



The Center Spotlight

www.centerfordairyexcellence.org ♦ Phone: 717-346-0849

Young Producers Find Value in Educational Venues

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 — Despite living across the state from each other, Micah Meyers and Candace Dotterer have a lot in common. They are both younger generation dairy farmers involved in family operations and responsible for managing the dairy herd on their farms.

Meyers and Dotterer also recognize the value that networking and education can bring to their ability to succeed as a dairy manager.

Meyers works with his father, Micah Sr., and brother, Craig, on Meyersland Dairy in Mercersburg, Franklin Co. He and his wife Emily recently completed the AgBiz Masters Program, a two-year blended learning program offered by AgChoice Farm Credit and its partners, including the Center for Dairy Excellence.

Dotterer is the dairy manager on the Paul Dotterer & Sons Dairy Farm, a 740-cow dairy in Mill Hall, Clinton Co. She was a 2009 participant in the Middle Managers Conference, a day-long dairy educational event hosted by the Penn State Extension Dairy Team every other year in November.

Both Dotterer and Meyers say the opportunity to network with others and develop new skills was tremendously beneficial. "It gives you a chance to learn what others are doing in areas where you can improve and to bring their ideas back to your own dairy," said Dotterer.

Insight on Building a Better Business Structure

The AgBiz Masters Program that the Meyers completed consisted of five online modules and two day-long group discussion sessions each year. The two group sessions involved hands-on case studies to help participants walk through business improvement processes taught during the course.

"We wanted to better grasp the financial end of our business, and we wanted to have the ability to run a financially-sound business," Meyers said.

"The group discussions really allowed us to learn from each other and those who shared their professional expertise with us. We learned so much as we went through the program."

Meyers said anyone who wants to build a better business structure could benefit from participating in AgBiz Masters. "What really stuck out for us is why it is important to have a business plan in place so everyone knows in what direction you are heading."

AgBiz also helped Meyers better understand a balance sheet and see a loan application from the loan officer's perspective. "We aren't afraid of the balance sheet any more because we understand how it works."

Advice on Building SOPs for the Dairy

Dotterer is involved in the planning committee for the upcoming Middle Managers Conference, being held on Nov. 8 at the Best Western Premier Central Hotel and Conference Center in Harrisburg.

"I attended the conference in 2009 because I wanted to see what other middle managers were doing and where I could improve myself as a manager," she said.

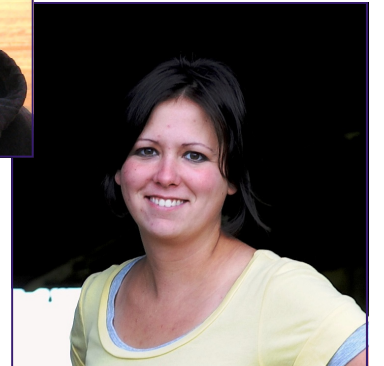
"I liked hearing from a dairy manager involved in a family farm and one involved in a non-family corporation. I learned more about the importance of incorporating standard operating procedures into our team's routine."

Dotterer said she learned to slow down and talk to her team members more. "Now we talk about how it is going to be done, and they give me ideas. Sometimes their ideas are better than my own."

Dotterer says the conference is a "chance to see



Micah Meyers, Greencastle, just completed the AgBiz Masters program, while Candace Dotterer, Mill Hall, was a 2009 participant in the Middle Managers Conference.



what others are doing and learn from them. It is ideal for anyone wanting to improve their management skills."

Scholarships Available

The Center for Dairy Excellence is offering scholarships to discount registration costs for dairy producers who are interested in attending the Middle Managers Conference and to those who want to enroll in the AgBiz Masters program.

The first 20 producers who register for the Middle Managers Conference can receive a \$50 scholarship from the center. The conference registration fee is \$97 per person. For more information about the conference, visit www.das.psu.edu/dairy-alliance or call 1-888-373-7232.

The first 25 dairy producers who enroll in Year 1 of the AgBiz Masters program can receive a \$75 scholarship from the center. The full registration cost is \$225, and the deadline to register is Oct. 31. More information can be found at www.agbizmasters.com.

For more information about scholarships from the center, call 717-346-0849.

Milk Production Erodes, Despite All-Time High Milk Price

Pennsylvania Dairy Industry Performance Scorecard Summary	July 2010 Report	July 2011 Report	Change from last year	Target range
Milk Cows	541,000 cows	540,000 cows	- 0.18%	
Rolling 12-Mo. State Milk Production	10.616 bill. lbs.	10.670 bill. lbs.	+ 0.51%	10.8 bill. lbs.
Wholesale Milk Price	\$18.10/cwt.	\$23.80/cwt.	+ 31.49%	
PA Daily Feed Costs (cost of corn, soybean & hay at 65 lbs. milk)	\$5.99/cwt.	\$9.44/cwt.	+ 57.60%	
Milk Margin (IOFC @ 100# of Milk)	\$12.11/cwt.	\$14.36/cwt.	+ 18.58%	
Milk Production/Cow/Day	62.30 lbs.	60.42 lbs.	- 3.01%	80 lbs.
% of Herds with 80+ lbs./cow/day	9%	8%	- 12.69%	
Rolling 12-mo. Herd Production Average	20,915 lbs.	21,106 lbs.	+ 0.91%	25,000 lbs.
Average Somatic Cell Count	285,650	276,340	- 3.26%	200,000
% of Herds below 200,000 SCC	34%	36%	+ 5.06%	
Average Days In Milk	187 Days	187 Days	—	185 Days
Average Age to First Calving	25.5 months	25.5 months	—	21—24 mo.
Average Days to First Service	90 Days	89 Days	- 0.45%	< 80 Days
Average Cull Rate (% left herd)	34.7%	35.9%	+ 3.40%	20—35%
Average Pregnancy Rate	18.11%	18.19%	+ 0.44%	> 20%
To view complete scorecard, visit:	www.centerfordairyexcellence.org			

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania's milk production is down 3 percent from a year ago to 880 million pounds, a 0.2 percent increase from July. Cow numbers are down 1,000 head, and the daily milk production per cow is down 2 pounds or 3 percent to 60.42 pounds.

Milk prices reached a three-year high at \$23.80 per hundredweight, up 31 percent from a year ago and nearly double what they were in July 2009. The higher milk price was offset by a 57-percent jump in the feed price, which approached \$9.50 for every 100 pounds of milk produced this month.

Somatic cell counts were down 3 percent from a year ago, but have inched up since January when they reached a low of 234,000. The number of herds producing more than 80 pounds of milk a day was down 17 percent. Cull rates were up significantly from a year ago, potentially driven by higher market prices for cull cows.

Help to Reach Your Benchmarks

If your farm is looking for help in reaching your benchmarks, the "On-Farm Dairy Resource Team" and "Dairy Decisions Consultant" program may be helpful. To learn more, call the center at 717-346-0849.

To view the complete scorecard, go to www.centerfordairyexcellence.org. Click on the "Scorecard" icon in the middle of the page. For more information about resources available from the Center for Dairy Excellence, call 717-346-0849.



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.