John Arthington New Chair of Animal Sciences

After a national search, Dr. John Arthington has been appointed chair of the UF/IFAS Department of Animal Sciences. His start date was April 1, 2019. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Arthington was the Center Director of the UF/IFAS Range Cattle Research and Education Center in Ona, FL. As a scientist, Dr. Arthington specializes in beef cattle nutrition and management. Contact him at (352) 294-6940 or jarth@ufl.edu

Five UF Dairy Students Participated in the 18th Annual Dairy Challenge and 7th Academy

Albert De Vries and Michael Schmitt

Collegiate dairy students (240 in total) from 29 different states and Canadian provinces traveled to Georgia for the 18th annual Dairy Challenge late March. The three-day event was held around Tifton, GA, on March 28-30, 2019. Among these students were five from UF; Cash Rice, Meagan Pearce, Margaret Fant and Cole Diepersloot made up the competitive UF team while Lisa Wilson-Simpson participated in the Academy. Coaches were Albert De Vries and Michael Schmitt. Also from UF, Carry Pattamanont, Marcus Marcondes and Virginia Brandao volunteered at the event.

Dairy students from 44 colleges worked to improve their dairy management and communication skills, networked with other students, and explored industry careers. “Dairy Challenge represents all that is great about the dairy industry, as we see dairy producers, universities and industry professionals all come together to provide these students - the next generation - be prepared to enter the workforce and make great contributions to dairy’s future,” explained Dr. Maurice Eastridge, Professor and Extensions Dairy Specialist at The Ohio State University and North American Intercolligate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC) Board Chairperson. The events were coordinated by the NAIDC Board of Directors and the Southern Regional planning committee.

This year’s contest participants included 36 universities, whose four-person teams competed for awards based on the quality of the teams’ farm analysis and appropriate solutions. Their farm presentations were evaluated by panels of five judges, including dairy producers, veterinarians, finance specialists and seasoned agribusiness personnel. The UF team ranked 4th out of nine teams that evaluated the same farm.

The Academy added another 7 schools to the event, providing interactive training for 96 students. Academy participants were divided into smaller groups including students from various schools, and dairy industry volunteers worked as advisors to coach these less-experienced Academy participants as they assessed the dairy farm and developed recommendations.

The three-day event began with learning stations at Pecan Grove Dairy (Baconton, GA) and Grassy Flats Dairy (Pavo, GA), where students learned from industry experts on cow comfort, milking protocols, feed center management and other key areas. Back at the University of Georgia – Tifton Convention Center, students enjoyed pecan pie and peach cobbler, as they poured over the in-depth dairy records for their assigned dairy. Day two began with the on-farm analysis, with all students having just two hours
to visit their assigned dairy and witness the dairy’s operations. After a question & answer session with the farm owners and advisors, the student teams developed specific recommendations on the areas they thought the dairy should focus on to make the greatest impact on improving their business. These suggestions were accompanied by an economic assessment of their recommendations. On Day Three, students presented their assessments and conclusions to the judging panel, visited with sponsors at the Career and Innovation Fair, and learned through dairy technology presentations from top Dairy Challenge sponsors.

Six dairy farms opened their farms for analysis and in exchange received a wealth of ideas from students and judges. Host farms for the 2019 Dairy Challenge were: Leatherbrook Holsteins LLC, Americus, GA; Barrington Dairy LLC, Montezuma, GA; BrooksCo Dairy LLC, Quitman, GA; Schaapman Holsteins, Abbeville, GA; Highbrighton Dairy, Montezuma, GA; WestBrook Dairy, Dixie, GA. Dairy Challenge is made possible through generous donations from the dairy community.

This article was put together with the help of the NAIDC post-contest press release. For more information about Dairy Challenge, contact Albert De Vries, devries@ufl.edu, (352) 294-6983, or visit http://www.dairychallenge.org

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**Dairy Farm Employee Comfort during the Hot Summer Months**

Izabella Toledo

Hot days are fast approaching in Florida! Starting as early as May and continuing into September, dairy producers and their employees work through days of extreme heat and humidity. Thus, before summer starts, it is important to take extra measures to protect not only dairy cows, but also to be conscious of how to protect dairy farm employees during stressful weather conditions.

Although in modern dairy farms many employees work in conditions where shade, ventilation and even air conditioning are provided during hot and humid weather, activities that require physical labor such as moving cows, feeding calves and working in the field expose employees to risks of heat stress, which occurs due to a combination of the environmental heat and the heat produced by physical labor.

Heat stress effects include heat exhaustion, fainting, heat cramps and heat rash. These conditions can quickly progress to heat stroke, which can cause permanent disability or death. It is important to recognize that during heat stroke the body becomes unable to control its internal temperature, while the body temperature rises rapidly and the sweating mechanism fails, resulting in the body not being able to cool down. Heat stroke
symptoms include high body temperature, hot, dry skin or profuse sweating, hallucinations, chills, headache, confusion or dizziness and slurred speech.

