

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUST 12, 2008

TABLE ROCK FARM REPORTS FINDINGS FROM SARE-FUNDED STUDY

CONTACT: MEGHAN HAUSER (585) 237 5375 meghan@insitearch.com

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The study, carried out from March to November 2006, focused on the time when milking is stopped prior to calving. This is a higher risk time for infections, and to fight that danger, many farms employ antibiotics.

In the Table Rock study, selected dairy cows were treated with teat sealant only, antibiotics only, or a combination of both preparations. Cattle were monitored through their dry period and into the first few months after giving birth. Findings indicated that there were no statistical differences in SCC counts or in the occurrence of clinical mammary infections in any of the three study groups.

The study was similar to a SARE-funded study carried out at Table Rock in 2004, the difference being that the farm had access to a on-farm direct somatic cell counter for the 2006 study, which allowed for a more precise study design and more accurate results.

Catherine Book designed the Table Rock study protocol, and Michael Lanpher, Thomas Nickerson and Ms. Book carried out study procedures. Leslie Scott De Groff of the Perry Veterinary Clinic offered guidance, and results of the study were analyzed by Quality Milk Production Services under the direction of Brad Rausch and Dr. Ynte Schukken.

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This study, carried out from March to November 2006, was a refinement of SARE-funded research originally performed in 2004. The 2004 study randomly assigned 150 dairy cows with a SCC of less than 200,000 (as determined at last herd test date) to one of three groups: teat sealant only, traditional antibiotics, or a combination of antibiotics and teat sealant. All other aspects of the dry off process were identical. A CMT was administered upon freshening and SCC was measured on the next official herd test date (30±15 days in milk (DIM)). Statistical analysis of the findings revealed no detectable differences in SCC counts or in the occurrence of clinical mammary infections in any of the three study groups.

The 2006 study replicated the 2004 format, but was improved by the use of an on-farm DeLaval Cell Counter DCC. This unit allowed us to measure SCC at dry off and in each postpartum animal within a desired and more precise time range. 2006 study findings indicated that once again, there were no statistical differences in SCC counts or in the occurrence of clinical mammary infections in any of the three study groups. Analysis noted a descriptive trend that a teat sealant may be less effective during summer months or during long dry periods, but a more extensive study would need to be undertaken to statistically indicate this trend.

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For a complete copy of study results, please contact Meghan Hauser at 585 237 5375.

DAIRY EDGE ANALYSIS, TRENDS, HOW-TO

CORRECTION

Manure Solids For Bedding – Correction

Because of an editing error, some information in the article Manure Solids For Bedding (August 2008, page 11) was inaccurate. The article should not have said that the factors below affect bacterial populations in bedding:

1. physical properties
2. teat ends
3. mastitis
4. somatic cell counts

Rather, the article should have said:

It is often assumed that the cleanliness of the unused bedding has an effect on the bacterial population of the used bedding. However, linear regression showed that increasing levels of bacteria in the unused bedding sometimes increased levels of bacteria and sometimes decreased levels of bacteria in the unused bedding. In addition, it wasn't always the same bacteria, and the r-square values indicate that levels of bacteria in the used bedding are due only 6 to 51% to the levels in used. These data suggest that other factors not studied play a more important role.

Find an expanded version of this article, including tables, on the *Northeast Dairy-Business* website, <http://dairywebmall.com/dbcpress/?p=226>.

■ For complete study results: <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu>.

■ The article was written by Jean Bonhot and Ellen Harrison, senior Extension associates with Cornell Waste Management Institute, and Mary Schwarz, research assistant with the institute.

MANAGEMENT

Farm, retail dollars rose equally

Concerns about whether producers get a fair share of the retail dollar for their milk are especially common now, with the rapidly rising cost of food. But Andrew Novakovic, director of the Cornell Program on Dairy Markets and Policy, says a recent study found that national farm and retail prices both rose about 90 cents per gallon from the lowest point in 2006 to their highest point in 2007.

The farmer's share of the retail price ranged from 38% to 55% during 2006 to 2008. Novakovic's study focused on the Northeast where, he said, patterns of monthly price changes are similar in major cities. He did not look at causes of price differences.

The study, also done by master's student Esther Washburn, covered 2007, when milk prices were higher. But Novakovic pointed out that 2008 prices continue to be high and variable.

