

# *ISU Extension View*

*News from ISU Extension to Iowa Dairy Producers*

Volume 14

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December, 2003



## ***Appreciate Your Dairy Families This Season!***

As the holiday season rolls around it seems a proper time for farm and family reflection; reviewing records, successes and impacts of the past year; and focusing on resolutions to continue to improve and strengthen the dairy farm family.

Most dairy operations are carried out by families. Sometimes it's important to sit back and smell the roses even amidst financial and other stressors that affect the dairy farm family.

This holiday season let all of us focus on our appreciation for the family and community structure that is possible thanks to the dairy industry being a part of our family and community life.

Have a Merry-*DAIRY* Christmas!

**Dale Thoreson / Larry Tranel**  
ISU Extension Field Specialists  
Dairy/Beef and Forages, NE Iowa

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
University Extension

***Helping you become your best.***

## **ISU Extension School for Beginning and Transitioning Dairy Producers**

It's going well. Both new and existing producers are invited to the remainder of the sessions at the Dubuque County Extension Office from 1:15-3:15 pm.. For more information or to request a registration brochure, contact Larry Tranel at 563-583-6496 or [tranel@iastate.edu](mailto:tranel@iastate.edu)

### **Thurs, Dec 11<sup>th</sup>: Maintain Quality of Life With Labor Efficiencies**

Larry Tranel and graziers Dale Gaul (Peosta, IA) and Vance Haugen (Canton, MN) will detail low-cost parlors and other strategies to reduce labor and capital needs.

### **Thurs, Dec 18<sup>th</sup>: Putting a Grazing Plan Together**

Larry Tranel and grazer Joel Kurtenbach (Monmouth, IA) will describe various arrangements for getting started. Robert Tigner, ISU Extension Farm Management Specialist will lead a discussion on working with a banker and Farm Service Agency beginning farmer loan options.

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***ISU Extension DAIRY TEAM***  
***"Bringing Profits to Life"***

Extension programs are available to all without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability.

### **Iowa Dairy Extension Field Specialists**

#### **Dairy/Beef and Forages**

- Dale Thoreson, 319-267-2707
- Larry Tranel, 563-583-6496
- Chris Mondak, 712-737-4230

#### **Agriculture Engineering, NE**

- Dr. Dan Meyer, 319-425-3331

#### **Farm Management, NE**

- Robert Tigner, 641-394-2174

#### **Crop Management, NE**

- Brian Lang, 563-382-2949
- George Cummins, 641-228-1453

#### **State Dairy Specialists:**

- Dr. Lee Kilmer
- Dr. Leo Timms

### **Regional Dairy Summit at Platteville, WI**

A regional dairy summit for dairy producers wanting to modernized their farms will take place on January 8-9, 2004 in Platteville, WI. The two-day summit will target Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin producers, who are on the verge of modernizing.

Conference workshops include planning parlor and freestall systems, retro-fitting existing facilities, building or expanding turn-key operations, grazing systems, value-added or alternative enterprises, nutrient management, milk marketing, business and financial planning and farm transfers.

The summit will begin at 10 am on January 8<sup>th</sup> and conclude after lunch on January 9<sup>th</sup>. The cost for attendance, including meals, is \$60 per person or \$85 per couple, if pre-registered by December 15<sup>th</sup>. To register, call 608-342-1314.

## ***ISU Dairy Farm Update*** - by Dr. Lee Kilmer

Many have heard the ISU dairy farm in Ames has been closed. While true, it does not mean the end of the ISU Dairy Science program, but it may have some impact on youth activities. Here's the facts:

For years, Iowa State University has had two dairy farms, each with around 200 cows. Most dairy folks are most familiar with Ames campus dairy which consisted of cattle of six different breeds and was the site for several youth activities such as the Animal Science 4-H Round-up and the ISU Dairy Science Club's Youth Dairy Judging Workshop. This herd was primarily used for teaching with some research done there as well. The second herd, located within the city limits of Ankeny, contained only Holsteins, and the cattle were used primarily for breeding research projects.

