

ISU Extension Dairy Team Newsletters Inform Dairy Industry

A.S. Leaflet R2704

Jennifer Bentley; Larry Tranel, ISU Extension & Outreach dairy field specialists

There are many ways dairy producers and industry professionals can receive information. Sometimes, the information they are looking for is so overwhelming to find due to “Google”. How do they know it’s credible and how do they sort through all the sites for the most up to date research based information? And what about those who don’t use the internet or have limited availability to resources?

“Dairy News and Views”

Since 2000, the ISU Extension Dairy Team has provided a newsletter called “DAIRY News and Views from the ISU Extension Dairy Team”, made available three times a year. This publication is mailed to every dairy producer in the state, which is currently about 1750 dairy cow and 250 dairy goat producers. It is also posted on the Dairy Team’s webpage with all past newsletters as a reference source. County Extension webpages may also choose to post it on their local webpages as well as send it out to local agri-businesses that work with dairy producers such as nutritionists, ag lenders, veterinarians. It is also electronically sent to industry and extension colleagues and contacts.

The newsletter always contains 10-pages; the latest in ISU Research, Journal of Dairy Science Research updates, Field Specialists Factsheets, Producer Profiles, and a listing of upcoming dates/locations of ISU Extension meetings pertinent to dairy producers. The topics can also be relevant to the season the newsletter is being sent. For example, the recent December newsletter contained relevant timely topics in areas of winter teat dips to maintain teat health and integrity, winter calf-care recommendations, or options in building design or prevention of snow load. These are topics producers can be thinking about and implementing prior to the season to maintain or increase profitability. It also allows producers to contact field specialists for further information. They may read an article on facility design and reach out to a field specialist looking for more information specifically tailored to their farm or operation.

Dair-“E” newsletter

The way producers and professionals are receiving information has also changed with the new wave of social media. The ISU Dairy Team most recently adapted a monthly electronic newsletter that reaches not only those in

the state of Iowa, but across other states that are interested in dairy.

An email is sent each month with 3 or 4 topics. Each topic starts with a brief paragraph of what the information is about and then the subscriber can click on a link to read more. The electronic newsletter has created a “Herd in the Barn” section that focuses on topics in dairy herd management. Kristen Schulte has provided a Dairy Outlook Series to keep Iowa informed on current milk prices, commodity pricing, and futures. Melissa O Rourke has provided an Employee Management Series; each month entails a different aspect of management from job descriptions, interviews, to employee handbooks.

The electronic newsletter also allows the TEAM to provide timely updates of upcoming events. For example, this past summer heat stress was a major issue in the dairy industry. The Dairy Team conducted a webinar-based training on heat abatement strategies and the latest in heat stress research 2 months prior to the summer heat and had excellent reference materials on the dairy team website. We were able to advertise the webinar through the electronic newsletter, as well as send out a special e-newsletter linked to our materials during the heat stress and reached many producers and industry across the Midwest and nation. To date, the electronic newsletter has reached 600 subscribers from Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois.



IOWA STATE
UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

www.extension.iastate.edu/DairyTeam

E-Dairy News and Views

From the ISU Extension Dairy TEAM



Chris Mondak



Larry Tranel



Jenn Bentley

Robotic Milking Becoming a Reality!

The past year has really set the stage for a dramatic change in how we milk cows. There are plans for over 28 robotic milkers to be installed on 13 different dairy farms in the near future, some already in.

This technology is surely worth looking at but due to high investment costs, variable milk production responses and possible cash flow issues, robots will not fit every farm. Plus, the technology is changing rapidly along with our knowledge of what's happening to dairies who have incorporated them. To learn more, join us for dairy days this year for an update of robotic milking technology

Dairy Days coming to NE and SE Iowa

Please check dates, times and locations for dairy days inside this newsletter. The agenda is again on issues pretty pertinent to dairy farm profitability.

Chris Mondak Becomes Part of ISU Administration

For those in NW Iowa, Chris Mondak has accepted a position with ISU Extension Ag and Natural Resources programs. We are grateful to Chris for her great programming efforts and wish her well with her new position. Plans are to fill the NW Dairy Field Specialist position soon so we look forward to that becoming a reality. If you know of someone who you think would fit that position well, please check out the position at: https://www.iastatejobs.com/applicants/jsp/shared/position/JobDetails_css.jsp?postingId=383871

Vacant Position (currently recruiting)

ISU Extension Dairy Field Specialist, NW Iowa

Jenn Bentley and Larry Tranel

ISU Extension Dairy Field Specialists, NE and SE Iowa

Edited by: Larry Tranel

ISU Extension Dairy Team
"Bringing Profits to Life"

Should You Raise ALL your Heifers?

We are in a timeframe when many springing dairy heifers are being sold for 10%-30% below what it is probably costing to raise them. This begs the question: if you don't need them, should you be raising them?

Granted there are great reasons to raise your own heifers due to genetic and biosecurity issues even if you might be able to buy them cheaper. But, many producers are simply in the habit of always raising all their heifers and then either selling them as springing heifers or culling out other cows in the herd and improving the herd (maybe not a bad idea with present cull cow prices, either).

But, producers may want to consider selling the newborn heifers if they aren't needed in the herd to save some costs, especially feed. With the initial value of the calf at \$200-\$250, for example, and then adding the labor, feed and other costs, the total cost in many heifers is approaching \$2,000 per head (or \$1,750 without the initial cost of the heifer). So, it may be worth considering.

The last article in this newsletter takes the risk to establish "thumbrule" costs on raising heifers as they are constantly being asked for. Check it out!

What Does it Cost to Produce Milk?

As the end of the year closes in and tax preparation begins, please let us know if you would like to run a Dairy TRANS financial analysis on your farm for your 2011 data. The program is strictly confidential and will allow you to do a complete cost of production with breakdowns per cow and per cwt. to allow you to benchmark your operation with good goals. In addition, efficiencies per cow, per labor unit and per acre will also be calculated. There is no cost on your part to do the financial analysis.

Simply call us to schedule a Dairy TRANS appointment. We can almost guarantee you will be glad you did.

THE ISU EXTENSION DAIRY TEAM

it starts with
EXTENSION
EXTENSION PROGRAMS BENEFIT ALL IOWANS