



Upcoming calls address forage, production costs & animal care

By John Frey, Executive Director,
Center for Dairy Excellence

Editor's Note: This is a special feature from the Center for Dairy Excellence exclusively for the Farmshine newspaper.

About two years ago, we started hosting regular conference calls as part of our "Mastering the Dairy Business" or MDB learning series. The concept was simple — host a 60 or 90 minute call over the lunch hour so farm families can listen while eating lunch to gain valuable insight from industry experts on key management areas for their dairy operation.

The series has become a very effective program, with an average of 60 people listening in as various authorities from across the country share their perspectives on anything from milk quality to

reproductive management to budgeting and cash flow planning.

Our next three MDB calls build on each other to provide insight that dairy managers can use day in and day out on their dairies. With the corn harvest just around the corner or already happening in some parts of the state, our next MDB call will focus on forage management with Paul Craig sharing forage quality results from research he conducted on bunkers, upright silos and ag bags.

The next day, Rick Grant will share five things dairy farmers can do today to lower their cost of production, with a special emphasis on improving feed efficiency (through good forage management) and enhancing cow comfort.

To show how one farm focuses on cow comfort and animal care, in early October, Dr. Gordie Jones,

managing partner at Central Sands Dairy, will share the standard operating procedures they have in place at Central Sands to deliver optimal animal care for their herd.

Participation in the "Mastering the Dairy Business" calls is free. To register, call the Center for Dairy Excellence at 717-346-0849 and tell us your name, farm name, phone number, e-mail address and the date of the call you would like to participate in. Once registered, you will receive call-in information to participate in the call.



Aug. 24 Call – Forage Management



TUES., AUGUST 24
"Saving More of the Forage You Make," with Paul Craig, Penn State Regional Forage Agronomist, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

Since 2004, Penn State regional forage agronomist Paul Craig has conducted bunker silo management investigations on 195 bunkers on 85 Pennsylvania-based farms, investigating bunker silo density levels and feedout practices to minimize shrink.

At the foundation of any profitable dairy herd is a good forage management program. How the forage is produced, harvested and stored can greatly affect the quality of the forage. In fact, poor harvesting and storage methods can result in 30 percent shrinkage and potential silage spoilage.

During the call, Paul will discuss common silage harvest practices, silage pile feedout practices, and the density trial results from bunkers, ag bags and upright silos. He will also answer questions dealing with specific issues related to harvesting the 2010 crop.

Aug. 25 Call – Lowering Cost of Production



WED., AUGUST 25
"Lowering COP through Feed Efficiency & Cow Comfort," with Rick Grant, Miner Institute, 12 - 1:30 p.m.

Raised on a dairy farm near Potsdam, N.Y., Rick Grant has served as the president of the William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute since 2003.

A privately-funded educational research institute focused on dairy, equine and agronomy, the Miner Institute includes a talented team of researchers focused on forage quality, dairy cattle nutrition, animal behavior and management.

Rick has served as an editor for the Journal of Dairy Science and has held several offices within the American Dairy Science Association. He was recently the 2010 Pioneer Hi-Bred Forage Award recipient.

During the call, Rick will discuss lowering your cost of production through improving feed efficiency and cow comfort. Part of his discussion will include five things dairy farmers can do today to lower their cost of production long term.

Oct. 7 Call – Optimal Animal Care



THURS., OCTOBER 7
"Delivering Optimal Animal Care at Central Sands Dairy," with Dr. Gordon Jones, Central Sands Dairy in Nekoosa, Wis., 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

Dr. Gordon A. Jones is the managing partner at Central Sands Dairy, a 3,800-cow dairy in Nekoosa, Wis. He works for Quality Milk Sales as a production consulting specialist and nutritionist for several large dairies, including Fair Oaks Dairy in Indiana.

With 25 years practicing veterinary medicine, Dr. Jones has consulted with dairy producers and veterinarians throughout the world on herd performance, nutrition, environments and housing design to keep cows clean, dry and comfortable.

To assemble the herd at Central Sands, Dr. Jones purchased cattle from 19 states and promotes the "ABCs" of animal care — air, bunk (or nutrition) and comfort.

At Central Sands, standard operating procedures are critical, with optimal health a priority to get optimal production. Their success is in the results, with only five displaced abomasums last year from 4,150 calvings.