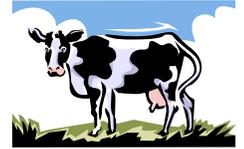




DAIRY NOTES



March 2006

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10th National Dairy Calf & Heifer Conference – March 21 - 24 in Visalia

The Professional Dairy Heifer Growers Association (PDHGA) is having its 10th anniversary annual meeting and educational conference in California! This event will be a great opportunity for local dairy people to attend an excellent program with noted speakers from all over the country. The program will be held at the Visalia Convention Center, Presidian Hotel (formerly Radisson), 300 S Court Street. If you are interested, we have registration forms at our office, so you can stop by to pick one up, or we can fax it to you. Also, you can download the registration form by visiting the PDHGA website at <http://www.pdhga.org/2006conferenceinfo.htm>. Highlights of each day follow. For more detail, visit the PDHGA website.

Tuesday, March 21, 2– 5 PM

Pre-Conference Forum - A Proactive Dairy Industry. Perspectives on animal welfare, bio-security, environmental management and animal ID will be offered by Sandy Stokes Goff (Validus), Jim Reynolds and Dale Moore (UC Vet Med Teaching and Research Center) and Lewis Anderson (Calf Source LLC).

Wednesday & Thursday, March 22-23, 8– 5 PM

Each day will feature topics of interest to anyone in the business of raising dairy animals including dairy and calf ranch owners, managers and employees. On Wednesday there will be presentations on marketing, employee management, motivation and cultural awareness, dealing with the media, and immigration reform. Speakers include Richard Cotta (CDI), Tom Fuhrmann (DairyWorks), Sheri Long (Amigos at Work), Jorge Estrada (Estrada, Simmonds and Associates), Charlie Powell (Washington State Univ.) and Luawanna

Hallstrom (Harry Singh and Sons). On Thursday morning, the program will focus on calf nutrition, health and development, and reproductive management with speakers including Mike Van Amburgh (Cornell Univ.), Jon Robison (Fresno State Univ.), Pat Hoffman (Univ. of Wisconsin –Marshfield), and Jorge Santos (UC Vet Med Teaching and Research Center). Other program features include break-out sessions and calf lab necropsies on Thursday afternoon. A California fiesta will be held Thursday evening followed by a panel discussion with local Hispanic employees and managers participating.

Friday, March 24, 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM A bus tour of local farms including Hilarides, Tony DeGroot and Atsma-Cameron dairies and also a calf ranch.

UCCE Dairy Herdsman Shortcourse – April 25 - 27 in Tulare

The UCCE Dairy Herdsman Shortcourse will be held at the UC Vet Med Teaching and Research Center in Tulare. The purpose of the program is to provide an opportunity for dairy employees to receive training in several aspects of dairy management. A brochure with registration information and more details is included with this newsletter. The registration fee includes the 3-day training, a notebook with handouts, lunches, and a shirt. If you prefer, you can sign up for the herdsman shortcourse and pay the fees electronically (please visit: <http://cefresno.ucdavis.edu/Dairy/>).

Join the nearly 300 people from throughout the state who have benefited from attending previous short courses. Pre-registration is required and space is limited (40 participants), so if you would like to improve the skills of your dairy employees, register today- it fills up quickly!!

Stable Flies and March Rains

The following article was written recently by Alec C. Gerry, Ph.D., Assistant Veterinary Entomologist and Cooperative Extension Specialist, University of California at Riverside.

April showers may bring May flowers, but March showers bring stable flies!

Recent research conducted by Brad Mullens (Veterinary Entomologist, UC Riverside) and Nyles Peterson (Dairy Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, San Bernardino) found that high springtime stable fly numbers on California dairies could be predicted by rainfall during the month of March. It was found that if significant rainfall (0.5 inch or more) occurred during the month of March, stable fly numbers would be higher from mid-May through mid-June (peak stable fly abundance period). For each 0.4 inches of March rain, biting stable fly numbers were raised by an average of about one fly per leg. Earlier winter rainfall did not have a statistical relationship with larger stable fly numbers in May and June.

