

It's Spring Cleaning Time Again! # 17

David R. Bray

Now is the time to prepare for the long hot summer.

1. Clean out high organic matter dirt (MUD) in pastures and lots and add new dirt, especially in calving areas.
2. Clean your barn cooling fans now, and whenever they look dirty. Dirty fan shields can reduce fan efficiency by 50%. If cows are in the barn or holding area, run fans 24 hours a day. This not only moves air to cool cows, it also helps to remove moisture and dry the place out.
3. Make sure your sprinklers, foggers, etc. work. It was at times a cold winter, many pipes froze and/or broke. Dirty nozzles don't add much water. Check timers for the proper time for adding water. Constant water is not as efficient as intermittent sprinkling and saves water. Set your sprinkler thermostat at 75 degrees F or lower during the hot season. Sprinklers need to run at night because cows get hotter at night than daytime on those hot nights. You need timers to control sprinklers at night, so they only run when cows are eating and standing at the feed line. Running sprinklers when cows are in the stalls will waste great volumes of water and raise the humidity in the barn.
4. Clean and rebuild your pulsators, wash out and change the filters on your vacuum controller (unless you have a variable speed drive) and make sure all ATOs work. Believe it or not, dealers do sell new pulsators.
5. Replace all milk hoses, wash hoses, pulsator hoses and jetter cup holders. Replace all rubber hoses that may be in the milk house that may add water to the pipeline and /or bulk tank wash. These hoses harbor Pseudomonas and Coliforms and can raise your bacteria count. If rubber hoses are used to wash udders, change them also.
6. Check every cow in the herd for blind quarters. Band the cow's legs so they are not milked, this will lower your SCC and SPC. Consider drying off or killing these quarters.
7. Replace all of your floor mounted cow wash sprinkler nozzles once a year. Spring is a good time to do this. They not only clean cows, they cool cows also. Several short wash cycles are more efficient and use less water.
8. Check the pipeline and bulk tank chemical concentrations. If you change brands or suppliers, they may need to be checked. With the new LPC concerns, this is important.
9. Clean your condenser fins on your milk coolers. Dirty fans cut down cooling and efficiency and you get warmer milk at higher electric costs. If they are by a dusty area, concrete the area to keep the dust off the condensers.
10. Mow and spray careless weeds in all pastures that house your calves, heifers, dry or lactating cows.
11. Cull your chronic mastitis cows now. It will lower your cell count and your help is sick of treating them.
12. Clean out the back third to half of your free stalls at least 10-12" deep and add new sand. Keep your stalls bedded every 4-5 days and groomed daily.
13. Clean out cooling ponds. Pump out the water, clean out the sludge and spread it someplace where the cows do not have access to it.
14. Let ponds sit dry for the sun to work on the bacteria. Mycoplasma and other nasty stuff live in ponds. You must clean them out at least once a year if you continuously add water to the pond. If you do not continuously add water, you need to sample the ponds for Mycoplasma and pump and clean out the ponds once or twice during the summer as needed.
15. Clean out your mind. Go visit other dairies. Some of them are doing amazing things and others are not. You can get new ideas or be glad you don't own some of them dairies.

Dave Bray enjoys retirement in Gainesville and elsewhere.



It's Hotter than the 4th of April

David R. Bray

It seems that Mother Nature has moved the calendar ahead by three months and the 4th of April is the new 4th of July! This not only affects the milking herd but the dry cows also. The hot weather not only affects milk production and reproductive performance, but if your milk cooling system is not up to snuff, you may also have poor cooling which might affect your milk quality bonus. Here are some tips to start the summer without fireworks.

1. Mow weeds in pastures; careless weeds in the South and thistles in the North.
2. Remove mud from mud holes in lanes, gate areas and calving lots.
3. Keep up fly control on all aged animals, calves and dry cows.
4. Clean fans in freestall barns if dirty.
5. Clean fans and adjust sprinklers or add sprinklers to the holding area. The holding area is a great way to cool cows or cook them.
6. Clean condensers on your refrigerated units; check Freon levels also.
7. Are your parlor chemicals still outside in the sun? If so, your chlorine sanitizer is now yellow water. Chemicals should be under shade.
8. Do you have fans in the parlor for the cows and the workers?
9. Do your calves have adequate shade and plenty of fresh clean water to drink? A 6 week old calf will drink 5 gallons of water a day in hot weather. A 5 quart water bucket won't cut it in the summer.
10. Do your dry cows have access to shade? If not, add shade cloth in multiple areas in the lots. Cows like to calve in private. Calving in a non-shaded mud hole in the sun is not a great way to start a lactation.

House Fly Control Basics (Think Clean and Dry)

Mary Sowerby and Jerry Hogsette

It is the time of year when house flies are back in full force with their annoying presence around cattle, manure and feed. Their reproductive rate is extremely fast, which can lead to over-night population explosions. A single adult female house fly can lay 250-500 eggs capable of developing through the larval and pupal stages back to the adult stage in just 6.5 days.

