



The Center Spotlight

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Jones promotes the ABCs of optimal animal care

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. — For Dr. Gordon (or Gordie) Jones, it's all about the cow. "The cow is everything," Jones said. "Without her, a dairy doesn't exist. Everything we do must be about making her comfortable."

Jones is the managing partner at Central Sands Dairy, a 3,800 milking cow dairy in Nekoosa, Wis., where they promote the "ABCs" of animal care — air, bunker and comfort. "If you get the ventilation and temperature of the barn right, the right ration in the bunker, and the right free stall design, the rest will follow," he explained.

Along with his role at Central Sands, Jones works for Quality Milk Sales as a production consulting specialist and as a nutritionist for a consortium of large dairies, including Fair Oaks Dairy in Indiana.

Jones has consulted with dairy producers and veterinarians throughout the world on dairy herd performance, nutrition, cow environments and dairy housing. He places considerable emphasis on keeping cows clean, dry and comfortable and has influenced the development of several cow comfort features in new dairy barns through working with environmental consultants and contractors.

According to Jones, providing optimal animal care at Central Sands Dairy is all about consistency. "It's a lot of little jobs made easy," he said. "If things are kept simple, consistency happens for the cows and everything runs smoothly."

You can provide optimal animal care, too

To assemble the herd at Central Sands, Jones purchased cattle from 19 states and says optimal cow health is a given in having optimal milk production. The standard operating procedures Jones and his partners have put in place are critical to the success

of their business, and that is evident in their results.

The somatic cell count at Central Sands Dairy averages 134,000, and they have very few transition cow problems. With 4,150 calvings last year, Jones said they only had five displaced abomasums for the entire year.

Dairy producers who want to learn the secrets of Central Sands Dairy's animal care program can participate in a "Mastering the Dairy Business" conference call hosted by the Center for Dairy Excellence and led by Jones on Thursday, Oct. 7, from 12 NOON - 1:30 p.m.

With more and more milk handlers looking to do animal care audits on the farms where they procure milk, participants in the call can also hear how Jones and his management team have actively sought out three third-party auditors to ensure that they are delivering optimal animal care at Central Sands Dairy. Jones will share what he learned from that experience and how he has integrated it into their SOPs.

It's as easy as picking up your phone

The call with Jones is part of the fall series of Mastering the Dairy Business conference calls designed to provide dairy producers insight and expertise needed to manage a business in an ever-changing industry. Held during the noon lunch hour, the calls provide cutting edge information without requiring participants to leave their homes.

Participation in the call is free, but pre-registration is required.

To register for the call, contact the center at 717-346-0849 or at info@centerfordairyexcellence.org. Give your name, farm name, phone number and e-mail address, and you'll get a call-in number and passcode to connect to the call. Presentation materials will be mailed or e-mailed to you, and all you



Dr. Gordon Jones, managing partner at Central Sands Dairy

have to do is dial the numbers to participate.

Audio and presentation materials from the first two calls in the series are now available online. Both calls offered insight on forage management, feed efficiency and cow comfort.

Penn State Regional Agronomist Paul Craig led a discussion on "Saving More of the Forage You Make." During the call, he shared results he and Dr. Ken Griswold, also from Penn State, gathered in forage analysis studies on bunkers, ag bags and silos.

Rick Grant, president of Miner Agricultural Research Institute in New York, spoke about lowering cost of production through feed efficiency and cow comfort. "The way to make 30,000 pounds of milk is with comfortable cows fed high quality forage."

Click on "Listen to past Mastering the Dairy Business conference calls" to access the information.

Pennsylvania milk production up 1.7 percent in July

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The latest *USDA Milk Production* report showed Pennsylvania's milk production grew 1.7 percent in the past year, despite

the financial hardships all dairy farms faced.

The "Pennsylvania Dairy Industry Performance Scorecard," published monthly by the center, shows

daily milk production per cow has been up one to two pounds over a year ago in every month of 2010. This increase has been driven by improved management on the farm.

Somatic cell counts continue to improve on Pennsylvania's dairy farms, with the average SCC score down nearly eight percent in July. Days in milk is also decreasing, and the average pregnancy rate jumped 1.34 percent.

Resources available online

Dairy farm families wanting to improve their production, enhance profitability or troubleshoot a bottleneck area can find help at the Center for Dairy Excellence. A few resources available include:

- The On-Farm Dairy Resource Team program, which provides funding and support for farm families to establish on-farm advisory teams.
- Risk management education resources, including an advisor who is willing to come to your farm to walk through your risk management options.
- Dairy Decisions Consultants, who can help you address difficult decisions on farm viability and the options for the future of your farm.

To view the complete scorecard and learn more about resources from the center, call 717-346-0849 or go to:

www.centerfordairyexcellence.org

Pennsylvania Dairy Industry Performance Scorecard Summary	August 2009 Report	August 2010 Report	Change from last year	Target range
Milk Cows	545,000 cows	541,000 cows	-0.7%	
Rolling 12-Mo. State Milk Production	10.518 bill. lbs.	10.613 bill. lbs.	+0.9%	10.8 bill. lbs.
Wholesale Milk Price	\$13.00/cwt.	\$17.60/cwt.	+38.7%	
PA Daily Feed Costs (cost of corn, soybean & hay at 65 lbs. milk)	\$6.18/cwt.	\$6.16/cwt.	-0.33%	
Milk Margin (IOFC @ 100# of Milk)	\$6.82/cwt.	\$11.64/cwt.	+70.6%	
Milk Production/Cow/Day	61 lbs.	62 lbs.	+1.9%	80 lbs.
% of Herds with 80+ lbs./cow/day	12%	9%	-21.1%	
Rolling 12-mo. Herd Production Average	20,931 lbs.	20,915 lbs.	-0.08%	25,000 lbs.
Average Somatic Cell Count	310,300	285,650	-7.9%	200,000
% of Herds below 200,000 SCC	25%	34%	+21.4%	
Average Days In Milk	189 Days	187 Days	-1.0%	185 Days
Average Age to First Calving	25.5 months	25.5 months	—	21—24 mo.
Average Days to First Service	89 Days	90 Days	0.5%	< 80 Days
Average Cull Rate (% left herd)	33.3%	34.6%	3.5%	20—35%
Average Pregnancy Rate	17.87%	18.11%	+1.34%	> 20%
To view complete scorecard, visit:	www.centerfordairyexcellence.org			