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Young Dairy Producer of Kentucky Recognized at Banquet

An inaugural award was presented at our Kentucky Dairy Awards Banquet this year in Bowling Green. The Young Dairy Producer of Kentucky award, sponsored by South Central Bank, recognized an individual between the ages of 18-35 that is making an impact on the Kentucky dairy community on the farm or in the industry:

We had 7 nominations for this award, all of which recognized outstanding young people in a variety of roles in the industry. An independent committee reviewed nominations to select the awardee and were very impressed by all nominated individuals.

After much consideration, the committee chose Benjamin Compton of Adair County as the 2024 Young Dairy Producer of Kentucky. Ben was nominated for this award by Larry Roy, Nick Roy, and Pam and Tony Compton. The nominations commented on his dedication to his role on his family's dairy, as well as his innovation and leadership in transitioning the farm to a robotic milking system and taking the operation into the future. The committee commented on the depth of responses by the nominators and felt that Ben really encompassed the spirit of a young dairy producer. Congratulations, Ben, on this outstanding achievement.

We want to thank those who took the time to recognize a young producer with a nomination, as well as those nominators for the Milk Quality and Milk Hauler Awards. We had several outstanding nominations in all of these categories, making it a very competitive selection process and we'd like to encourage those who are not awarded this year to try again next year.



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Kentucky Milk Matters produced by Carey Brown

President's Corner

Freeman Brundige



Spring has sprung! 70-degree days are happening some and my old joints and bones are proud to see them. Farmers are utilizing every dry day to prepare for spring planting and harvesting of crops. Working with mother nature is always good for improving your attitude and your outlook. Hopefully Kentucky dairy farmers can be successful in getting our crops planted and harvested in a timely manner, probably the most important key to our farmers profitability.

KDDC has had an eventful Winter. Milk marketing is still at the forefront with several different approaches to help bring more money back to the producers. But regrettably they are all

very slow in their progress. American Farm Bureau with support from organizations throughout the country, KDDC being one of these, has asked for emergency action to bring back the "higher of" class 1 formula. Maybe this can get some price relief to us in a quicker scenario.

Our Dairy Partners Meeting was recently completed with much complimentary success. We had great speakers and exhibitors with exciting products and services for our evaluation. We are always open to thoughts and suggestions that would make this event even more successful and beneficial to all our dairy community. Congratulations to all the award winners. That could be you next year!

Again, hearing from you with your thoughts and comments is always a pleasure for me.

KDDC BOARD MEETING DATES

May 16th

Taylor Co Ext. Office

July 18th

Barren Co. Ext. Office

September 19th

Adair Co. Ext. Office

November 21st

Nelson Co. Ext. Office

December 12th

Taylor Co Ext. Office

(KDDC Director Only Planning Meeting)

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Commissioner's Corner

Jonathan Shell



Agriculture is a vital industry with 69,425 farms dotting Kentucky's landscape and more than 12.4 million of the state's 25 million acres dedicated to some form of farming. These numbers are just some of the statistics that came out of the recently released 2022 Census of Agriculture.

It's no surprise agriculture is still very much a part of what makes Kentucky so special and dairy farmers play a key role. The numbers released by the Census solidifies Kentucky's agricultural hold. We know agriculture is a large part of our history, but these numbers show it is also moving our future forward.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts the Census of Agriculture every five years. The latest census data, which was collected in 2022, was released in February.

The data released for Kentucky shows a large growth in agricultural production at \$8 billion, up nearly 40 percent from 2017 figures. When looking specifically at the dairy industry milk sales were nearly \$232,868,000.

Kentucky's Top 10 counties in milk sales include:

- Barren – \$38,066,000
- Adair – \$22,448,000
- Logan – \$20,619,000
- Lincoln – \$13,940,000
- Christian – \$12,043,000
- Todd – \$11,677,000
- Metcalfe – \$10,596,000
- Russell – \$10,313,000
- Monroe – \$9,843,000
- Taylor – \$9,320,000

During 2022, the year data was collected for the Census, farmers were still dealing with the issues created by the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic, including supply chain issues and financial struggles. Farmers in Western Kentucky were also dealing with the aftermath of two tornadoes, while farmers in Eastern Kentucky were cleaning up from historic floods. These factors combined to create economic hardships for those across the state, including our agriculture community. Despite these setbacks, the strength and essential nature of agriculture shone brightly providing a stability we can all rely on.

These Census numbers are just one small example of how the resiliency of our farmers help form and shape the backbone of Kentucky's landscape.

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Executive Director Comments

H H Barlow



Looking out my window at the beautiful ryegrass, the Jerseys on the green pasture with the pond behind them, I'm reminded of how truly blessed I am to experience the coming of spring and see God's handiwork. I know dairy farming is a very tough business and there are days we wonder, is it worth all the effort and why am I doing this. I believe it's because of the love of the land, the cows and experiencing the miracles of God all around us like the birth of a new calf and watching our new corn crop coming out of the ground. I'm very thankful that I've had the privilege to live and work on a dairy farm my entire life. Overall, it has been very rewarding.