House flies breed and deposit their eggs in moist areas (40-60% moisture) with available food (organic matter such as manure, cow feed, hay, straw or garbage) for their larval stage offspring. Most dairies have "hot spots" of fly breeding around calves, cattle feeding areas, feed storage areas and manure storage areas.

Calf pens are particularly attractive to flies especially where new bedding or no bedding is added for the 6 to 8 weeks that a calf resides in the pen without wet, soiled bedding removed. A combination of manure, urine (moisture), straw, plus spilled feed and milk make an outstanding place for fly breeding. Use of wood shavings instead of straw helps a little, but at least a weekly clean-out or move of the stall before adult flies hatch helps a lot more.

Feeding areas often have spilled feed or feed left uneaten (perhaps in a place a cow's tongue cannot conveniently reach) which turn into prime fly-breeding sites. Sanitation is the key to preventing flies from reaching adulthood in these places. Round bale feeders with uneaten hay, especially if rained upon, are harbors of fly breeding. Once a hay ring is removed, any leftover hay and manure in the area should be picked up and thinly spread so it can dry.

Feed storage areas also require special attention to prevent spilled or old feed from accumulating in little noticed spots. With moist feeds, like wet brewer's grains and silage,



it is a special challenge to keep close-up areas dry and clean to prevent fly breeding.

Flies will breed any place manure is allowed to stay moist and undisturbed, like corners in free stall barns, or just off any concrete pad. These areas should be cleaned up. Spreading manure thinly is recommended to allow it to dry and decompose quickly on fields before becoming a fly hatchery.

Although flies do not breed on weeds and tall grass, they do like to rest in their shade. By keeping grass and weeds cut around buildings, flies are encouraged to reside elsewhere.

Sanitation is the #1 key to house fly control. Start there, and then proceed to chemical, biological or trapping controls.

Contact Mary Sowerby at (386) 362-2771, meso@ufl.edu

Two UF Students Compete in 2012 North American Dairy Challenge

Mary Sowerby and Albert De Vries

One hundred twenty-eight students from 32 colleges participated in the 11th Annual North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge held in Roanoke, Virginia on March 30-31. Senior Animal Sciences major Alexandra Swain and Junior Animal Sciences major Lauren Mayo represented Florida well on a composite team which included members from Michigan State and Penn State.

Hosted by Virginia Tech and North Carolina State University, this year's Dairy Challenge included evaluation of four host dairy herds in southern Virginia by eight teams each. At the Dairy Challenge, each team of four students puts textbook knowledge to the ultimate test – consulting for an actual dairy. In addition to this consulting competition, students have ample networking and educational opportunities.

"Students hone their ability to work as a team and improve their time management, critical thinking and public speaking skills through participation in Dairy Challenge," explained David R. Winston, coordinator of the 2012 contest and Extension Dairy Scientist-Youth at Virginia Tech.

“Employers in today’s dairy job market seek to hire employees with excellent communication and dairy management skills, and NAIDC is a prime opportunity to advance these skills.”

The two-day competition began with a walk-through of an operating dairy, analysis of farm data and question-answer session with farm owners. Then each team developed recommendations for nutrition, reproduction, milking procedures, animal health, housing and financial management. The teams presented their recommendations to owners, while being evaluated by a panel of five judges - dairy producers, veterinarians, farm finance specialists and industry personnel.

In the 2012 Dairy Challenge, First Place awards were earned by Cornell University, University of Guelph, The Ohio State University and University of Wisconsin-Platteville. Each first-place team member received a \$200 scholarship. Second place teams came from California Polytechnic State University, Kansas State University, Utah State University and Virginia Tech.

Other participating colleges were Alabama A&M University, University of Alberta, Berry College, Clemson University, Delaware Valley College, University of Florida, University of Idaho, University of Illinois, Iowa State University, University of Maine, University of Massachusetts, Michigan State University, University of Minnesota, Morrisville State College, University of New Hampshire, North Carolina State University, Penn State University, Purdue University, South Dakota State University, University of Vermont, Washington State University, Western Kentucky University, University of Wisconsin-Madison and University of Wisconsin-River Falls.



Aggregate Team #2. Front row (left to right): Ashleigh Covert, Michigan State University; Lauren Mayo, University of Florida; Alex Swain, University of Florida. Back row (left to right): Coach Miriam Weber Nielsen, Michigan State University; Coach Mary Sowerby, University of Florida; Coaches Lisa Holden & Gabriella Varga, Penn State University; Rebecca Fultz, Penn State University.

Over 70 representatives from 40 dairy companies and organizations volunteered as contest judges and assistants. NAIDC – with one national and four regional contests – is fully funded through generous support by 125 agribusinesses and dairy producers, and programs are coordinated by a volunteer board of directors.

