

# ISU Extension View

News from ISU to NE Iowa Dairy and Beef Producers

Volume 8

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Summer, 2001



I am very excited to announce that the Upper Midwest Grazing Conference will be held in Dubuque on July 17, 18 and 19<sup>th</sup> at the Dubuque Midway Best Western Hotel, 3100 Dodge St. (Hwy 20).

This summer grazing conference is sponsored by Extension in Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin in cooperation with many other organizations, agencies and entities. It features speakers from the Upper Midwest and New Zealand and will include farm tours, trade show and networking opportunities. Many of the topics will focus on improving pasture quality and quantity, milking facilities, genetics, raising dairy, beef and sheep, baleage and winter feeding systems. Dr. John Lawrence will discuss beef marketing options come fall. A complete agenda is enclosed with the newsletter. Please join us if you can.

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## The Dairy Options Pilot Program (DOPP)

Round III of the DOPP program is designed to give producers an opportunity to learn how futures and options work and, at the same time, give the producers first-hand experience in buying put options contracts to insure a minimum price for their milk.

The required 4 hour training session will provide a good overview of how to apply put options to a dairy operation and the rules of the program. Producers are responsible for 20% of the premium on each put option. The USDA pays the rest along with a \$30 broker fee per transaction.

Iowa Counties participating include, Allamakee, Bremer, Buchanan, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Howard, Jackson, Sioux and Winneshiek. If you operate a dairy in these counties and have not received information contact RMA at 651-290-3304, Ext. 221. DOPP Training meetings run 10am-3 pm and are scheduled as follows:

Dyersville	June 18 <sup>th</sup>	Elkader	June 19 <sup>th</sup>
Calmar	June 20 <sup>th</sup>	New Hampton	June 21 <sup>st</sup>
Boyden (Sioux County)	June 26 <sup>th</sup>		

## Inside This Issue:

- **When Too Much Help is No Longer a Good Thing—Assisting Cows Calving**
- **Youth Asset Building Takes a Look at Support**
  - **NE Iowa Dairy Survey Results**
- **Motivating Your Employees to Achieve Their Potential**
  - **Alfalfa Potato Leafhopper Fact Sheet**
- **Iowa Feedlot Plan Raising Awareness of Regulations**
  - **\$15 Buys Dad's Time?**
  - **Dairy/Beef and Forages Calendar**

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### ***\$15 Buys Dad's Time?***

"Dad, I was wondering how much you make an hour for working all the time?" Dad replies, "\$15, why who wants to know?" The daughter thinks for a bit and says, "well I was wondering if I could borrow \$9?" "\$9," he snaps back. "Do you realize how hard I work everyday to earn enough for us to have all the luxuries we have? It's bedtime, please go to your room as I'm in the middle of something right now."

The daughter begins to cry but obediently goes to her room for the night and tries to sob herself to sleep. Dad finishes his tasks at hand and begins to realize he may have been a bit harsh and that he maybe could spare \$9 as he spends \$9 on lots of things—even just for fun. He gets to her room, says he's sorry and asks, "what did you need the \$9 for honey?" "Dad," she sobbed, "I've saved \$6 and was hoping someday soon I could buy an hour of your time—just us."

### ***NE Iowa Dairy/Beef and Forages Calendar***

#### **June**

- 13 Dairy Foundation Meeting, Dairy Center, Calmar, 11:30am
- 13 Pasture Walk, Lonnie Kuehl, 30718 232<sup>nd</sup> St. Garnavillo, 1pm
- 14 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl, Starmont
- 18 Dairy Options Pilot Program, Dyersville, 10am-3pm
- 18 Environmental Regulation Information Meeting, Peosta, 7-9pm
- 19 Dairy Options Pilot Program, Elkader, 10am-3pm
- 19 Environmental Regulation Information Meeting, Calmar, 1:30-3:30
- 19 Environmental Regulation Information Meeting, Washington, 7-9pm
- 20 Dairy Options Pilot Program, Calmar, 10am-3pm
- 20 Pasture Walk, Joel Kurtenbach, 11601 20<sup>th</sup> Ave, Wyoming, 1pm
- 21 Dairy Options Pilot Program, New Hampton, 10am-3pm
- 22 Dairy Options Pilot Program, Boyden (Sioux Cty), 10 am-3pm
- 23 Pasture Walk, Greg Koether, Hartwick Rd, McGregor, 10am
- 26 NE Iowa Research Farm, Nashua, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Field Day
- 27-30 Holstein Association National Meeting, Cedar Rapids