Enough reminiscing, we have had a beautiful February and March so far and I'm anticipating harvesting spring crops and planting corn. I believe we are in for better times financially in the dairy business. All markets and crop futures point to lower feed costs in the year ahead. Milk prices currently are too low but marketplace factors point to higher prices ahead. I don't believe the markets have responded to the shortage of dairy heifer replacements and the extremely strong cull cow prices. It appears dairy farm expansion is at a standstill. All of these factors point toward a much tighter milk supply which will equate into higher prices. Class III futures are \$2 higher and Class IV futures are \$1 higher in late summer and fall over their present value.

Worldwide production is stagnant or declining which as well should open the door for more exports. I pray I'm right with my predictions of better times because we don't need another 2023.

KDDC had a great Ky. Dairy Partners conference in late February. There were 228 attendees with 63 farms represented. There were 38 vendors who set up in our trade show. We changed the format by moving our awards program to Wednesday lunch from our usual Tuesday night banquet. We had more award winners and a larger crowd in attendance with the new schedule. KDDC consultants prepared a great video that highlighted our production winners. Every year since I have been Executive Director, the number of herds with high production continues to increase. There were 9 herds recognized with over 30,000 lb. herd averages and an additional 10 herds over 28,000 averages. The old wives tale that you couldn't get high production in Ky. has been officially debunked by our state's dairy farmers.

One totally new award this year was the "Young Dairy Producer of

Kentucky". This award came from nominations and then an independent committee made the selection. Congratulations to Benjamin Compton from Adair County on winning this nice \$1,000 prize. We thank South Central Bank for sponsoring this great cash award. A list of the all the awards is in this newsletter.

KDDC was successful in receiving approval of an amendment to our MILK 4.0 program from the Agricultural Development Board. This amendment is titled Management Plus and we believe it ties the different areas of our program together. This is by showing the value of genomic testing for the identification of the cows that should be bred to high indexing dairy sires for replacement heifers, which then allows for breeding your lower performance cows to specific beef sires that will produce very high value crossbred cows.

I'm hearing reports of three day old crossbred calves bringing between \$500 and \$800. This is significant money which can be a real profit center for dairymen using our beef on dairy program. These high priced calves correspond with the highest cull cow prices in my career. These beef prices are another reason why I am bullish on 2024 profit potential for our dairymen,

The Farm Bill and Federal Order Reform are both suffering the consequences of politics in Washington D.C. We dairymen have now lost considerably over a billion dollars in the milk price simply because they haven't changed the milk pricing formula back to the "higher-of" calculation. Slow and total inaction by USDA and congress is a travesty for our nation's dairymen.

KDDC consultants have been busy with the Southeast Dairy Business Initiative grants. We have had 33 farms in Kentucky apply for the infrastructure and technology matching grants that are available. The grants are competitive so some applications might not get funded. As I have stated before, KDDC is proud to have our own consultant, Jennifer Hickerson, to be one of three facilitators that covers the whole Southeast.

I know spring is an extremely busy time of the year for all farmers. Your KDDC team is available at all times. If we can be of any service in any situation, please contact one of us.

Enjoy the warm days, the trees and flowers blooming and thank God for the blessings of family and our vocation. I believe a tall glass of cold milk is in order to celebrate spring.

P.S. Any time you see people purchasing dairy products, stop to thank them for supporting dairy farmers.



FARM FAMILY FEATURE

Fields Family Farms

by H.H. Barlow

Fields Family Farm is a beautiful farm nestled in the wooded area of Hart County. Driving into the farm, your first view is a gorgeous farm lake surrounded by well kept barns on both sides of the road.

The Fields Family have been farming in this area since the early 1900's. The brothers are the 5th generation in a row to farm. At present, the farm is being operated by Brandon and Brian with leadership and help from their father Doug. Brandon concentrates his efforts on the dairy and Brian manages the crops.

Brandon, wife Wendy, sons Carson, Dawson, Jonah with daughters Julianne and Charlotte are responsible for the dairy work. Brian, wife Missy and their children, Rachel, Clay, and Sarah also help when needed.

The Fields are milking 120 cows twice a day, averaging 76 lbs/day. They just installed a 4000 gallon tank and may increase the herd to 150 cows. Brandon milks mornings and teenagers Carson, Julianne, Rachel, Clay and Dawson do the night milking on a rotational basis. The families also do all the feeding and everything necessary to maintain the herd plus raising all the heifers. They also have registered young bulls for sale. Using all family labor is a great reason for their success.

Brandon proudly showed me his high quality cows. He has 7 cows classified excellent with one being 2 E. The cows are appraised by the National Holstein Association. In the last few years, he has gotten involved with Dr. Jeffrey Bewley in partnering together on some high indexing cows and embryos. Their desire is to breed and raise some elite high performance animals.

Brandon was recently notified by the National Holstein Association that his BAA Classification score ranked 17th across the Southeast and was No. 1 for herds who scored over 50 cows. I saw 2 cows who gave 148lbs. for the DHIA tester last week.

Brandon believes cow comfort plus high forage diets are essential for high production. His 72 cow pack barn has a full bank of fans down one side and he recently raised the roof on his 70 cow freestall barn and holding pen to aid in cow comfort.

