

Florida 4-H Dairy Youth and Dairy Science  
Undergraduate Program Update

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FLORIDA DAIRY CHECK-OFF

What have the Dairy Producers of Florida accomplished through the Milk Check-Off Program since its conception in 1988? For one thing, they have supported numerous research projects conducted by UF Scientists. These projects which are evaluated, reviewed and approved by the Milk Check-Off Committee, comprised of Florida dairy producers, address the issues which are of concern to you. Studies range from the basic to the applied sciences of Agriculture/Dairy Science. Studies concerned with summer management practices to alleviate heat stress problems as well as with insulin-like growth factors-I that affect postnatal growth of calves have been supported by the Milk Check-Off Program. As of January 1991, the Florida Dairy Milk Check-Off Program has supported forty-four research projects that provide valuable information to dairy producers.

While the research projects are producing tremendous results, one of the most exciting impacts is in the area of youth development. Dairymen in Florida can be proud of the accomplishments of the youth program of this state.

As a direct result of the Milk Check-Off Program, there has been a 20% increase in the number of youth enrolled in a Dairy Project Program. Last year there were 781 4-Hers enrolled in Dairy Project Areas with 181 volunteer leaders. A portion of the increase was due to new clubs developing active Dairy Project Programs. The major portion of the increase was due to a new program called "Ag in the Classroom." This is a school enrichment program that allows 5th and 6th graders to learn the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic using agriculture as a model. This is a wonderful way to better educate consumers and to instill a better appreciation of agriculture within the general population.

The Florida 4-H Dairy Program has had a very successful year in a national competition. In July of 1990, the Junior and Senior Holstein Bowl Teams competed in South Carolina at the National Junior Holstein Association Annual Meeting. The Junior Team which consisted of Jerri Giesy, Hillsborough; Alicia Churchwell, Hillsborough; Mika Sampson, Suwannee; and Russell Smith, Columbia, won second place honors after a very competitive final round with the team from Wisconsin. The Senior Team of Jay Giesy, Hillsborough; Dana Carter, Suwannee; Robert Fredd, Suwannee; and Angie Arnold, Okeechobee, took fifth place over 12 other State teams.

The 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl team of Tycee Betts, Manatee; and Dana Carter, Mika Sampson and Robert Fredd of Suwannee competed in Louisville, KY at the National 4-H Dairy Quiz Bowl competition. The team placed sixth with 21 teams competing.

The Dairy Judging team, made up of Jay Giesy, Timmy Best, Alicia Churchwell and Debra Summerall did an excellent job in Memphis, TN at the Mid South Regionals. The Gold Team took First Place honors overall and First in the Reasons, Guernsey and Holstein divisions. While Timmy Best was High Individual in the Guernsey and Holstein divisions, Debra Summerall took High Individual in the Jersey division. Florida had the High Individual Overall in the contest with Jay Giesy. This is Florida's only first place finish at a national level contest since 1953 and our first High Individual ever.

Jay Giesy also was selected as a national Record Book Winner in the Dairy Project Area. This allowed Jay to attend the National 4-H Congress in Chicago, IL.

The First Annual 4-H Dairy Institute was held at Camp Welaka in 1990. During this three-day camp students participated in workshops on fitting, grooming, showmanship, nutrition, heat detection and records. The 4-Hers were able to be a part of some very unique demonstrations that allowed them to examine a rumen-fistulated cow and palpate a mechanical cow.

Dairy scientists at the University are becoming very involved in 4-H programs as well. For example, in the 4-H Mentors in Science Program, a program that pairs high school students with researchers in a scientific project, there were 24 positions with mentors available for students. Of these 24, eight were held by Dairy Science professors.

The excitement we see in the 4-H Dairy Program largely is a direct result of the Milk Check-Off funds and the interest of the dairymen in the state of Florida.

Another portion of the youth program being supported through the Milk Check-Off funds is the Undergraduate Program in Dairy Science at the University of Florida. As of the Spring 1991 semester, we have 23 undergraduates in the department. This is another example of the enthusiasm of the dairymen in the state, as well as the faculty at the UF Dairy Science Department.

We have made a major revision in our Dairy Management option curriculum in response to the concerns and needs of the students in management, as well as that of the managers of today's larger, more complex dairy operations located in Florida. The Dairy Science student is given the opportunity to participate in Internships, Placement Service and Co-op Programs. We had three students on internships last summer, one of whom was with ABS in their young sire progeny test herds program.

The University of Florida Dairy Judging Team traveled to Fort Worth, Texas to compete in the Southwestern Regional Dairy Judging Contest. The team of Dale Hanson, Tanya Carter and Jason Marriage was Second in Guernseys, Fourth in Brown Swiss, Second in Reasons and Seventh Overall.

The Dairy Science Club has become very active and is involved in numerous events. The Club hosted the Annual Young Dairymen Tailgator and Annual DHIA Meeting. They have acquired 15 animals for a Club Dairy Herd for which they make typical management decisions. They purchased a Mars Tony daughter which has been flushed for embryos as a club project. The Club is responsible for the sale of cattle at the Sunshine Classic at Tampa and make numerous field trips during the year. The Club recently has purchased a portable computer for use in a variety of ways including homework, and created a text book library that students may borrow from to help defray some of the cost of getting a college education. In addition to the many levels of support provided by the Milk Check-Off, \$4,000 also was committed for 1990 Undergraduate scholarships in Dairy Science.

In closing, the dairymen of Florida have made a strong commitment to the youth of the state. Please take the opportunity as it arises to visit with these young people and I think you will see the quality of young adults that the Milk Check-Off Program is helping to develop.