#### **July**

- 11 Pasture Walk, Kurt Wedell, 13551 Douglas Ave, Riceville, 1pm
- 11-12 4-State Dairy Nutrition Seminar, LaCrosse, 515-294-2116
- 17-19 UPPER MIDWEST Grazing Conference, Midway Hotel, 3100 Dodge St., Dubuque. For Information: 319-583-6496.
- 19 Pasture Walk, Dale and Dee Gaul, 16227 N Cascade Rd, 1pm

## **When Too Much Help is No Longer a Good Thing: Assisting Cows During Calving**

Over 50% of calf deaths occur within the first 24 hours after birth. Dystocia accounts for almost 70% of these deaths. As producers and researchers have become aware of the susceptibility of the newborn calf, there has been a push towards the use of calving ease sires and recommendations to increase supervision of cows around the time of calving.

The underlying basis is calving ease sires should produce smaller calves that should be delivered with ease, and that by increasing supervision of cows, assistance can be provided early. However, even with use of calving ease sires, the odds of unassisted deliveries have been decreasing while the odds of a birth requiring assistance using extreme force have also been increasing.

With the odds of an unassisted birth decreasing each year, it becomes clear that simply the selection of sires for calving is not diminishing the problem of dystocia. It is possible that increased calving management awareness may account for a large part of this increase.

Research shows the frequency of dystocia increased as the frequency of herd supervision increased suggesting that inappropriate assistance may play a role in the incidence of dystocia. In a study where assistance was given whether it was needed or not, calving difficulty scores increased 2-fold, implying that untimely assistance hinders the calving process.

How can simply helping the calf along actually hinder the birth process and lead to health problems? As much as it may seem like speeding along the birth

process and helping the calf out would seem like a good thing, there are actually many consequences.

First, to assist the calf, most producers rupture the “water bag”. This fluid filled sac is mother nature’s little air bag designed to help protect the calf from the full force of the cow’s contractions and to speed up the dilation of the cervix. By rupturing this sac, the calf’s head and shoulders must apply pressure to the cervix for dilation. This not only lengthens the time required for cervical dilation, but also increases the force directly on the calf.

Second, by pulling the calf from the vagina, the umbilical cord is ruptured. In a natural (unassisted) delivery, the calf is expelled to its last rib and then both the calf and cow rest. Blood continues to flow through the umbilical cord during this time, even though the calf is now breathing on it’s own. Research in our lab has shown that premature rupture of the umbilical cord causes calf lung function to be impaired. The ability of these calves to saturate their blood with oxygen was greatly diminished, not only after birth, but also for the entire eight-week study. Even slight assistance (calving ease score of 2 on a 5 point scale) doubles the risk of the calf dying.

Assistance at calving also leads to health problems in the cow. Slight assistance (calving ease score of 2 on a 5 point scale) has been shown to cause an increase in the incidence of retained placenta and metritis, as well as cause significant losses in milk production and a full week increase in days open. So, how and when should one assist during delivery? More research is needed, but here a few general recommendations that can be stated:

- Check calf position early during the labor process. This allows for calf repositioning at a time when contractions are not as forceful.
- Do not break the water bag. Calf position and viability can all be checked without breaking the bag.
- Be patient! It is not uncommon for Holstein cows to be in labor for an hour after the first water bag ruptures. The longest part of the delivery process occurs while the cervix is dilating – thus  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the time should be spent delivering the calf’s head and shoulders.
- Assist by pulling only while the cow is having a contraction, and hold steady pressure in-between contractions (no more than one person should provide assistance).
- Deliver the calf until the last rib is expelled. This allows the umbilical cord to remain attached, while the calf starts breathing. Either movements from the calf or the cow will break the cord (usually within 2-3 minutes, but can be as long as 20 min.).

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*Adapted from Carolyn Hammer, Graduate Student, Iowa State University  
Dr. Howard Tyler, Associate Professor, Iowa State University  
and reprinted from the Swiss Valley Dairyman*

## ***Iowa Feedlot Plan Raising Awareness of Regulation Differences***

As Iowa's open feedlot operators move closer to regulatory compliance, still more questions arise, especially concerning the differences between proposed and current rules changes.