Nutritionally, Brandon uses a lot of spring forage along with corn silage and a complete grain mix. His favorite spring forage is oats followed by triticale. He chops some and wet wraps rolls of what is not put in silage.

Brandon's cows are very impressive. He's getting a lot of milk with functional type. Several of the cows have had multiple lactations which is a tribute to his management and husbandry skills.

Before I left, Carson drove up and I asked him if he was interested in making a career of dairy farming? He said yes and his brothers liked cows as well. I believe the future of Fields Family Farms is very bright with the next generation so interested.

Brian did comment on how he loved his vocation because it was both enjoyable and rewarding. He also stated he liked working with KDDC and our programs especially the Genomic one. He also complimented consultant Tori Embry.

The family is an example of what can be accomplished when everyone works together toward a common goal. I enjoyed my visit very much and really appreciated the fact the children were so involved with a great attitude. It is a tribute to their parents.

If you want to see beautiful cows in a beautiful setting call Brandon up for a visit.



2023 KDDC District and Proficiency Awards

Top Herds - 3.5% Fat Corrected RHA Milk by District

		County	RHA Milk	Fat	Protein
District 1 Winner	ELI S ESH	Christian	28056	1029	780
2nd	JAMES LEID DAIRY	Christian	27980	1027	821
3rd	LEVI E STOLTZFUS	Caldwell	26851	1044	662
District 2 Winner	ROBEY FARMS	Logan	32976	1178	1000
2nd	H&S DAIRY	Butler	30826	1140	892
3rd	LONGVIEW FARMS	Grayson	28893	1057	889
District 3 Winner	RICKY NUCKOLS	Barren	27228	1014	787
2nd	DON AND JEREMY KINSLOW	Barren	27211	960	825
3rd	BONNIE & DAVID SAMMONS	Hart	25543	930	768
District 4 Winner	BILL CRIST	Metcalfe	29801	1077	851
2nd	JIM SIDEBOTTOM	Green	29485	1115	826
3rd	FOWLER BRANSTETTER	Metcalfe	17936	647	554
District 5 Winner	JAMES A COWHERD & SON	Taylor	31948	1162	942
2nd	H & H DAIRY	Adair	31875	1082	950
3rd	DAVID E. CORBIN	Taylor	28697	1059	862
District 6 Winner	MERVIN WEBER	Pulaski	31508	1167	930
2nd	JOSHUA WILLIAMS	Monroe	29193	1049	865
3rd	PHILEMON MARTIN	Pulaski	28192	1040	831
District 7 Winner	KENNETH AND MATTHEW HORST	Lincoln	33006	1220	976
2nd	DARREL L. HORST	Lincoln	32122	1184	960
3rd	ETHAN HORST	Lincoln	31776	1130	958
District 8 Winner	EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY	Madison	25173	909	772
2nd	WAYNE MARTIN	Fleming	24464	906	708
District 9 Winner	ELMER U FISHER	Christian	24660	935	654
2nd	JOSEPH F STOLTZFUS	Christian	24418	880	709
3rd	WALNUT RIDGE DAIRY- EPHRAIM STOLTZFUS	Christian	23791	861	707
District 10 Winner	FAIRDALE FARMS-RICHARD SPARROW	Owen	35611	1348	1119
2nd	KEIGHTLEY - CORE	Mercer	19505	790	603
District 11 Winner	BILLY RINEY, JR	Washington	29418	1059	849
2nd	TIMMY & KIM JONES	Marion	22443	809	684
3rd	DEEANN BAUERLE	Marion	10695	414	320
District 12 Winner	KANAGY DAIRY	Todd	29802	965	998
2nd	DAVID WEAVER	Christian	28714	1039	844
3rd	ENOS YODER	Todd	27286	980	819

The Gary Lane Production Award

1st Place	FAIRDALE FARMS-RICHARD SPARROW	OWEN	35611	1348	1119
2nd Place	KENNETH AND MATTHEW HORST	LINCOLN	33006	1220	976
3rd Place	ROBEY FARMS	LOGAN	32976	1178	1000

Dairy Proficiency Award Winner

H & H DAIRY	ADAIR	31875	1082	950
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Kentucky Quality Dairy Producer

The Kentucky Quality Dairy Producer Award is an award to recognize the producer who best exemplifies quality milk production in Kentucky. The contest is open to all Kentucky dairy producers. Applications are based on a year's criteria of SCC and Bacteria Count (SPC). This award is a nomination-based award.

The 2023 Kentucky Quality Dairy Producer Award goes to Adam and Angela Ping of Eubank, Kentucky. Adam was nominated for this award by his DFA field representative David Moore. David calls Adam's farm "a true family farm in which Adam and family do all the work on the farm themselves." If you had to use one word to describe the Ping's operation that word could be CONSISTENCY! The Ping family consistently produces quality milk year after year. They take pride in producing the highest quality milk possible. If they have any quality count that doesn't meet their standard, they address it immediately. They are very passionate about producing high quality milk year after year. Moore attributes their dedication to consistency as a main reason to producing some of the highest quality milk that DFA has marketed for the last several years.