Find the entire report at <http://www.cpdmp.cornell.edu>

U.S. milk-feed price ratio

Milk-feed: pounds of 16% mixed dairy feed equal in value to 1 pound of whole milk.

August 2008	August 2007	July 2008
1.89	3.19	*1.91

*Revised

HERD SYSTEMS

Teat sealant shows effectiveness

An on-farm study at Table Rock Farm, Castile, N.Y., concluded that a teat sealant is statistically as effective as traditional antibiotics when used in dairy cattle with low somatic cell counts (SCC).

The study was partially funded by Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE). Performed in 2006, it replicated a similar study done in 2004, which found no detectable differences in SCC or mammary infections between three groups of low-SCC cows: those with teat sealant only, traditional antibiotics only or a combination.

The later study included use of an on-farm DeLaval Cell Counter DCC, which provided improved measurement of SCC at dry-off. Once again, there were no statistical differences. Although there was some evidence that a teat sealant may be less effective during the summer or long dry periods, a more extensive study would be needed to confirm the trend.

For a complete copy of study results, contact Meghan Hauser, 585-237-5375.

Check out our website:
www.dairybusiness.com

TRENDS AT A GLANCE

▲ MILK, COWS

July 2008 U.S. milk production (15.9 billion lbs.) was up just 1.4% compared to July 2007, the smallest year-to-year jump since June 2006-07. But, the same report estimated there were 9.281 million cows in U.S. dairy herds in July 2008, 128,000 more than July 2007.

◀ ▶ MILK PER COW

July 2008 monthly average milk production per cow in the 23 major dairy states, at 1,742 lbs., was unchanged from July 2007.

▲ IDAHO

Having previously surpassed Pennsylvania for milk production, Idaho moved into the No. 3 position in July, a spot held by New York for 36 years. New York is still No. 3 in year-to-date 2008 production.

▼ COTTONSEED

Due to competition for corn and soybean acreage, USDA estimated the 2008 cottonseed harvest at 4.7 million tons, down from 6.6 million tons in 2007.

▲ FEED COSTS

Compared to July 2007, July 2008 average feed costs were up \$3.06/cwt. of milk sold in the five largest dairy states (California, Wisconsin, Idaho, New York and Pennsylvania), based on USDA's monthly Cost of Production report.

▼ FUTURES PRICES

As of Sept. 2, average Class III futures prices for the final quarter of 2008 (October-December) were down \$4.64/cwt from the peak of \$20.99/cwt., set on June 18.

▼ DRY WHEY

A 17¢/lb. drop in dry whey prices since May equates to about a \$1/cwt. decline in federal order Class III milk prices.

▲ EXPORTS

USDA's latest Ag Trade Outlook report estimates the value of fiscal year (FY) 2008 U.S. dairy exports could hit \$4 billion, compared with \$2.5 billion in FY '07.

For trend details, visit www.dairybusiness.com.

The Dry Cow Practices Study

Source: Table Rock Farm Press Release and www.uvm.edu/~nesare/grants.html

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This study, carried out from March to November 2006, was a refinement of SARE-funded research originally performed in 2004. The 2004 study randomly assigned 150 dairy cows with a SCC of less than 200,000 (as determined at last herd test date) to one of three groups: teat sealant only, traditional antibiotics, or a combination of antibiotics and teat sealant. All other aspects of the dry off process were identical. A California Mastitis Test was administered upon freshening and SCC was measured on the next official herd test date (30±15 days in milk (DIM)). Statistical analysis of the findings revealed no detectable differences in SCC counts or in the occurrence of clinical mammary infections in any of the three study groups.

The 2006 study replicated the 2004 format, but was improved by the use of an on-farm DeLaval Cell Counter (DCC). This unit allowed Table Rock herd managers to measure SCC at dry off and in each postpartum animal within a desired and more precise time range. 2006 study findings indicated that once again, there were no statistical differences in SCC counts or in the occurrence of clinical mammary infections in any of the three study groups. Analysis noted a descriptive trend that a teat sealant may be less effective during summer months or during long dry periods, but a more extensive study would need to be undertaken to statistically indicate this trend.

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According to Tom Nickerson, the staff at Table Rock Farm enjoyed working on the study. It offered a change of pace and a chance to scientifically evaluate a new product when Orbeseal was released.