These proposals are in a comment period until July 30. At the conclusion of the comment period, all comments submitted to EPA will be reviewed, the proposed rules re-evaluated and the final rules issued. A Guide for Preparing Comments Regarding EPA's Proposed Rules for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), developed by Iowa State University's College of Agriculture and ISU Extension, was written to assist producers and others who wish to submit comments to EPA.

"The Guide was developed to help producers prepare their own comments on the proposed CAFO rules," said John Lawrence, director of the Iowa Beef Center and a project collaborator. "The identified topics highlight major provisions of the proposed rules. But, this document was designed only as a guide, not to provide specific comments on the proposal."

The Guide is posted on the IMMAG Web site at <http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/immag/NewsFR.html>. Links to this document also are available on the Iowa Beef Center <http://www.iowabeefcenter.org> and the Iowa Pork Industry Center <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ipic/>.

"We think it is very important to emphasize that the current regulations are quite different from the changes EPA recently proposed," said Wayne Gieselman, Iowa Department of Natural Resources Animal Feeding Operations unit coordinator. The

Iowa DNR did not actively enforce the regulations and EPA recently mandated increased enforcement at the state level. In response to this push, the Iowa DNR, Iowa Cattlemen's Association and Iowa Beef Center collaborated to develop the Iowa Plan for Open Feedlots, an agreement to help all open feedlot operators come into compliance with current standards.

"The member groups of the Iowa Plan for Open Feedlots cannot stress enough that the registration process we're asking producers to participate in is for current Iowa regulations," said Lawrence. "Any changes to the rules will happen years down the road; producers are strongly advised to register with the DNR to begin the process of complying with today's rules first and receive limited amnesty from EPA site inspections." For more information, or to obtain a registration form, please visit the Iowa Plan for Open Feedlots web site at <http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/immag/openfeedlot/plan.html>; contact the Iowa Cattlemen's Association at 515-296-2266; call the Iowa DNR at 515-281-8941; or get in touch with your area Iowa State University Extension livestock field specialist.

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### ***Regulation Information Meetings Planned***

A series of "Informational Meetings" to inform livestock producers of proposed changes to federal environmental regulations for livestock operations will be held across the state of Iowa the week of June 18-21. Livestock producers will have the opportunity to become aware of the proposed changes and encouraged to share their comments with the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) following the meetings. The deadline for the comments is July 30, 2001.

The meetings are planned for seven locations across the state.

#### **June 18<sup>th</sup>**

- Peosta - North East Iowa Community College Conference Center 4 from 7-9 pm

#### **June 19<sup>th</sup>**

- Calmar - Northeast Iowa Community Based Dairy Foundation from 1:30-3:30 pm
- Washington - Knights of Columbus from 7-9 pm

#### **June 20<sup>th</sup>**

- Ames – ISU Memorial Union, Gold Room from 1:30-3:30 pm
- Lewis - Wallace Learning Foundation from 7-9 pm

#### **June 21<sup>st</sup>**

- Sheldon – NW Iowa Community College from 1:30 to 3:30 pm
- Cherokee - Western Iowa Technical Community College auditorium from 7-9 pm.

The issues discussed will include the EPA's proposed changes to regulate livestock operations. The proposal could regulate operations with as few as 300 cattle, 200 dairy cows, 750 swine, and 30,000 chickens that could affect Iowa producers as early as 2003. The proposal also includes nutrient management plans based on phosphorous, require NPDES permits, groundwater monitoring, requirement for regular inspections, and additional effluent storage to contain 25 year 24 hour rainfall events. The informational meeting will address how these proposed changes will affect livestock producers in Iowa.

## **Youth Asset Building Takes a Look at Support of Family**

The Search Institute in Minnesota conducts a survey with youth grades 6 through 12 to identify youth assets and needs. One asset identified as being critical to youth well-being is the asset of support. The research shows that young people need to experience support, care and love from families, neighbors, and others in the community. Youth need organizations and institutions that provide positive, supportive environments. The following survey statements are part of the support asset. The national percentage of youth with this asset is listed with each.