The Holsteins from the Ames herd have been moved to the Ankeny herd and the Jerseys leased to the Northeast Iowa Community Based Dairy Foundation Herd at Calmar. We kept three young calves, all under one year of age, from each of the other four breeds as foundation seed stock to preserve some of the genetics that we have developed over the years. All remaining animals in the other four breeds were sold at public auction. The new facility will consist of 500 cows with 350 Holsteins, 50 Jerseys, and 50 Brown Swiss, with the remaining 50 being a mixture of Ayrshires, Guernseys, and Milking Shorthorns. Obviously, once the new facility is completed we will need to procure more animals to fully populate the herd.

What impact will closing the campus farm have on our dairy science curriculum and youth activities? The answer is very little other than some activities sponsored by the ISU Dairy Science Club. We will continue to teach all of the classes that we have taught in the past, only now we will be bussing students to Ankeny for some of the labs or hauling cattle to Ames for class use. We fully expect to offer the dairy option as part of the Animal Science Round-up, but the Club's judging workshop may not be held again until the new facility is completed.

Ever since I came to Iowa State over 20 years ago, our plans were to build a new, larger dairy farm near Ames, move the cattle from both existing herds to the new facility and close both of the old farms. That is still our plan, but the time line has

been changed as the Ames facility has been closed earlier than we anticipated. The biggest impact of the closing has been to shift the planning process for the new facility into high gear. The other dairy faculty and I are not focusing our attention on the closing of the campus dairy, but rather on the fact that we will finally be getting a new state-of-the-art dairy facility. One that we can be proud of and that will allow us to provide the type of training that students and youth will need to be successful in the dairy industry in the future.

## ***NE Iowa Dairy Days, 2004***

The Dairy Team is once again hosting Dairy Days. Sessions will include:

1. Heifer mastitis, teat plugs and vaccines;
2. Shortening the dry period?
3. Beginning Dairy Farmers and alternatives;
4. Dairy Outlook and Marketing;
5. Locomotion Scoring Cows;
6. Hoof Care on Today's Dairy;
7. What Cows tell you about their Nutrition?
8. Top 10 List of Manure Strategies.

Presenters will include local veterinarians and Dairy field and campus specialists with Iowa State University Extension. A \$10 registration fee will cover meal/proceedings costs. Vouchers may be available from your local agri-service providers\*\*. The following locations will host Dairy Days, 2003 from 9:45 am – 3 pm:

Jan. 19, Civic Center, Waverly  
Jan 20, Knights of Columbus, Elma  
Jan 21, Lansing Community Center, Lansing  
Jan 22, NE Dairy Foundation Center, Calmar  
Jan 26, County Extension Office, Cherokee  
Jan 27, County Extension Office, Algona  
Feb 10, Avalon Supper Club, Rickardsville  
Feb 11, Johnson's Reception Hall, Elkader  
Feb 12, Legion Hall, Ryan

\*\*Bring a quart of TMR, corn silage or grain samples for particle size analysis.

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## **Buchanan/Fayette Dairy Profit Forum**

will be held on Monday, February, 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Lamont Community Center from 12:30–3 pm. Topics include: Hoof Care; Dairy Outlook--Where Are We Headed?; Dairy Trans 4.0--A Useful "Tool" to Increase Profit; and Shortened Dry Periods--Profitable or Not? Cost is \$5. Please register with ISU Extension at 319-334-7161 or 563-425-3331.

## **Feeding Strategies When Forage Supplies are Tight** *by Larry Tranel, ISU Extension*

Some Iowa dairy producers are feeling the effects of tighter than normal forage supplies due to low carry-over inventories, alfalfa winterkill, lighter yields and late summer drought conditions.

It is important to first deal with forage substitutes, namely corn silage in times of tight supply. Each August-September, producers should consider forage inventory as that is typically the most cost-effective time to strategize with corn silage as a compliment and/or substitute for hay or haylage.

A good rule of thumb from research at the USDA Forage Research Center in Madison, is that 1/3 of a dairy cow's diet should be comprised of alfalfa hay or haylage; 1/3 should come from corn silage; and the other 1/3 could profitably come from either.

