

SETTING GOALS FOR EFFECTIVE  
MANAGEMENT

by

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It has been said that 90% of the people don't set any goals, but of the 10% who do, 90% reach them! Management objectives (goals) need to be verbalized and committed to writing on a regular basis to insure that sufficient effort will be expended in all areas of management need.

Some characteristics of goals have been identified which should be helpful.

1. Goals should be appropriate. It serves no purpose to set or reach a goal that is not meaningful in terms of the whole dairy operation. Each goal should relate to some phase of the operation where performance is related to general success.
2. Goals should be specific. We need to enumerate our desired level of performance so that it will be evident quickly when a goal is achieved.
3. Goals should be expressed in terms that are measurable.
4. Goals should be understood by all employees and members of the management team.
5. Goals should be consistent with other goals and the general objectives of the business. It is possible to select individual goals which are desirable because they add pleasure to the business, but these should be scrutinized carefully for conflict with profit potential. Another example of conflict might include excessive culling of cows just to reach a specific production average without regard to economics.
6. Goals should be set at an optimistic level. Each goal, when reached, should improve the operation. If goals are set too low, they may not help as much as possible.
7. Goals should be realistic. To be effective, we need to select goals that are attainable in a reasonable length of time. Unreasonable expectation on the part of management or labor can be discouraging.

While the same goals may not be appropriate for all operations, several are presented in the following tables which would be appropriate for many Florida herds.

Table 1. Production Goals

Rolling herd average	14,000 lbs
Daily production - milking cows	50
Daily production - all cows	42.5

Table 2. Reproduction Goals

Average days open:	100
Calving interval (months):	12.8
% Services Successful:	50
% Cows Conceived on 1st Service:	45
Average number of days from calving to 1st service:	70
Numbers cows sold for repro- ductive failure (% of cows sold):	<25%

Table 3. Replacement Goals

Survival rate (1st 30 days):	95%
% Freshening with four normal quarters:	95%
Age at first calving:	27 months
Average M.E. Production:	14,000 lbs
% with known sire identity:	95%
Number first-calf heifers culled:	25%

Table 4. General Management Goals

% cows left herd:	25%
Average number of days dry:	60
% cows over 800-thousand somatic cells:	< 5%
% 1st calf heifers over 800-thousand SCC:	0%
Average bulk tank SCC:	<300 thousand
% cows with known sire identity:	75%
Average Predicted Difference - Milk of Service sires used:	+1200

Other areas of goal-setting are certainly feasible. An obvious one includes finances. This set of financial goals forms the annual budget for the operation. It is probably useful for management to select a limited number of goals that can be followed rather than too many that may be forgotten.

In summary, we need to -

1. set goals that are:
2. meaningful,
3. specific,
4. measureable,
5. understood,
6. consistent,
7. optimistic, and
8. realistic.

Remember, everyone needs a map. If you don't know where you are going, you might not get there!