For a complete copy of study results, please contact Meghan Hauser at 585-237-5375 or e-mail: meghan@insitearch.com.

Northeast SARE Farmer Grant Program

This study was partially funded by The Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education organization (SARE). SARE's mission is that agriculture in the Northeast be diversified and profitable and provide healthful products to its customers. Furthermore, farming will be conducted by farmers who manage resources wisely, who are satisfied with their lifestyles, and who have a positive influence on their communities and the environment. The goal of the Farmer Grant program is to develop, refine, and demonstrate new sustainable techniques and to explore innovative ideas developed by farmers across the region. To apply, you must be a farmer in the Northeast SARE region. You need not be farming full time, but your operation should have an established crop or animal product that you sell on a regular basis.

Meghan Hauser at Table Rock Farm said, "SARE is the easiest granting agency we have worked with. They understand the challenges a farm faces when completing a project." Their application form is simple. SARE offers

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a useful guide titled "How to Write a SARE Farmer Grant Application" with 44 pages of examples and explanations of what makes a strong proposal.

Established farms that want to evaluate a new technology, farming practice, or marketing strategy might want to consider applying for a SARE Farmer Grant. Past grants have averaged about \$5,200 and are capped at \$10,000. Cornell Cooperative Extension can offer technical assistance on study design or evaluation. ❖

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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including civil penalties).

PS Form 3526, September 2007 (Page 2 of 3)

Up On The Farm

A Sign of the Times



Bruce Dehm

Anyone driving on a Western New York country road in August will notice the appearance of the somewhat mysterious crop signs near corn, soybean or hay fields. Usually about a square foot in size, these signs are a product of human hands, not the kind that some believe are of alien origin. If you have ever wondered why someone would

advertise something in such a cryptic manner, please understand that the advertising is not for you!

Crop signs are small and simple, but contain a lot of information. It is easy to understand the brand name such as Pioneer, Mycogen, Agriculver, DeKalb, Asgrow or Doebler. These are the companies that grow and distribute seed. The variety of the plant is designated by some combination of letters and number. Other enigmatic symbols may indicate the presence of unseen genetic traits such as disease, pest or herbicide resistance.

Local seed dealers put the crop signs there so that farmers driving by can see the results of the tiny seed they want you to buy from them next year. For the uninitiated, every cornfield, for example, may look alike. However, the trained eye of an experienced farmer sees much more. It is all about the genetic traits that are tucked neatly inside a simple looking seed. Even then, what the eye can see is only the proverbial tip of the iceberg relative to the traits the plant is carrying.

Let's take corn for example to see some of the traits farmers look for in their seed. First of all, what is the crop going to be used for? If it is to be chopped and fed to cows as corn silage, the plant will have more leaves and stalks relative to grain. If it is for silage, does the farmer want a traditional silage or the newer and more digestible BMR variety? If the corn

crop is for grain, will it be fed to livestock, used for ethanol or exported overseas? Once these questions are answered, then the choice is narrowed to traits in categories such as: how the plant adapts to your soil type; how it fits into your crop rotation plan; its adaptability to your type of tillage technology; or ear and grain characteristics such as ear length, height of the ear from the ground, and grain test weight.

Farmers need to decide if they want their corn to be fixed-ear or flex-ear. A flex-ear variety will change the number and size of ears it produces depending on growing conditions. A variety will also have specific features for plant height, stalk strength, root strength, and drought tolerance. Traits for pest and disease resistance include European corn borer, southern leaf blight, northern leaf blight and anthracnose.

Genetically modified seed (GMO) have technology such as Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) genes that allows the plant to protect itself with the same naturally occurring bacterial protein that organic farmers use to control caterpillar pests such as European corn borer, black cutworms, fall armyworms, corn stalk borers, earworms, rootworms, and others. Round-up Ready varieties contain genes that protect crops from the broad-spectrum herbicide while using less fuel and fewer other herbicides to control weeds. Google a variety from a nearby crop sign and get ready to be amazed by the technology that gives us the cheapest and safest food supply in the history of humankind.

Bruce Dehm is an agricultural economist at Dehm Associates, LLC and Chairman of the Genesee Valley Farm Discovery Center in Groveland. Visit www.FarmDiscoveryCenter.org for more information. Email him at bdehm@DehmAssociates.com



Field sign photo

Table Rock Farm Reports Findings of Study

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