- I receive lots of love and support from my family. **57%**
- I see my parent(s) as accessible resources for advice and support. **46%**
- I have frequent, in-depth conversations with my parents. **48%**
- I have access to adults other than my parents for advice and support. **49%**
- I have frequent, in-depth conversations with adults other than my parents. **41%**
- My parents are involved in helping me succeed in school. **27%**
- My school provides a caring, encouraging environment. **30%**

## **The Farm Family and Youth Focus**

This is the first of a series of columns that will take a look at how

the family can share their time and talents to promote building assets in youth. Research has determined that the more assets youth possess and develop, the better they are able to adapt and make healthier decisions. Consider the following thoughts on how one can be more supportive to the youth in our rural communities.

### **Family Support**

Give hugs and verbal reinforcement: don't assume that youth know how much you love them. Try to set aside at least one evening per week for family activities. Some communities have an evening that they set aside and label "family night." The schools work not to have activities planned for that night. What have you done as a family lately?

### **Parents as social resources for Youth**

Ask your child or children what they are doing and thinking and show your interest. Give youth space when they need it, but let them know that you are always available and then be there available for them.

### **Parent communication**

Parents need to ask youth questions about what they think and believe. Consider a topical family dinner in which the whole conversation focuses on one topic. Some ideas could be planning for a special family get-together or making plans for family time.

### **Other adult resources**

Give your children opportunities to spend time with other adults.

### **Other adult communication**

Encourage your teens to talk with an adult friend whom they respect when they need advice. Include youth in conversations in the home with other adults.

### **Parent involvement in schools**

Parents are involved in helping youth succeed in school. Make it a point to talk with all your child's teachers during the school year. Regularly ask your teen what they are learning in school. Offer to help with homework in appropriate ways. Make time to attend school functions for each of your children. From the statements listed this is the one for support that has the greatest potential for improvement.

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*Written by Barbara Sauser, Extension Youth Specialist for Northeast Iowa.  
Material adapted from the Search Institute Ideas for Building Assets in Youth*

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***The three little pigs went to a restaurant. One ordered serving after serving of meat and potatoes. The second ordered plate after plate of salad bar entrees. The third ordered only glass after glass of water, much to the surprise of the waiter who questioned the third why so much water? The third little piggy assertively responded, "Well, someone has to go wee-wee-wee all the way home." By LT***

## Motivating Your Employees to Achieve Their Potential

By Dan Bolinger, Dairy Agent  
Michigan State University  
Michigan Dairy Review Vol.5 No.3

"**John** has worked for me for more than a year. When he started this job, he was energetic and excited to come to work. He was always punctual and efficient. He understood the job well – until recently. The last few months, he has really slacked off. He doesn't seem to care anymore. Is he just getting lazy or is it something else? I just can't figure out this problem."

Sound familiar? Workers like John can be found at most places of employment. Many employers would simply write off John as a once productive employee who has become apathetic. John may either be terminated or allowed to struggle in his current position until he quits with frustration. Although he is obviously capable of being an excellent employee, John, unfortunately, is lacking motivation.

A recent study demonstrated work performance is highly dependent on job satisfaction (3). Although it may seem obvious, a basic principle is too often overlooked – **content workers are more productive workers**. By understanding what provides job satisfaction, you as an employer have an opportunity to provide motivation that workers like John need.

### Evaluate Motivating Factors

In order to gain a greater understanding of motivation, begin by evaluating the factors you believe motivates your workers. Rank them from 1-9 using the list outlined in Table 1.

Rank the factor you believe most motivates your employees first, while ranking what your believe your employees least desire last.

**Table 1. Basic Motivation Factors**

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___ Personal loyalty	___ Job security	___ Interesting Work
___ Tactful discipline	___ Good wages	
___ Appreciation and recognition	___ Sympathetic help with problems	
___ Feeling "in on things"	___ Promotion/growth	

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In a recent study, employers and employees were asked to conduct this very same exercise (2). The most interesting finding from the study was not so much the actual rankings, but the discrepancy between employee and employer rankings (Table 2).

Many of the factors that the employees considered important received much lower rankings among employers. The employers tended to put the greatest emphasis on the tangible or physical factors that are relatively simple to measure, such as money. Psychologist Frederick Herzberg called these items maintenance factors. Maintenance factors are job characteristics that must be met at a minimum level or job satisfaction will be reduced. Generally, maintenance factors alone cannot motivate and satisfy workers.

