offer the Pennsylvania Farm Energy Audit Program to commercial farms in rural areas of Pennsylvania.

Through the program, USDA will offset the cost by paying 75 percent of the energy audit, with the farmer responsible for the remaining 25 percent. The audits are carried out by Penn State agricultural energy specialists or specially trained private



Gary Kline, a partner at Y-Run Farm in Troy, Bradford County, said an energy audit takes time but can uncover significant savings.

consultants, depending on the farm’s location and availability of personnel.

Each energy audit will include an easy-to-understand report that lists recommended ways to improve energy efficiency on your farm, plus information on possible funding for installing energy efficient equipment.

In some cases, grant opportunities are available for the installation of more energy efficient equipment. For instance, the Klins applied for a grant from USDA Rural Development to cover 25 percent of the costs for the new lighting in their freestalls.

Pennsylvania Farm Energy Audit Program funds are on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information about the energy audit program, contact Alan Zepp at the Center for Dairy Excellence at 717-346-0849 or azepp@centerfordairyexcellence.org.



Pennsylvania Continues to Make Big Gains in Milk Quality

Pennsylvania Dairy Industry Performance Scorecard Summary	Jan. 2010 Report	Jan. 2011 Report	Change from last year	Target range
Dairy Farms	7,400 farms	7,340 farms	-0.4%	
Milk Cows	541,000 cows	543,000 cows	+0.37%	
Rolling 12-Mo. State Milk Production	10.536 bill. lbs.	10.740 bill. lbs.	+1.94%	10.8 bill. lbs.
Wholesale Milk Price	\$18.00/cwt.	\$18.00/cwt.	—	
PA Daily Feed Costs (cost of corn, soybean & hay at 65 lbs. milk)	\$6.09/cwt.	\$7.57/cwt.	+24.30%	
Milk Margin (IOFC @ 100# of Milk)	\$11.91/cwt.	\$10.23/cwt.	-14.11%	
Milk Production/Cow/Day	60 lbs.	61 lbs.	+0.65%	80 lbs.
% of Herds with 80+ lbs./cow/day	12%	13%	+8.56%	
Rolling 12-mo. Herd Production Average	20,888 lbs.	21,128 lbs.	+1.15%	25,000 lbs.
Average Somatic Cell Count	257,390	234,690	- 8.82%	200,000
% of Herds below 200,000 SCC	42%	48%	+ 13.4%	
Average Days In Milk	182 Days	184 Days	+ 1.21%	185 Days
Average Age to First Calving	25.5 months	25.5 months	—	21—24 mo.
Average Days to First Service	89 Days	89 Days	—	< 80 Days
Average Cull Rate (% left herd)	33.9%	35.2%	+ 3.72%	20—35%
Average Pregnancy Rate	18.65%	19.12%	+ 2.52%	> 20%
To view complete scorecard, visit:	www.centerfordairyexcellence.org			

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The number of dairy farms in Pennsylvania was reported in the February Pennsylvania Dairy Industry Performance Scorecard, down by nearly a half percent from a year ago. Cow numbers in the state increased 2,000 head from January 2010.

Milk margins declined in January, down 14 percent from a year ago and nearly 16 percent from December. Feed prices increased 24 percent from 2010 to \$7.57 per hundredweight, a six-percent increase from December.

Total milk production in Pennsylvania was up 1 percent to 891 million pounds in January, with the state herd’s rolling herd average up 1.15 percent to 21,128 pounds per cow.

Somatic cell counts are falling, down to 234,690, while the average pregnancy rate is approaching 20 percent. The average cull rate topped 35 percent in January, likely due to higher cull prices, while Days in Milk were up.

See Scorecard Online

The entire scorecard can be viewed online at the center’s web site — www.centerfordairyexcellence.org. Click on the “Scorecard” icon in the middle of the homepage.

Information about the center’s programs and resources can also be found online. Click on “Producer” to learn more about what is available.



The Center for Dairy Excellence is proud to recognize Pennfield Feed as a supporter through the “Ally for Advancement” program. For more information about Pennfield, call 1-800-732-0467 or visit www.pennfield.com.



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