Adam and his wife Angela, along with daughters Haley and Brooklyn, operate Ping Dairy in Pulaski County. Adam always wanted to be dairy farmer and started his dairy in 2001, after spending several years helping his uncle milk cows and working on dairies throughout high school. The family currently milks around 65 Holsteins. Adam focuses on genetic improvement by AI breeding his cows and raising his own replacement heifers. He improved facilities in 2012 to a sand-bedded freestall barn. Along with managing the herd, he grows corn, soybeans, and hay. Angela milks and raises calves on the farm, which Haley and Brooklyn also help with, and works off the farm as an elementary education teacher.

Ping Dairy represents a family's dedication to producing a high-quality product and KDDC takes pleasure in recognizing their exceptional achievement with the Quality Dairy Producer Award for the 6th consecutive year.

Kentucky Quality Milk Hauler Award

Where would our dairy producers be without their milk hauler? The hauler is an integral part of the dairy industry whose job is not always the easiest as they are tasked with working in all types of elements to deliver the product we make as producers to be able to be provided to consumers.

The purpose of the Kentucky Quality Milk Hauler Award is to recognize the Kentucky milk hauler who best signifies quality hauling procedures and who is recognized as an exceptional representative of Kentucky's dairy industry. This award is a nomination-based award. This year we had 7 nominations.

The 2023 Kentucky Quality Milk Hauler is James Horton of Hardyville, KY. Mr. Horton has been hauling milk for 27 years. He hauls for Givens and Houchens. Jamie was nominated by Brandon Fields of Upton.

Jamie is always positive, never impatient, and helpful to all his farmers. He treats everyone the same whether they are a bigger stop or small one. He is super reliable, punctual and takes pride in the necessary procedures related to milk weights and cleaning. Jamie tries extremely hard to get milk hauled during poor winter road conditions, calls ahead and is always willing to work schedule around when the weather doesn't cooperate. He keeps a close eye on cooling equipment and tank washer. On multiple occasions he has noticed something wrong elsewhere on the farm and called to let me know if cows were out or automatic pipeline washer had malfunctioned. He genuinely cares about his job and his producers.

He deserves recognition for his long, dedicated career in hauling milk and we congratulate Jamie on being the 2023 Kentucky Quality Milk Hauler.





- 1, District 5, Cowherd Dairy
- 2. District 8, EKU
- 3. Distring 10, First Place, Fairdale Farms
- 4. District 10, Second Place, Keightley - Core
- 5. District 11, First Place, Riney Dairy
- 6. District 11, Second Place, Tim & Kim Jones Dairy
- 7. Gary Lane Award, Fairdale Farms



Contact Brilee Tucker at (859) 516-1619 or btucker@kydairy.org to schedule Kentucky Kate



Doctor Lew Strickland demo at the Kentucky Dairy Conference

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May 2024

Class 1 Advanced Price

(@3.5%BF)

\$22.33

KDDC Introduces Kentucky Certified Dairy x Beef A Value-Added Program for Crossbred Calves

On January 25th, KDDC hosted a Beef on Dairy meeting in Campbellsville to hear directly from industry experts about the beef on dairy (BOD) segment from the dairy operation to the end product and to update producers on KDDC's new Kentucky Certified Dairy x Beef value-added program. This is part of KDDC's Beef on Dairy Initiative which aims to provide support for the BOD industry to create a reliable end product that helps dairy operations find a sustainable line of diversified income. KDDC has been cost sharing high-quality beef sires for dairy producers since 2022 and the Kentucky Certified Dairy x Beef program is the next step of this initiative.

KDDC's Kentucky Certified Dairy x Beef program will offer ear tags to dairy producers that use sires approved through our cost share. Producers using these tags will be certified for best management practices related to beef on dairy, including creating a strong breeding program, selecting high quality sires, and maintaining superior early life care. KDDC staff will be working to promote and educate buyers about the value of these tags to make them recognizable and reliable throughout the state.

While KDDC was eager to introduce our ear tag program at this meeting, we were also able to promote and offer updates on the BOD industry generally. Our first speaker, Dr. Dale Woerner from Texas Tech University spoke to us from a meat science background about the quality and sustainability of BOD end products. While straight dairy animals have significant strengths in the beef industry, including superior flavorful taste and tenderness, crossbred animals create products that rival the yield and expectations from conventional beef animals. Other positives from BOD animals include improved sustainability measures, which is notable for today's consumers. A significant challenge introduced by Woerner and discussed throughout the day was the prevalence of liver abscesses and associated costs. Overcoming this challenge should be a focus for producers to improve and sustain BOD's reputation through proper health management and nutrition from day 1 on the dairy.

A panel of representatives from AI companies, including David McGlothlin from ABS, Brady Core from Select Sires, Clay Cull from Semex, and Luke Fuerniss from ST Genetics, discussed their beef on dairy programs

and advancements. All of these programs include sires backed by research to produce calves that will perform well at the feeding stage and rival conventional beef products. There was quite a bit of discussion around fertility of beef semen on dairy cows, with panelists discussing ways that they are making a competitive product that will perform well for dairy producers. The solutions these companies offered to help producers find the best approach to beef on dairy on their operation ranged from ear tag programs to help market calves, to straight beef embryos for cows that may not contribute well to a beef on dairy calf.