Maintenance factors include: wages/salary; working conditions; job security; organizational policy and administration (bureaucracy, who reports to whom); supervision (amount and quality); interpersonal relationships with others in the workplace; status and respect; and personal life.

It is important to note that all but one of the maintenance factors are under the direct influence of the employer. Only personal life issues offer limited influence from the employer. Without meeting all of these maintenance factors it is extremely difficult to obtain and maintain a high level of employee motivation.

In contrast to employers, the job related factors that employees ranked as the most important tended to be less tangible, more self-esteem related factors. Herzberg considered these the motivators or satisfiers. These are the factors that when provided in addition to the maintenance factors often compel employees to do their best work.

These motivators include:

- recognition and appreciation
- achievement, a sense of success
- work itself, being challenged
- advancement, promotion
- responsibility and trust
- professional growth skills

The motivational factors outlined above often represent the best opportunities to generate the highest level of work performance from your employees. Once the maintenance factors have been met, an employer's job is not done. Employees need motivators to meet their

fullest performance potential and to a large extent it is the employer's responsibility to provide these motivators.

Additional studies of employer motivators from the 1960's to the present have consistently shown four factors that rank high among employees (1). These included:

1. respect for me (the employee) as a person
2. good pay
3. opportunity for self-development & improvement
4. large amount of freedom on the job, empowerment (chance to work without direct or close supervision)

Sargent and Terry (3) reinforced the importance of these factors in an intensive study reported in 1998. The study found that variables related to employee empowerment were most closely associated with increase job satisfaction, thereby work performance. This emphasizes the important of entrusting your employees with decision-making. Being more concerned with the results than the means of employee responsibilities is essential to effective employee empowerment.

The same study also showed that under utilization of employee skills and a feeling among the employees that a job is not important, are significant impediments to overall job satisfaction. A person's sense of self-worth is reduced greatly if he/she feels he/she is not making a difference in the world. An individual needs to be challenged and needs to understand why his/her job is important to the business and why the business is important to the community and world.

Although each stage of the previously mentioned items are good starting points for motivation, it is even more valuable to start with **your** employees and **their** specific needs. Consider having your employees rank their needs for job satisfaction, just as you did. For best results, ask an independent third party to conduct the survey for you. This party could be another member of your farm management

team such as a feed representative, veterinarian or financial advisor (this may involve a fee with some consultants). A third party will likely give the employees more comfort and anonymity in revealing their honest opinions. Instruct the third party to average the individual rankings. If you have a large number of employees, it may be beneficial to average by specific positions. For instance, the milkers' average should be separate from the others. Having a third party provide the range of rankings for each motivational factor also may be useful in determining variation or uniformity of opinions among employees.

**Table 2. Motivation Factors as Ranked by Employers and Employees**

Factor	Employees	Employers
Interesting Work	1	5
Appreciation and Recognition	2	8
Feeling "in on things"	3	10
Job security	4	2
Good wages	5	1
Promotion/growth	6	3
Good working conditions	7	4
Personal loyalty	8	6
Tactful discipline	9	7
Sympathetic help with problems	10	9

As you evaluate the results, consider how many of the top five items are maintenance factors versus motivators. More maintenance factors may be indicative of serious job satisfaction among your employees. These maintenance factors need to be addressed immediately. If your employees indicated more motivators in the top 5, you are in a more desirable situation, but you are not off the hook. These motivators represent your opportunity to improve worker performance, which leads to increased profitability and peace of mind. If you have an employee like John or want to avoid having one, reflect on what opportunities exist to satisfy and motivate your employees. Worker motivation, like so many other parts of business management, is more of a journey than a destination. Either way, you will not get anywhere if you do not start moving.

**References:**

1. Montana, P.J., et al. Summer 1999 Journal of Career Planning and Employment, Bethlehem. Pp 27-30.
2. Niebrugge, V July 1992, NOVA Group.
3. Sargent, L., et al. 1998. Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, Great Britain. 71:219-236.

## What the 2000 NE Iowa Dairy Survey Tells Us

by Robert Tigner, NE Iowa Farm Management Specialist

During Spring 2000, the Northeast Iowa Dairy team of Iowa State University Extension conducted a survey of area dairy operations. The purpose was to gather baseline information about the dairy operations. Demographic information about the dairy operators, farm size, herd size, herd management practices were gathered.