Thus, in year's like 2003 with dry conditions in August-September and hay forage prices looking like they were going to rise after the harvesting season, forecast decisions need to be made then.

Budgets depict that corn silage can often be put into storage at costs ranging from \$65-\$80 per ton of dry matter. That is often the break-even price range for substituting corn silage at higher levels relative to the hay price. When forage supplies might become tight after the growing season, producers are encouraged to either consider substituting corn silage for higher portions of the dairy cow or replacement rations or, as important, to consider purchasing or locking in their hay needs for the winter prior to the end of the harvest season since prices tend to rise thereafter.

But, producers often get too busy during corn silage harvest to figure forage inventories and many are now short on both corn silage and forage hay necessitating more drastic measures—feeding lower forage diets, purchasing and feeding higher amounts of high-fiber by-products, purchasing or feeding higher amounts of hay, or feeding straw, depending on the severity of the situation. Diet changes to stretch forage supply should be done under careful supervision and forage testing to enable proper supplementation strategies.

In general, replacing grains with high-fiber by-products has the effect of raising total diet NDF

and NFC recommendations, according to Dr. Randy Shaver, UW-Madison/Extension. He continues that this practice is positive in low forage diets, as it aids in meeting the total diet NDF and NFC recommendations. The NDF in high-fiber by-products is not as effective as the NDF from forage for maintaining fat test. The exception is whole cottonseed where the NDF effectiveness factor relative to forage NDF is near 100%. For a detailed discussion of by-product feeds, log onto: [www.wisc.edu/dysci/uwex/nutritn/pubs](http://www.wisc.edu/dysci/uwex/nutritn/pubs) for nutrition publications dealing with by-products.

### **FEEDVAL 4 Determines Break-Evens**

Break-even prices for by-product feedstuffs can be calculated using FEEDVAL4 with bloodmeal, urea, shelled corn, tallow, dicalcium phosphate and calcium carbonate as referee feedstuffs. The FEEDVAL4 spreadsheet program can be obtained at the following website:

[www.wisc.edu/dysci/uwex/nutritn/spreadsheets](http://www.wisc.edu/dysci/uwex/nutritn/spreadsheets)

*Note: Input current prices for referee feeds so the break-even prices in the spreadsheet are relevant.*

<b>Replacement Feeds</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Replacement</b>
<i>for medium chopped haylage</i>	<b>NDF</b>	<b>per lb. DM*</b>
Coarse chopped straw	73	2.1**
Coarse chopped grass hay	55	1.4
Coarse chopped alfalfa hay	45	1.1
Alfalfa meal	42	0.4
Beet pulp	46	0.4
Brewers grains	47	0.5
Canola meal	30	0.3
Citrus pulp	24	0.2
Corn gluten feed	36	0.4
Cottonseed hulls	85	2.0***
Cottonseed meal	31	0.3
Distillers grains	39	0.4****
Hominy	21	0.2
Linseed meal	36	0.4
Malt sprouts	47	0.5
Soybean hulls	60	0.5
Sunflower meal	40	0.4
Wheat middlings	37	0.4
Whole cottonseed	50	1.2

\*Replacement values of feeds per lb. dry matter based on physical effectiveness of NDF (peNDF).

\*\*Limit usually to 2-4 lbs per milking cow/day

\*\*\*Should coincide with feeding coarse hay.

\*\*\*\*Actual may be limited ingredient fat content.

Adapted from Dr. Randy Shaver, UW-Madison.

## LOOK, LISTEN, AND FEEL : A LIFESAVER! by Dr. Leo Timms

LOOK, LISTEN, AND FEEL! Critical words and concepts you learn in first aid and CPR that are imperative to assess a person's well being who's been traumatized. **LOOK** at their position, complexion, vital visual signs; get close and **LISTEN** for airflow and breathing; and **FEEL** for a pulse which assures blood flow.

These same words are critical and are the basis for **assessment and health of your milking equipment and routines**. They can be a lifesaver and are often the difference between profitability and problems, as **proper airflow and milk flow** are as vital to milking equipment as air and blood flow is to humans.