Jacob Smoker of Smoker Farms in Indiana discussed his real-life experiences with growing beef on dairy calves with the end-goal of producing as many prime carcasses as he can from the 2,000 head he finishes each year. Smoker supported the need for good early-life care and proper nutrition from the first stage of life to contribute to success at the end. Being able to finish these animals out successfully is necessary to maintain a good reputation and a solid future for the entire segment of the industry.

Our meeting wrapped up with a discussion with Jim Akers at Bluegrass Stockyards. He gave us an overview of what to expect from the beef markets. With record-setting low beef herd numbers, Akers predicted strong markets that are hungry to see beef on dairy calves entering and supporting the demand. Producers may expect to see high quality beef on dairy calves selling similarly to straight beef calves, with cuts on the selling prices increasing as frame size and characteristics get more similar to straight dairy animals. As a standard when selling at a public market, large groups also bring more than individual animals. Akers assessed a pen of BOD calves and pointed out the characteristics important to buyers and tips on providing what buyers are looking for to maximize profits to the dairy.

The experts we heard from provided key updates and stimulated exciting conversations between attendees, which included representation from 16 dairy farms- over 4,000 dairy cows- and more than 10 companies and organizations. KDDC plans to continue these conversations at our next beef on dairy meeting in the summer, with tentative topics focused on nutrition and health. Make sure you're signed up for updates from KDDC at www.kydairy.org to receive timely notices on our BOD program.



KDDC's **KENTUCKY CERTIFIED DAIRY X BEEF**

There's lots of ways to make a beef on dairy calf, but only one way to know you're receiving a high performance, Kentucky-born crossbred calf. Buy with confidence when selecting Kentucky Certified Dairy x Beef calves.

ABOUT US

The Kentucky Dairy Development Council is a producer organization that supports the sustainability and advancement of Kentucky's dairy industry.

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REGISTER NOW

2024 Southeast Value-Added Dairy Conference & Carolina Meat Conference

REGISTRATION OPEN NOW!!

The 2024 SEVAD annual conference will be held in Boone, North Carolina on July 30th and 31st with an optional farm tour on July 29th. This year the Southeast Dairy Business Innovation initiative will collaborate with the Carolina Meat Conference to provide hands on educational and networking opportunities, innovative marketing and packaging techniques, how to get access to retail space, food safety and hazard audits, networking opportunities, hands-on trainings, and technical and business assistance!

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For more information visit www.carolinameatconference.com



SEVAD SCHOLARSHIP

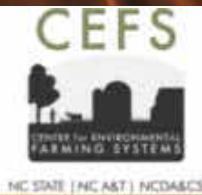
KENTUCKY DAIRY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL'S MANAGEMENT PLUS PROGRAM

2024 Sees the Start of a New Program Through KDDC

The Kentucky Dairy Development Council works to provide resources and programming that supports Kentucky dairy producers and encourages growth of the industry. We offer programming focused on improvements around reproduction management, milk quality, genetic merit, and diversifying income with beef on dairy calves. To round out our offerings, we are introducing the Management Plus Program, focused on taking management to the next level with a focus on producing high-quality heifer replacements.

Replacement numbers are at a 20-year low and KDDC seeks to help producers maintain heifer numbers and improve genetic merit by offering the Management Plus Program, which will primarily cost share sexed semen and herd bulls and offer education around optimal usage of this technology.

Requirements for this program are similar to other KDDC programming. Permitted dairy producers that utilize DHI testing or an equivalent program will be eligible. There will be an educational component to complete to qualify and sire requirements are inclusive of varying operation's goals. This program is retroactive and will cover all qualifying 2024 purchases. Keep an eye on KDDC outlets for more information on this program and work with your local consultant to sign up.



2024 SOUTHEAST VALUE-ADDED DAIRY CONFERENCE & CAROLINA MEAT CONFERENCE

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Local meat and cheese tastings
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Donna Amaral-Phillips

Retired UK Dairy Specialist

How Do You Define the Role of Your Nutritional Consultant?

In my career, I have had the opportunity to participate in numerous youth educational events. I greatly enjoy seeing these future agricultural leaders and industry advocates wanting to learn about the science behind how we manage and care for animals, not just dairy cattle. Understanding the application of these concepts has always been a passion of mine, the reason I went on to Graduate School and have the job I do today. At these youth educational events, I often times have a nutrition-related station of which the content changes from year to year. One year, I decided to ask each of the groups what they thought a nutritionist's role should be on a dairy. Not to my surprise, their response centered on balancing rations alone. This was the response from more than one group of youth on this day. Yes, nutritionists are actively involved in providing balanced rations, but their role can and should extend way beyond just crunching numbers to get a recipe to feed various groups of heifers or cows. Today, the role of nutritionists on farms is very different from those 20 years, even as shortly as 5 years, ago. So, how would I define a nutritionist's role and skills needed on today's dairy farms?