Other questions included asked about financial and health status. The questionnaire used was almost the same as used in Minnesota and Wisconsin at the same time to compare results.

The response rate for the NE Iowa dairy survey was just over 50%, a very good rate. The Minnesota's response was just 20% with Wisconsin at 40%. The Iowa respondents, 536, have 17.3 % of Iowa's dairy farms and 39,976 cows and have been in dairy farming for over 24 years.

Farm owners were 93% of the respondents with an average age of over 46 years. The age range was 16-80 years. The average age when the dairy operator began managing a dairy herd was 21.8 years, but the range was wide, 16-55 years.

Two respondents didn't begin their first dairy operation until after 50. Over 80% of farms were sole proprietorships and nearly 70% own the majority of the land they operate. Only 6% of the dairy farms reported non-family ownership.

Survey respondents had dairy herds averaging 74.6 cows in 1999, about 7.6 cows larger than the average Iowa herd.

These same herds had 55.7 cows in 1994 and are projecting 79.3 cows

in 2004. While tie stall and stanchion barns constitute the majority of milking facilities for herds, 30% of dairies utilize a parlor, about 1.5 times larger than in Wisconsin. Along with parlors, freestall housing use is about 30%.

Annual average milk per cow was 19,981 pounds with a daily average of 60 pounds. The range of herd averages was 11,000-29,400 pounds. Like the annual average, daily milk production had a wide range, 20-90 pounds.

Only about 10% of dairy producers forward contract milk prices. BST is used by about 23% of dairies, while only 60% use a herd production system. Slightly less than 60% breed heifers AI.

As for Management Intensive Grazing (MIG), 21% use this production strategy. When asked if MIG is a viable dairy production method, 59.8% agreed and only 13.7% disagreed. Grazing can be a useful strategy for many, but especially for smaller and start-up dairy producers. Grazing allows operators to avoid the high capital costs attendant to conventional dairying and has proven to be profitable.

Several aspects of NE Iowa dairy farms differ from the average Iowa farm family. Only 10% of dairy operators have off-farm employment, but 31.6% of those with 24 cows or less had off-farm jobs. Spouses had off-farm jobs 44% of the time. Both of these averages are significantly below the average Iowa farm family. Dairy families reported that 76.8% of them obtained at least 90% of their household income from the dairy operation and another 12.5% said that at least half of their income is from dairying. This large majority obtaining their income from farming also contrasts with the average Iowa farmer. 81.7% Of dairy operators reported that their income was sufficient to remain in operation for at least 5 years. 5.4% said they could only operate another year at most.

Dairy operators indicated that 78.7% were somewhat or very satisfied with their family's quality of life and 35.6% indicated that it had improved in the past 5 years. While 90.8% agreed that maintaining a family run dairy industry in Iowa was important, only 32.7% said they would encourage their children to become dairy farmers. Another 35.2% said they wouldn't encourage their kids to have a dairy production career. That last opinion is important to research further.

**Table 1. Farm Enterprise Characteristics by Herd Sizes**

	<u>Total</u>	<u>1-24</u>	<u>25-49</u>	<u>50-99</u>	<u>100+</u>
Average age of main operator	46.1	44.9	48.1	44.9	46.5
Off-farm employment, operator	10.0%	31.6%	13.9%	6.9%	4.3%
Off-farm employment, spouse	44.1%	35.7%	48.9%	46.4%	38.1%
>90% income from farming	76.8%	61.1%	72.2%	78.8%	82.8%
Satisfied quality of life	78.7%	86.5%	82.6%	77.3%	75.3%
Hire regular non-family labor	21.4%	2.9%	8.8%	19.0%	52.7%
Milk in stanchion/tie stall barn	75.5%	90.3%	92.6%	78.7%	38.6%
Uses Total Mixed Rations	40.2%	2.9%	14.2%	41.9%	82.6%
Uses internet for information	46.5%	***	48.0%	44.8%	53.6%
Uses computer for farm records	64.5%	***	50.0%	66.9%	69.6%
Forward contracts some milk	9.1%	3.0%	1.8%	10.3%	18.0%