- **LOOK! (use your eyes to assess vital signs, including milk flow!)**
  - Look to make sure **teats**, especially ends are **clean and dry** before putting milker unit on.
  - Look to see that **milk gushes into the claw continuously** once the unit is attached.
  - Look to see that **milk moves as a fast slug through the milk hose!** *If slow, look for clogged bleed holes in claws/shells.*
  - Look at all the **rubber parts (inflations and hoses)**! Are they worn out, cracked, kinked?
  - Look at your **regulator?** When's the last time you *cleaned the air filter?*
  - Look at you **vacuum gauge?** Is it the same level every day? Does it fluctuate? When you turn the system off, does it go to zero?
- **LISTEN! (use your ears to assess proper air flow!)**
  - Listen to the **air bleeding into your claws/shells**. No noise means slow, poor milkout!
  - Listen to your **pulsators**. ( better yet-take off an air hose and listen to the intermittent air bursts). They should be loud and crisp and all units the same. Critical for teat health!
  - Listen to your **regulator!** It should be letting in a lot of air (your air insurance policy)!
  - Listen for **irregular air sounds!** (leaks, cracks, tore inflations, etc). This is detrimental to equipment and cow health!

- **FEEL! (use your fingers to assess proper unit function!)**
  - Feel (put finger) on bleed holes. You should feel the suction!
  - Feel (**put 4 fingers**) in the inflations of each unit! Do they feel similar? Different? This tells vitals about inflations and pulsation functions (twisted, leaks, proper massage, etc.)

**LOOK, LISTEN, AND FEEL – critical steps in lifesaving for humans and cows (milking time). But don't wait until after the trauma occurs!** Use your senses and these simple tools on a routine basis to assure healthy milking practices and equipment. Your cow's and your livelihood depend on it!

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## Reserve Your Seat Dairy Conference Registration Opens

The third Eastern Iowa Dairy Conference is set for January 13-14, 2004 at the Best Western Midway Hotel in Dubuque.

The opening speaker, Monte Hemenover with Avenues for Change, is back with his Perspective on the Midwest Dairy Industry. Respected industry expert, Dr. Bill Mahanna with Pioneer Global Nutritional Sciences will discuss Forage Quality from the Lab to the Cow and area producers, including Jerome Gaul, Epworth, will share their family farm enhancements.

Wednesday's agenda features David Reid, DVM, BouMatic, Dr. Robert Cropp, University of Wisconsin-Madison and break-out sessions on "Finding Your Niche". Tom Pittman, Senior Supply Manager, Dairy Procurement with Unilever, makers of Hellmann's Mayonnaise and Breyer's ice cream, will deliver the closing keynote on the Dynamics of Marketing Milk throughout the U.S.

Attendees will enjoy delicious 'Taste of Iowa' meals and breaks with the opportunity to network with area producers and vendors. Regardless of your herd size, this conference promises to be one of the most useful dairy practitioner opportunities you will have in the new year. For more information, or to reserve your seat, visit [www.mvec.coop](http://www.mvec.coop) or call 800-927-6068.

## “To Dip or Not to Dip?” That is the Question (“In Winter”)! *by Leo Timms*

Temperatures are dropping, snow flurries and wind, cracked fingers, and concerns about winter teat problems! We're there again, and the same old question pops up: To dip or not to dip? If so, with what? And what else can we do to stop winter teat problems? Let's start with why you dip!

The purpose of teat dipping is to provide a germicide that will kill mastitis germs and apply skin conditioners that keep teat skin and ends healthy. These are both essential to achieve to minimize mastitis risks! In winter, we want these same things but want to make sure that when we dip, we don't compromise one for another (frozen teats, more germs on teats). So initially (not just winter) you need a dip that has a proven germicide and excellent skin conditioning. We need to start and be here all the time. But now what, it's winter? Well, here's the choices!

