



The Center Spotlight

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Lebanon Co. Dairy Couple Believe in Open Doors

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. — Tom and Shirley Krall's first experience with telling their story came when their son Joel's kindergarten teacher approached them about hosting a field trip.

"The school always tried to organize the field trip through someone in the class, and they asked us if we would be willing to do it since we had a farm," Shirley said. "We absolutely enjoyed it, and with our next son Travis coming into the school, we decided to do it every year."

The Kralls, who dairy farm with their family in Lebanon, Pa., participated in the Farm City Exchange through the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce in the 1990s. "That was one of our earliest experiences hosting larger community groups," Shirley said.

Over the years, the Kralls have hosted foreign exchange groups of farmers from other countries, farm safety meetings through the PA Young Farmers Association, and barn parties for local churches and other organizations. "Once we hosted a group of dairy case managers from Wegman's," she said.

The Kralls' interest in telling their story has evolved into them being part of several farmer outreach efforts, including the Dairy Farmers Speakers Bureau, organized by the Center for Dairy Excellence, Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association, and Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, and funded through the Dairy Checkoff program.

Providing Transparency in Our Food System

The Kralls got involved in the Dairy Farmers Speakers Bureau when it began about three years ago. Last December Shirley took over as the scheduler for the program, working with farmers and community organizations to schedule presentations throughout the year.

"As dairy farmers, we love what we do, but since the general population is so many generations removed from the farm, there is a gap between the people making the food and the people eating it," she said.

Programs like the speakers bureau help close that gap, she added. "People are interested in the food they put in their bodies, how that food was produced, and how that animal was cared for. They have a lot of questions about it because they are so far removed from the farm. We provide transparency to those questions."

Currently, dairy farmers who participate in the speakers bureau represent 18 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Collectively they spoke to more than 65 civic organizations in 2010.

"The program is successful only because of the list of farmers we have who have that desire to share their story," Shirley said. "We have gotten all positive feedback from the many organizations we've spoken to."

More Farmers are Needed

Additional dairy farmers are invited to participate in an expanded program in 2011, with a goal of providing coverage in more counties across Pennsylvania and in more states in the Mid-Atlantic region. On average, a speakers bureau participant speaks at three to four meetings a year.

"I provide the scheduling support for the speakers and help them access presentation resources and other help along the way," Shirley said. "Their role is to attend the meeting and give a 10 to 15 minute presentation about their dairy farm and their role in the local community."

Dairy farmers and dairy advocates interested in participating in the Dairy Farmers Speakers Bureau can register to attend a workshop on Thursday, Dec.



Tom and Shirley Krall, Lebanon, Pa., open their doors to close the gap between those who produce the food and those who eat it.

16, at Celebration Hall, 2280 Commercial Blvd., State College, Centre Co. The meeting will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with lunch included.

New participants are encouraged to participate in a "Speakers Bureau 101" introduction session from 9 - 11 a.m. to learn the basics of the program and what resources are available to reach out to the community. A "Round-Up" session, held from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., will include a celebration of this year's success, a look at what's new for 2011, and a review of resources available to help speakers bureau participants share their story.

Those interested in participating in the Dairy Farmers Speakers Bureau program and attending the Dec. 16 workshop may contact Shirley Krall at 717-821-0259, or dairyfarmerscheduler@gmail.com.

Pennsylvania Milk Production Up 2.9 Percent in October

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The latest *USDA Milk Production* report showed Pennsylvania's milk production grew 2.9 percent in the past year, with cow

numbers up 2,000 head from last year, but down 1,000 head from September to October.

The "Pennsylvania Dairy Industry Performance

Scorecard" shows milk margins up 11.8 percent from September, with the wholesale milk price at \$20.58 per hundredweight. Feed costs are up 14.3 percent from a year ago, up 14 cents from September.

Somatic cell counts averaged 271,760 in October, down a half percent from last year. Days in milk were up slightly, while age to first calving and days to first service were steady with a year ago. Pregnancy rates fell 16 percent to 14.36 percent.

Help for Your Dairy

For those dairy farm families who want help in troubleshooting bottleneck areas or focusing on a key herd management area, the Center for Dairy Excellence offers the Target Profit Team Program. Producers can receive funding and program support to organize a target team to focus on that key area.

Farms wanting to look at the entire dairy operation and enhancing overall performance and profitability can use a Dairy Profit Team. The Dairy Decisions Consultant Program is also available for farms that want to sit down one-on-one with a consultant to evaluate their dairy farm business and options for future viability.

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	November 2009 Report	November 2010 Report	Change from last year	Target range
Milk Cows	539,000 cows	541,000 cows	+0.4%	
Rolling 12-Mo. State Milk Production	10.532 bill. lbs.	10.685 bill. lbs.	+1.45%	10.8 bill. lbs.
Wholesale Milk Price	\$15.80/cwt.	\$20.85/cwt.	+29.8%	
PA Daily Feed Costs (cost of corn, soybean & hay at 65 lbs. milk)	\$5.82/cwt.	\$6.65/cwt.	+14.3%	
Milk Margin (IOFC @ 100# of Milk)	\$9.98/cwt.	\$13.85/cwt.	+38.8%	
Milk Production/Cow/Day	59 lbs.	61 lbs.	+2.6%	80 lbs.
% of Herds with 80+ lbs./cow/day	7%	8%	+9.9%	
Rolling 12-mo. Herd Production Average	20,955 lbs.	20,958 lbs.	+0.02%	25,000 lbs.
Average Somatic Cell Count	273,320	271,760	-0.57%	200,000
% of Herds below 200,000 SCC	37%	37%	—	
Average Days In Milk	187 Days	188 Days	+0.64%	185 Days
Average Age to First Calving	25.4 months	25.4 months	—	21—24 mo.
Average Days to First Service	89 Days	89 Days	—	< 80 Days
Average Cull Rate (% left herd)	33.8%	34.7%	+2.72%	20—35%
Average Pregnancy Rate	17.21%	14.36%	-16.6%	> 20%
To view complete scorecard, visit:	www.centerfordairyexcellence.org			