What does this mean for California dairymen? High stable fly attack rates on cattle are known to reduce animal weight gain and may also have a negative affect on milk yield. Cattle react vigorously to the presence of excessive stable flies, and their protective behaviors (bunching, stamping, head throws) may impact feeding and resting, resulting in a shift of energy away from meat and milk production. The ability to predict a bad stable fly year will provide dairy operators with an opportunity to increase control measures for stable flies a month or more before stable fly numbers actually peak.

Significant March rains presumably increase stable fly numbers by wetting outside decaying manure and vegetation habitats that stable flies need for immature development. These development sites are

typically widespread on a dairy and may require some effort for control. Common development sites include the old manure that accumulates within a dry pen (especially the manure beneath fence lines and watering stations), spilled feed, silage, and composting manure or green waste. The old, undisturbed manure under fence lines etc. is thought to be especially important as a stable fly habitat when wetted by late rains. In general, very dry winters overall are probably good news in terms of fewer stable flies, but the later rains are critical.

In the event of significant March (or probably late February) rains, efforts to reduce stable fly numbers should begin as soon as rains are no longer predicted (no later than mid-April). Efforts to control stable fly should include: 1) Check and repair all leaking watering stations and mister systems; 2) remove old manure that has accumulated beneath fence lines, watering stations, feeding areas, and other structures in or adjacent to cattle pens; 3) scrape pens to remove old manure; 3) old manure removed from pens and other structures may be composted (now that seasonal rains have ended) or placed into a mound in the center of the pen to which the animals have access – disturbance by the animals will help to prevent fly development; 5) remove all vegetation from the perimeter of cattle pens, flush systems, and feed lanes; 6) thoroughly clean all feed lanes and flush lanes of feed, manure, and soil; 7) replace all animal bedding used in calf pens and free stalls (use only wood shavings in free stalls during spring and summer months to reduce fly production) - removed animal bedding should be composted or moved off site into a landfill; 8) check silage and haylage for runoff and weeping – remove wet silage from base of pile every other week and use for feed or compost; 9) check open Ag-bags for the presence of fly larvae – remove silage or haylage from open end of bag each week to prevent fly development in this material.

The sanitation efforts listed above are the best means to reduce stable fly numbers on an individual dairy. Once stable flies have completed immature development and have emerged as adult flies, control options are quite limited. Traps such as the Olsen biting fly trap (<http://www.olsonproducts.com/index2.html>) may help reduce localized adult stable fly numbers, but the very large numbers on commercial dairies in late spring probably exceed the ability of such traps to control them on a farm-wide scale, especially in a wet year. Application of insecticides (principally pyrethroids such as permethrin) applied directly to an animal may provide some relief, but studies have not shown these insecticides to be particularly effective at reducing fly numbers on treated animals.

Reference: Mullens, B. A. and N. G. Peterson. 2005. Relationship between rainfall and stable fly (Diptera: Muscidae) abundance on California dairies. J. Med. Entomol. 42(4): 705-708.

2005 DHIA Production Summary

California DHIA recently released the annual summary of data for all herds that process their records through a dairy records processing center (mainly Agri-Tech or DHI-Provo for herds in this area). Following are highlights for Holstein and Jersey herds in Kings County. The full report is available at the CDHIA website: <http://www.cdhia.org> The Kings County DHIA annual awards banquet for the 2005 testing year will be held at the Civic Auditorium in Hanford on Thursday, April 6th. Call the Kings DHIA office for details - 582-2010.

2005 DHIA Production Summary

		Rolling Herd Average								
		Cows	Herds	Cows/Herd	Lbs. Milk	% Fat	Lbs. Fat	% Prot.	Lbs. Prot.	SCC
California	Holsteins	639,329	720	888	23,242	3.62	840	3.11	723	273
	Jerseys	57,749	140	412	17,178	4.58	786	3.58	615	212
Kings DHIA	Holsteins	96,314	78	1235	23,077	3.63	837	3.08	718	271
	Jerseys	4,545	12	379	16,286	4.60	749	3.58	584	213



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Kings County

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