- **Use the same good germicide, skin conditioning dip you've been using!**
  - Most days, it's not cold enough to freeze the drop on the teat end so tally ho!
  - In situations (cold wind chills and/or direct exposure post milking), **dab or wick the drop off the end with a cloth towel**. This takes very little time and effort. **DO NOT DRY THE TEAT** as it removes the dip / skin conditioners from teat. **This has been proven to work!**
  - **Never add extra conditioners to dip!** It screws up the formulation!
- **What about barrier dips?**
  - **Not recommended in very cold weather and exposure situations** since they take 20+ minutes to dry, thus increasing risks for teat end problems!
- **What about the winter formulation dips? High emollients and/or powder dips?**
  - Designed to be used only during cold weather and high risk situations where teats will freeze or dehydrate quickly (like your fingers cracking)!
  - Usually cost 2-3 times your regular dip ( but evaluate potential returns, not just investment!)
  - **High emollient dips:** (usually > 70% skin conditioners): Minimizes initial freezing risk post milking due to slow evaporation; Make

sure germicide is proven!; Teats stay wetter and oily longer so may increase risks with prolonged cold exposure or dirty conditions (sticky teats!)

- **Powder based dips:** Function to keep teats dry (no liquid). New formulations have germicide and skin conditioners. Stalls, etc must be clean / dry, to avoid wicking on teats.
- **What about salves?**
  - **NOT THE BEST CHOICE!** High risks unless germicide and skin conditioning are proven!
  - Most germicides can be overcome by contamination!
  - Greasy hands, greasy teats, greasy equipment! A mess and a great way to spread things!
  - Can coat or trap infections; greasy feel can attract things (dirt, etc.).
  - Research shows minimal or no effect ( some detrimental) when more fluid salves are used.
  - If you decide to use, use sparingly (only on the risky area – teat end!)
- **What about quitting dipping and doing nothing else?**
  - **A POOR CHOICE OR NOT EVEN A CHOICE! HIGH RISK!**
  - Teats are still wet after milking; teat skin conditioners milked off; increased dehydration and cracking risks; Plus no contagious mastitis germicides!

**So there are the choices!** It's a sure thing that winter will come, a sure thing that teat end problems will occur (none of the above can totally stop everything), and a sure thing that the best way to deal with it is manage the risks. Weigh out the options above and pick the one that you can manage the best. Couple this to other management strategies such as minimizing direct wind exposure post milking, clean dry stalls to prevent chilling and organism growth, and proper milking procedures that minimize other teat stressors.

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***A young man was asked if ignorance and apathy were the two biggest concerns of youth today.***

***He responded:***

***I Don't Know and I Don't Care!***

## **Standard Operating Procedures** by Chris Mondak, ISU Extension Dairy field specialist, NW Iowa

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are a strategy to insure that work on a dairy is consistently performed correctly by family members and hired employees. In the words of instructor Rich Stup, Dairy Extension Human Resource specialist at Penn State University, SOPs tell all the dairy's workers "when, why, and how tasks get done on the dairy."

The term and concept of SOP's is certainly not new, but it is still often an under-utilized tool on many dairies. **Why is it smart to use Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) on your dairy?**

**SOPs control for people-caused variation on the dairy.** If you have 2 or more people doing work on your dairy, it is likely that key tasks are being performed differently by each person. It doesn't take too much figuring to realize the potential negative production and financial impacts if variation occurs in important tasks such as feed mixing, milking routines, calving assistance, and newborn calf care.

**SOPs make training easier.** So often we hear from dairy producers that their quality of life could be improved if they could take a day or weekend away now and then. The common reason cited for not getting away is a worry about the lack of trained relief help, or a lack of trust in the relief help. Here is where the written SOPs can help tremendously. A set of written procedures describing the steps for the correct way to mix feed, monitor cows at calving, feed calves, or milk cows on your dairy greatly simplifies the process of training a family member, relief chore person, or newly hired employee. The written list can be used in conjunction with your demonstrations of the procedure, and if posted by the work area, can serve as useful guidelines for the trainee to refer to when you are not physically present.

**SOPs serve as standard for feedback and evaluation.** Written procedures can assist you evaluate the work of family members and employees. They provide a common standard for everyone's performance. Written procedures assist you as a manager as you periodically monitor and review how work is getting done. If problems crop up in production or herd health, checking to make sure that tasks are being performed according to your SOPs is a good starting point for trouble-shooting a problem.