Skill Needed: Ability to balance rations reflecting current science and knowledge

To start with, today's rations are balanced for an optimum performance while containing feed-related costs to achieve maximum profit, and not for least cost per se. Both potential production and reproductive performance along with feed cost drive farm profitability and need to be considered together when balancing rations. Rations also need to provide the best chances for maintaining an animal's health and well-being, as well as being environmentally friendly.

To bring all of these aspects together in one package or ration, the nutritionist needs a sound understanding of how cows convert nutrients found in feeds into milk and meat. Science in this area

has accelerated greatly in recent years. Researchers are looking more at the mechanisms or the how's behind why certain products, i.e. additives, or nutrients work and the impacts they have within the rumen or the cow herself. To understand and apply findings from this generation of research, one needs a science foundation to build upon (often in the form of advanced physiology, nutrition, and biochemistry classes) and they need to participate in continuing education opportunities to understand and apply these advances. This understanding is needed to not only balance rations for today's industry and cows, but as importantly, to explain the merits of changes in suggested ration formulations, especially when they carry higher initial costs. Recent examples can include the use of ruminal-protected methionine in pre-fresh cows or the impact of certain fat supplements (specifically, certain fatty acids) on milk yield and components. Probably the best examples are the upcoming nutrition refinements associated with protein (specifically amino acids- the building blocks for protein) for lactating cows and in the requirements for calves and heifers.

Skill Needed: Nutritionists are management consultants, not just "Ration Balancers"

Sound nutrition programs are a result of the effective integration and application of not only nutritionally-related concepts, but also those associated with other "cow" management, agronomic, and economic aspects important to a dairy's profitability and survival. Sometimes I am amazed by an assumption by some, including trained nutritionists, that nutritionists can only "do nutrition". We possess the skills and training to understand the science behind concepts regardless of the discipline and have a unique skill set to apply and integrate various disciplines on farm. This understanding and ability to integrate various management aspects is important to achieve the expected results from properly designed feeding programs. Often times, nutritionists are the first person to detect an issue while it is developing and before it becomes a total disaster. This developing issue may not be directly related to the feeding program, but other aspects, such as reproduction or mastitis prevention. For example, nutritionists understand the important components associated with a reproductive program as breeding issues can easily derail any best designed and implemented feeding program. Cow comfort, be it stall maintenance, stocking density, or heat abatement, impact feed intake and rumination times. Nutritionists can be a sounding board as you consider changes in your operation's cropping or management system or changes needed from an environmental standpoint. Additional aspects associated with environmental management are coming quickly and will need to be considered in feeding and overall management programs.

Skill Needed: Ability to maintain and expand a professional relationship

Many different combinations of feedstuffs and management practices can be incorporated into profitable feeding and management programs. A two-way dialog between a dairy manager and nutritionist sets the stage for this process and can be the difference between designing a profitable feeding program and overall operation and one that is not. Your nutritionist needs to understand your goals for your operation and on a routine basis discuss these goals with you, not just at the time of “getting your business”. On a routine basis, at least quarterly, they need to be able to explain to you why changes or certain components are part or should be part of your management program. Ration balancing is an on-going process, not one that is completed once yearly after fall crops are harvested. Tweaking a management program should occur in small steps, but is something which must be continuously explored. Dairy managers, in turn, need to understand why changes are needed, how to implement these changes, and continually ask questions of their nutritionist. A true dialog between all parties is important and do not forget to include others directly impacted by these discussions, such as family members or on-farm feed people.

Probably, one of the hardest realizations is the fact that this is a professional, business relationship first and foremost, not based on a friendship or feeling that either party “owes” the other something. You may develop a friendship and share common interests outside of the dairy operation. But, this is separate from the business component of your relationship. Sometimes your nutritionist, or any consultant for that matter, needs to be honest with you and tell you something that you do not want to hear. Yes, this conversation may “hurt” your feelings, get you upset, and get you to contemplate “firing” this consultant. However, later you might come to realize that they had your best interest at heart and really were doing you a favor. The key part here is they want to help you understand how to correct the detected issue and work through steps needed to correct the identified issue. Basically, they want to help you with a solution.

Skill Needed: What skill set do they offer- those of a nutritionist or a feed person?

The skill set of a “feed person” is very different than those of a nutritionist, in my opinion. A feed person serves an important role in the feeding program, but one very different than a nutritionist. A feed person, very often, is sent to collect forage samples as needed, makes “social calls” to make sure managers are happy with services provided, recruits new clients for the business, and collects payments, when needed, to name just a few of this person’s

possible responsibilities. Often times, the feed person does not have background to understand how cows use various nutrients and does not have the responsibility of balancing rations.

In contrast, a nutritionist has some form of formal training in nutrition and physiology, continually participates in professional training opportunities for scientific updates, and is able to apply these concepts in the development of feeding and management programs on farm. Today’s ration balancing programs require one to have a sound understanding of what occurs in a cow’s rumen and in the cow herself. These computer programs calculate the amount and concentration of over 50 nutritionally-related nutrients and fractions, much different than older generation programs calculating just protein and energy concentrations. Nutritionists also should on a routine basis review management records to detect potential issues early, walk through the cows to “listen to the cows themselves”, and interact with the feed person, other employees and dairy manager as well to learn what is occurring on farm.