Participants for New Dairy Cost Study Sought

Mary Sowerby, Albert De Vries, Curt Lacy, and Mohammed Ibrahim

The University of Florida, the University of Georgia and Fort Valley State University recently received funding from Southern SARE to start a project that helps dairy farmers in the Southeast investigate their cost of production and evaluate alternative management options, especially regarding grazing options. The title of the project is “Improving the Welfare of Southeastern Dairy Families through the Adoption of Sustainable Production Systems.” The objectives of this project are to:

1. Work closely with individuals and groups of pasture-based and conventional dairy producers to identify production and financial management practices that will improve their environmental and economic sustainability;
2. Establish a database of benchmark information for participating dairy producers;
3. Determine the relative profitability of conventional versus pasture-based dairying; and
4. Identify barriers to converting from a conventional dairy to a pasture-based production system.

The cornerstone of this project will be a benchmarking service that will be provided to interested producers. By providing anonymous individual production and financial information to the project team, milk producers will be providing crucial data that can be utilized to identify the most profitable management practices and production systems in the Southeast. Participants do not have to be grazing dairy farmers.

The first 60 producers in Georgia and Florida that sign up will receive \$100 per year (that is right, we pay you when we collect your data) for the three years of the project. In addition to the compensation for their time and effort, dairy families will receive individual farm and risk-management assistance with their operation.

We are now seeking dairy producers who want to participate in the project with their financial and production data.

To schedule an appointment for data collection, or for more information about this project, dairy producers in Florida should contact Dr. Mary Sowerby at (386) 362-2771, meso@ufl.edu. Dairy producers in Georgia should contact Dr. Curt Lacy at (229) 386-3512, clacy@uga.edu. Albert De Vries, devries@ufl.edu, and Mohammed Ibrahim, ibrahimm@fvsu.edu, also lead the project.



48th Dairy Production Conference Proceedings Available

Albert De Vries

The proceedings of the 48th Florida Dairy Production Conference are now available at the Florida Dairy Extension site at <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu>. The 48th conference was held



at the new Alto Straughn IFAS Extension Professional Development center on the UF Campus. Approximately 90 participants, among them dairy producers, allied industry, and students, attended the Conference. The new venue and the

program were well received. Contact Albert De Vries, devries@ufl.edu, (352) 392-5594 x 227, for more information.



Families enjoying the hayride at the UF Dairy Unit Open House day on March 24

Florida Dairy News 1950 - 1962

For a peek in the past of the Florida dairy industry, take a look at many of the issues of Florida Dairy News. These old issues had interesting advertising, stories, facts and news articles for our dairy producers more than 50 years ago. Florida Dairy News was published by the Florida Dairy Industry Association. The University of Florida library has made most issues published from 1950 to 1962 available on its website. To access Florida Dairy News, visit <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00082035/00041/allvolumes>.



Prediction of the Future Florida Mailbox Price: May 2012 - April 2013

Albert De Vries

Using the Class III future settle prices of April 17, 2012 and a University of Wisconsin formula based on historical prices for the association between the Class III settle price and the Florida mailbox price, we predict the Florida mailbox prices for May 2012 to April 2013 as follows:

Month	Year	Class III settle price*	Predicted Florida mailbox price
May	2012	15.78	18.78
June	2012	14.83	18.04
July	2012	14.71	17.95
August	2012	15.43	18.90
September	2012	16.05	19.37
October	2012	16.27	19.54
November	2012	16.30	20.08
December	2012	16.21	20.01
January	2013	16.10	19.92
February	2013	16.13	19.47
March	2013	16.03	19.39
April	2013	16.28	19.59

* Class III settle price as of April 17, 2012.

UF Dairy Unit Open House a Success

Albert De Vries

The University of Florida Dairy Unit in Hague, FL, opened its doors to the general public on March 24. Over 850 people, among them many families with small children, visited the Dairy Unit to learn more about how milk is produced and what the University of Florida is doing to help improve the safe, affordable and sustainable production of milk.



Seventeen "stations" were set up where visitors could see cows being milked, learn about feed stuffs, touch equipment, learn about health care, sample milk and cheese, and see the facilities. Over 80 volunteers helped steer visitors in the right direction and provided information.

"Family Day at the Dairy Farm" was organized by the Department of Animal Sciences, IFAS Information and Communication Services, and Florida Dairy Farmers, Inc. A large number of sponsors made the day possible. To see the pictures and read the reports, visit <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu> Contact Albert De Vries, devries@ufl.edu, (352) 392-5594 x 227, for more information.

Dairy Extension Agenda

- Thursday May 24, 2012, **Corn Silage and Forages Field Day** at the UF Plant Science Research and Education Unit, Citra, Florida. For program details, visit <http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu>. Contact Jose Santos, jepsantos@ufl.edu, (352) 392-1958 or Jerry Wasdin, jwas@ufl.edu, (352) 392-1120.
- Monthly **Risk Management Workshops**. Now also available by webinar. Contact Mary Sowerby at (386) 362-2771 or meso@ufl.edu.