**SOPs are best if stated in simple terms.** Although the term "standard operating procedure" may conjure up images of thick technical manuals, a

good SOP is actually short and simple. For example, the SOP for milking procedures could be a short list of the key steps to be performed in prepping a cow for milking stated in a page or less.

**SOP formats are varied – choose the format that fits your dairy or particular task.** SOPs can be written as a simple list of steps, as a list of steps and sub-steps, as a set of photographs with a sentence or two, or as a flowchart.

**How can you get started making your own SOPs? Some thoughts from ISU Extension on ways to apply these concepts:** Let's say you like the *idea* of having important procedures spelled out in writing so that you can control variation, but you don't see how you can find time to get this done. Every day is already so busy – **how can you possibly find time to sit down and write out these things?**

Here's a simple 3-part suggestion from a person who's experienced the time crunch phenomenon on the dairy: Use the course of your regular work day/work week to get started on forming your dairy's SOPs.

- Take a coffee break or lunch break and pull out a notepad and pencil. Think of a key procedure such as milking procedure, for example. Jot down each step of the procedure as you would like it to be done. Or, in the course of doing milking chores, ask a family member or partner to follow you around and write down each key step as you do them.
- Once you have this first draft, ask a trusted consultant if the draft SOP accurately covers every important thing that should be included. Use this opportunity to fine-tune your procedures – ask if these procedures reflect current best management practices.
- Once you've received feedback on the draft, give it the "acid test": Ask a person unfamiliar with the task, like a new employee, or person training to be a relief chore worker, to follow the draft SOP and actually perform the steps. This will give you immediate feedback on what steps are unclear to others, or what step should be added for clarity.

Once you've created the written procedure for milking time cow prep procedures, you can then list the next key procedures to target for a written SOP. If you want to read more details on using and creating SOPs on your dairy, check out Rich Stup's articles that appeared in Hoard's Dairyman issues 2/10/03, 10/10/03, and 10/25/03.

## **UDDER HEALTH MANAGEMENT**

Although “Orbeseal” has just been recently made available in the United States, the product has been in use in Europe since 1978. The original purpose for its development and use was the reduction of antibiotic use at dry-off. English workers tested the effectiveness of this internal teat sealant at dry off as an alternative to dry cow treatment with antibiotics. All cows in each of four herds and only low somatic cell count (SCC) in three herds were utilized to compare infusion with the internal sealant with no treatment at dry off.

No clinical cases of mastitis were found in cows treated with the sealant during the dry period. Six of 204 untreated cows experienced clinical mastitis. Infections detected at calving were significantly higher for the untreated group (21). Workers concluded that infusion at dry off with an internal teat sealant significantly reduced the new infection rate in dry cows. They also cautioned producers against drying off cows without antibiotic treatment. **Reference: Journal of Dairy Science. 85:2512-2520**

### ***Research Study on Dairy Farmers in Northeast Iowa***

The University of Iowa with the support of Iowa State University Extension, Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation and Swiss Valley Farms is conducting a research study on joint and muscle pain in dairy farmers in NE Iowa. The study, which will occur in mid-January, is going to be carried out by mailing questionnaires to 800 randomly selected dairy farms in Dubuque, Delaware, Clayton, Allamakee, and Winneshiek counties. The questionnaire will take about twenty minutes to fill out, and will help the researchers identify what areas of the body dairy farmers experience the most pain. Also, this questionnaire will help identify how this pain affects their activities of daily living. There will be a \$100 cash drawing for each county for the participants who respond from the respective county. If you have questions about the study please feel free to contact Matt Nonnenmann (319-335-4386) at the University of Iowa. Participation is appreciated.

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Too many people overvalue what they are not and undervalue what they are.