One question I often get is, do you know a nutritionist that is not selling something that I can hire? One first needs to realize that all nutritionists form personal opinions of what products, ingredients, and nutrient specs work best on farms, irrespective of whom pays their salary. This is just human nature. The difference comes in how they form these opinions and how they modified or update them over time. Are their opinions regarding a product or ingredient based on their company’s or personal profit margin or have they seen research that supports that said product/ingredient can deliver the intended benefit? I think you would agree that both sides of this coin exist in nutritionists serving the US Dairy Industry. The key here is to ask questions that allow one to determine if the selected products/ingredients are the best match for providing an optimum feeding program for your cows and if this person/nutritionist possesses the skills to help you, the dairy manager, better manage your cows’ profitability. This answer will not be the same for everyone. Just make sure what skills you are wanting, those associated with a feed person or a nutritionist, and use these people accordingly.

Bottom Line:

Nutritionists are a professional whom plays a very important role in helping you implement and manage sound feeding and management programs. They are trained to understand how cows make milk and how to make the best of this biological system for your operation’s potential profitability. They offer a skill set that goes beyond those associated just with balancing rations. As dairy managers, your job is to make the best use of their skill set in your dairy business.

2024 Georgia Dairy Conference

Once again dairy producers from Georgia and across the Southeast gathered in Savannah January 15-17 for the annual Georgia Dairy Conference. This conference has gained the reputation as one of the premier dairy meetings in the country. This year's lineup of speakers solidified that reputation.

The two-and-a-half-day conference packed in twenty top speakers from across the United States and Canada, with a variety of topics that touched a cross section of the dairy industry. Besides the information gained from the conference speakers, this meeting creates a forum for producers and industry from across the southeast to meet in an informal setting to discuss common dairy issues.

Taking advantage of this year's conference were a group of KDDC directors, staff and producers. If you are a dairy producer that has never attended this conference, put it on your to do list for next year, you won't be sorry



UPDATING YOUR DIVISION OF WATER PERMIT FOR YOUR FARM? PLANNING AN EXPANSION OF YOUR OPERATION?

Update your Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) and take advantage of financial assistance programs for livestock manure management, crop nutrient management, and water quality BMPs.

Contact - Ben Koostra - Professional Engineer and NRCS Technical Service Provider - Bowling Green - 859-559-4662



Milk. A part of everything that's good.

Book Your Mobile Dairy Classroom Visit

Southland Dairy Farmers continue to travel all across the Commonwealth of Kentucky educating and promoting dairy in a daily diet. Your local instructor, Haley Fisher, travels with her milking cow to schools and events all over the state and is currently accepting requests to attend in your area.

The Mobile Dairy Classroom features an educational milking parlor with a live cow, which is used to highlight the value of dairy and healthy nutrition by demonstrating the basic milking process and promoting dairy and milk from farm to table. A typical week for Fisher is traveling with her cow to schools and events across the entire state to teach and promote on the importance of dairy farming and nutrition in the wholesome milk and dairy products they produce.

The Mobile Dairy Classroom is open to all schools and events for free, courtesy of supporting Kentucky dairy producers. Haley is continuously booking and you can visit www.southlanddairyfarmers.com to request your free visit. Tell your local teachers and event coordinators about this great opportunity to educate about dairy and dairy nutrition. Slots fill up fast and it is never too soon to book for the upcoming summer or fall seasons!

You will also want to visit Southland Dairy Farmers at the 2024 Kentucky State Fair, August 15 - 25. Come see educational demonstrations and stop by and get a free dairy treat in South Wing A of the Discovery Farm Exhibit Center!

KY MILK MATTERS ADVERTISING RATES

Ad Size	BW/C (1x)	BW/C (3x)	BW/C (6x)
Full Page	\$400/\$450	\$380/\$428	\$360/\$405
1/2 Page	\$300/\$350	\$285/\$333	\$270/\$315
1/4 Page	\$200/\$250	\$190/\$238	\$180/\$225
Business Card	\$100/\$125	\$95/\$119	\$90/\$113

AD SIZE SPECIFICATIONS

Full page (bleed).....	8.75 x 11.25
Full page (no bleed).....	7.5 x 10
Half page (horizontal).....	7.5 x 4.875
Half page (vertical).....	3.625 x 4.875
Business Card.....	3.625 x 2.3

Milk's Got Game! The Dairy Alliance Promotes Milk With Basketball Player Reed Sheppard

Accomplished shooting guard Reed Sheppard from the University of Kentucky chose real milk for game day. Reed partnered with The Dairy Alliance for the Milk's Got Game campaign this February and March.

Powered by real dairy milk, Reed Sheppard brought it all to the court for Milk's Got Game. Reed comes from a well-known basketball family, with parents Jeff and Stacey Reed Sheppard making their mark on the University of Kentucky's basketball court more than 20 years ago.

The love of basketball isn't the only legacy Reed wants to carry on with milk, though. The London, Kentucky, native is staying

close to his hometown roots. Through this campaign, Reed recognized the importance of local farmers and championed their contributions to Kentucky's communities.

