

DAIRY *Update*



Autumn 2003

Current Events

Dairy Producer USDA Risk Management Input Sessions

- ◆ September 29, 10:00 am, Best Western Inn and Suites, 908 Specht Ave., Caldwell.
- ◆ September 30, 10:00 am, Best Western Sawtooth Inn, 2653 S. Lincoln Ave., Jerome.

For more information contact Joe Dalton at 459-6365 or jdalton@uidaho.edu

United Dairymen of Idaho Annual Meeting

October 28, 29, 30, DoubleTree Riverside Hotel, Boise. For more information contact United Dairymen of Idaho at 327-7050.

DHI-Provo 49th Annual Herd Management Conference and Workshop

November 6-7, Red Lion Hotel, Sacramento, CA. For more information contact www.dhiprovo.com

University of Idaho Dairy Science Program

The University of Idaho (UI) Dairy Science Program continues to make a difference in the lives of students and the Idaho dairy industry. During the 2002-03 school year, the UI Dairy Club participated in many different service and educational activities. During Ag Days on campus, the UI Dairy Club conducted the annual FFA/4-H dairy judging contest and promoted dairy products through the sale of ice cream and milk shakes. At the Idaho Annual Holstein Sale in Filer, students helped with the sale of cattle. Throughout the fall semester, the UI Dairy Club raised funds to support their trip to the Western Dairy Management Conference, held in March 2003, in Reno, Nevada. Students received financial support for their trip from the UI College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, dairy allied industry and individual sponsors.

In the spring, the UI Dairy Management Challenge team competed in the 2nd Annual North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge held in Lansing, Michigan. The Dairy Challenge tests students' knowledge in dairy management by requiring teams to analyze all phases of a dairy business. Twenty-four teams from 22 universities participated this year. Awards were separated into Platinum, Gold, and Silver categories with 7 to 9 teams receiving awards in each category. The University of Idaho team received a Gold award.

Activities for the 2003-04 year include participation in:

- National Intercollegiate Dairy Judging Contest, Louisville, Kentucky
- 3rd Annual North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge, Altoona, Pennsylvania

For more information, please contact Amin Ahmadzadeh at 885-7409 or amin@uidaho.edu

University of Idaho

Dairy Cattle Research Update

Q: *What are the benefits to remodeling older free stalls?*

A: Research at the University of Idaho dairy recently compared cow behavior and performance in old (1960's) design free stalls versus a modern design.

Thirty-six lactating cows were enrolled in a switchback study where animals were rotated between the two free stall treatments during the ninety day study. On average, cows spent more time occupying modern stalls (+ 45 minutes/cow/day), more time resting in modern stalls (+ 57 minutes/cow/day), and less time standing in modern stalls (-12 minutes/cow/day) compared to their behavior in old design free stalls. Cows had one less resting period per day in modern stalls, but rested for a longer duration per resting event. Previous research had suggested a positive relationship between resting time and milk yield. In those studies, a 1 to 1.5 hour increase in resting times led to a 3 to 4 pound increase in milk production per day. In the UI study, resting time increased nearly one hour per day in the modern stalls, but milk production did not change as a result of longer resting time.

(Rick Norell and Amin Ahmadzadeh, 2002)

Risk Management

From November 2001 to July 2003, the Class III milk price averaged \$10.35/cwt, well below the cost of production for Idaho dairies. The Class III milk price was \$13.80/cwt for August 2003—a much needed increase of \$4.05/cwt since May 2003. Unfortunately, historical data reveals that high prices do not last. Since 1988, the Class III milk price has been below \$13.00/cwt 80% of the time.

What's on the horizon? On September 17, 2003, Class III milk futures for February through June 2004 ranged between \$11.40/cwt and \$11.95/cwt. What is a good price for your dairy business? \$11.80/cwt? \$12.00/cwt? \$13.00/cwt? Understanding your cost of production, and historical and seasonal price trends, is critical to managing price risk successfully over the long-term. For more information on risk management:

- Attend a future University of Idaho Achieving Risk Management Success "ARMS" program
- Speak with your milk processor
- Visit the University of Wisconsin "Understanding Dairy Markets" website: www.aae.wisc.edu/future/

Dairy Update is compiled by Joseph C. Dalton, Asst. Professor and Extension Dairy Specialist for the University of Idaho Department of Animal and Veterinary Science. For more information, contact Dr. Dalton at the Caldwell Research and Extension Center, 16952 S. Tenth Avenue, Caldwell, ID 83607, (208) 459-6365, jdalton@uidaho.edu.



Extension Dairy Specialist

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Take home message

- Modern free stall designs provide a more comfortable resting environment for dairy cattle.
- Modern free stall designs provide improved lunging space enabling cows to more easily lay down and rise from the stall bed without striking stall pipes.
- In the UI study, increased resting times occurred with modern free stalls; however, milk yield did not change as a result of longer resting time.