-- *Malcolm Forbes*

## **CROSSBREEDING of DAIRY COWS**

Reproductive failure costs and average of \$385 per cow per lactation (Bartlett, et al. 1996). Producer practice information obtained from a survey supported a hypothesis that crossbreeding dairy cows can improve reproductive performance without reducing milk production. In addition, the survey supports previous literature that demonstrated crossbreeding gains were small, but important, according to the producers. Cow survival and longevity in the herd appeared to increase the most from crossbreeding. This would indicate that crossbred dairy cattle are more likely to become pregnant after the first and subsequent lactations. As a result, cows remain in the herd longer. Most producers responding indicated that they would continue the practice of crossbreeding. **Reference: Graduate Thesis, Kenny Kieler, UW-Platteville.**

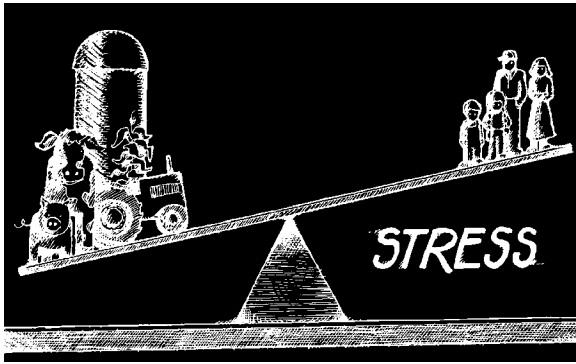
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### ***The ISUE Dairy Budget***

The purpose of the ISUE dairy budget (next page) is to give a snapshot of the current profitability of dairy operations. Section I lays out gross income for a dairy cow producing 20,000 or 24,000 pounds of milk. Component prices and production amounts as well as SCC numbers are obtained from the Central Federal Milk Market Order monthly. Cull cow and dairy calf values are estimates from NE Iowa market reports.

Section II lays out feed costs. The feed amounts were developed by Lee Kilmer and Dale Thoreson to support the levels of milk considered. Prices for the feeds are obtained from local New Hampton feed dealers. Livestock costs are typical costs from IA and WI dairy farms. Both Iowa State University and U of WI obtain aggregated financial data from commercial accounting and tax preparation firms.

Section III lays out the cost of capital assets used to produce milk. For this example, a 250 cow parlor and freestall system with \$4185 investment per cow repaid over 13.5 years. Cow investment used is \$1400 per cow. The costs calculated for cows are related to death losses and the interest and insurance on cow investment. A replacement cost for the herd isn't calculated since the herd should replace itself.



## *Farm Couples Getaway*

If you have a farm operation in transition; want to better manage the stresses of farming and family relationships; or just feel the need to "getaway" with your spouse and talk about your farm and family issues, you might want to attend a Farm Couples Getaway January 16-17, Midway Hotel, Dubuque. This experience is designed to help farm couples:

- deal more effectively with stress
- learn creative communication skills and learn about personality differences
- communicate more effectively with your spouse and children
- learn about helpful resources in your community and ISU Extension
- make basic decisions and plans for your farm and family's future
- enjoy a much-needed mini-vacation from the farm and farm work

**Act Now!** The "getaway" will be open to the first 8 farm couples from NE Iowa that sign up to attend. A confirming letter will be sent. If you have questions or would like to register please call Larry Tranel at 563-583-6496 or e-mail at [tranel@iastate.edu](mailto:tranel@iastate.edu). Registration deadline is one week prior to the "getaway" weekend. **T**here is **no cost** to attend – the cost

of refreshments, meals, lodging, instruction and materials are being covered.

**P**lease register early and be one of the couples to enjoy this Farm Couple Getaway.

Check-In Time: 12:30 p.m. Day 1

Ending Time: 3:00 p.m. Day 2

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Funding for this project was made possible by Farm Bureau in Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette and Winneshiek Counties, and past participants of the Farm Couple Getaways. Additional funding may be provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), grant no. 1 H79 SM5484-01.

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### **What farm couples have appreciated about past seminars:**

- "Interaction with other farm couples"
- "The understanding of personality differences"
- "New perspective on old issues"
- "A time for us to reflect and plan"
- "Time away from the farm and farm work"
- "Realized we weren't the only ones with issues"
- "Excellent leadership skills and insights into improving my farm operation."



"The time went by quickly – an enjoyable weekend"