"Teaming up with The Dairy Alliance holds special significance for me. Growing up in Kentucky, I've always valued the close-knit relationship with those who contribute to our community's agricultural legacy," said Sheppard leading up to the campaign launch. "I look forward to leading this campaign that highlights the value of supporting our Kentucky dairy farmers and enjoying the nutritious benefits of dairy milk."

Kentucky consumers were encouraged to

learn how milk's got game by visiting The Dairy Alliance landing page that highlights milk's role in sports nutrition. As part of the campaign, billboards featuring Reed and milk were present throughout Kentucky. You can spot these billboards in Bowling Green, Campbellsville, Glasgow, Lexington, and London. Additional marketing targeting Kentucky consumers included media releases, social posts, and radio ads.

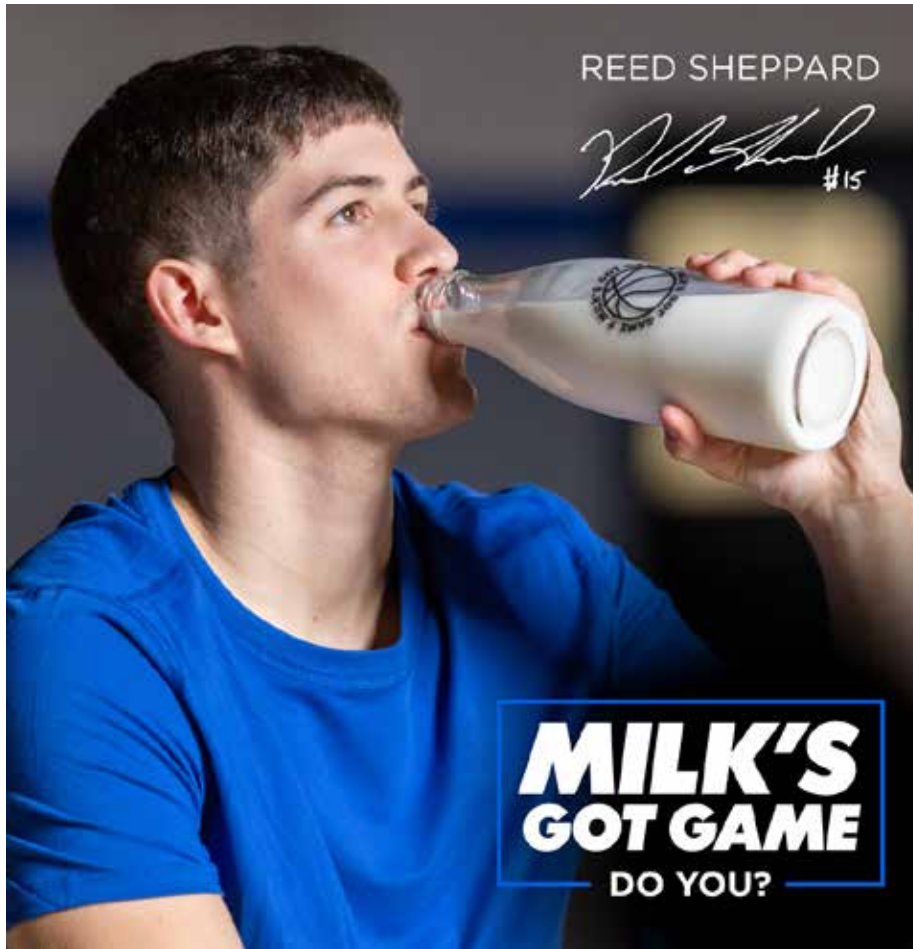
The Dairy Alliance's Milk's Got Game is part of a series of sports marketing campaigns featuring college athletes from across the Southeast region. Each campaign targets consumers in states specific to the players.

The previous campaign, the Milk Bowl, featured football players Joe Milton of Tennessee and Ladd McConkey of Georgia. The two competed on and off the field by promoting their favorite benefits of drinking dairy milk—Joe for milk's role in strengthening and Ladd for milk's role in hydrating. Television, radio, and social media spots garnered 106,100,000 impressions and over 621,000 engagements during the Milk Bowl. The targeted ads reached 3.4M unique users online, 1.9M in Georgia and 1.5M in Tennessee.

These campaigns featuring college athletes encourage fans to choose dairy milk and other dairy foods. Successful athletes highlight how milk can help consumers meet areas of focus important to them, like consuming more protein and helping improve recovery after exercise.

Fans reacted positively and shared messages of support and excitement online. Through campaigns like Milk's Got Game, dairy is positioned as an important part of your favorite athletes' sports nutrition that fans can easily choose for their benefit, too.

To learn more about milk's vital role in sports nutrition, check out MilksGotGame.com.



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Calendar of Events

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| APRIL 20 | 4-H Dare to Dairy, ECU Meadowbrook Farm |
| APRIL 23 | Kentucky Farm Bureau Clays for a Cause |
| MAY 16 | KDDC Board Meeting, Taylor County Extension |
| MAY 29 | 4-H State Dairy Judging, ECU Meadowbrook Farm |
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