Possible considerations to manage work conditions where heat stress may occur include:

- Acclimatize new employees to hot work/weather conditions by progressively exposing them to heat for longer periods.
- Closely monitor employees who may have additional heat stress risk factors.
- Try to schedule outside tasks that require physical labor during the cooler times of the day and if possible, assign extra employees to reduce work load.
- Provide more frequent than usual rest/cool-off periods.
- Provide cool water or electrolyte-replacement beverages to employees to avoid thirst and dehydration.
- Provide adequate fans and ventilation to assure air movement.
- Encourage employees to wear light, loose-fitting breathable clothing.

Creating a comfortable and safe work environment with the best possible working conditions, as well as providing employee training in topics that include heat stress risks and prevention, and self-monitoring during hot weather conditions is critical for the success of dairy operations. Motivation and pride in doing a job well and being comfortable while doing it helps workers to be more efficient and effective.

Dr. Izabella Toledo is the Northeast Florida Dairy Regional Specialized Extension Agent. Reach her at izatol@ufl.edu or (386) 294-1279.

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2000 Visitors at the 6th Family Day at the Dairy Farm

Albert De Vries, Emily Miller-Cushon, Jimena Laporta, Izabella Toledo and Juliana Ranches

The UF/IFAS Dairy Unit held its sixth Family Day at the Dairy Farm (FDDF) on Saturday March 23, 2019. Family Day at the Dairy Farm is an open house for the general public and attracted 2000 visitors, easily beating the previous record set in 2018. The event was again organized by faculty and staff of the Department of Animal Sciences, the staff of the UF Dairy Unit, and Florida Dairy Farmers Inc.

First held in 2012, Family Day at the Dairy Farm is designed to be educational for children and adults alike. An important objective is to show a real working dairy farm to the public and be transparent about dairy farming practices. This year, visitors could visit 19 information stations where they learned about dairy management and milk quality and how UF/IFAS dairy research and Extension help dairy farmers produce better milk at lower cost, while keeping their herds comfortable, healthy, and being stewards of the environment. Activities organized by ANS faculty and graduate students provided opportunities for visitors to watch cows be milked, pet calves, make butter, tour barn facilities, learn about nutrition, physiology, reproduction and how milk is produced, stored and transported. Florida Dairy Farmers, the Florida Departments of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Alachua County 4-H also had stations.

New in 2019 was the UF VETS Team who provided an Animal Technical Rescue response training for emergencies that affect cattle. Sponsors Zoetis and Campus Credit Union set up booths where visitors could obtain information and be entertained during their visit.

Family Day at the Dairy Farm is a fun Extension event to organize because the public is appreciative of the opportunity to see dairy cattle and learn about dairy farming.

Graduate student Juliana Ranches organized surveys to measure visitors’ impressions as part of her agricultural communications course. The responses of the exit survey (n = 101) were very satisfactory, which can be translated to the high quality of the event.

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Dairy Extension Agenda

- 55th Florida Dairy Production Conference,

There is no Florida Mailbox price forecast in this issue of Dairy Update. The website that provides the data ([https://dairy.aee.wisc.edu](https://dairy.aee.wisc.edu)) was not accessible when this issue was finalized.
Among the participants, 89% responded that they enjoyed their visit to the FDDF, 76% responded that they gained greater appreciation for dairy farming, 75% responded that they learned new things about dairy farming, and 83% responded that the information presented was easy to understand. The majority of the participants responded that the event was suitable for children (88%) and was well organized (87%). Finally, 89% of the participants responded that they would recommend FDDF to others or would consider attending again. Participant responses also indicated that the tour improved perception of dairy cow well-being, with some participants indicating that they would increase consumption of dairy products.

It took 80 volunteers, including undergraduate and graduate students, dairy faculty, and UF staff, as well as beautiful weather to make this Family Day at the Dairy Farm a success. Volunteers helped with jobs like parking cars, registrations, giving directions, taking surveys, cleaning up trash, and answering questions from the public. Most volunteers were undergraduate and graduate students in Animal Sciences.

The event could also not be organized without the help of our sponsors:

For more information, contact Albert De Vries at devries@ufl.edu or (352) 294-6983. Visit the website at https://www.facebook.com/FamilyDayattheDairyFarm/

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Hiromichi Ashizawa
Dairy Consultant

https://www.facebook.com/FamilyDayattheDairyFarm

Economic Contributions of Florida’s Dairy Cattle and Allied Industries

In 2017, Florida’s combined beef cattle, dairy cattle and allied industries generated revenues totaling $16.80 billion, and supported 118,191 full-time and part-time jobs that represented 1.0 % of the state’s total workforce in calendar year 2017. As a primary industry, dairy farms were responsible for $1.16 billion in revenues and 6,288 jobs. The report from the UF/IFAS Department of Food & Resource Economics was written by Alan Hodges, Christa Court, Mohammad Rahmani, and Caleb Stair. Sponsor was the Florida Cattlemen’s Association with assistance from Florida Dairy Farmers. The full report, executive summary, and fact sheet are available at https://bit.ly/2NXTMiF

Dairy Update is published quarterly by the Department of Animal Sciences, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Please address any comments to Albert De Vries, Editor, Dairy Update, PO Box 110910, Gainesville, FL 32611-0910. Phone: (352) 294-6983. E-mail: devries@ufl.edu. Past issues are posted on the UF/IFAS Florida Dairy Extension website at http://dairy.ifas.ufl.edu. This issue was published on June 20, 2019.