

USDFRC Dairy Operations Report

for 2005

J.A. Davidson, Herd Manager

The current dairy herd personnel include Orië Eilertson, Marsha Key, Mark Hintz, Deidre Kannenberg, Kelly Miess, Rich Campbell, Kurt Pickar, Ken Lazzara, Frank Klemm, John Biech, Bob Breunig, Dick Hager, Jim Lukken, Greg Schultz, Mike Wilson, Ann Julson, Tina Melvin, Sarah Omvedt, and Sebastain Baxter. Stephanie Jicinsky, a University Wisconsin-River Falls student, was employed during the summer break as an intern. Three undergraduate students will have intern experience at the research farm in 2006. These individuals are the keys to a successful research program at the farm and the increased number of experiments that have been conducted during the past year. They have been instrumental and cooperative during the on-going renovations to the facility.

The operation had a very successful year maintaining a DHIA rolling herd average over 25,000 pounds along with steady production of milk components. Facility updates nearing completion include the addition of a drover's lane to our lactating cow free-stall wing; altering the feed alley and side walls of the heifer and lactating cow free-stalls; and installing a feed pad with headlocks to our dry cow and pregnant heifer lots. Our research capacity in the heifer wing was increased with additional water tanks and stalls for each pen. We will soon begin renovating the tie-stall wings to improve labor efficiency and ergonomics of collecting intake data. Continued efforts will be made to improve cow performance and health, cow comfort, and labor efficiency with an increase in our research efforts.

During the past year, cows and heifers committed to research experiments ranged from 4 to 120 at any given time. The scope of research projects was to increase nitrogen efficiency in rumen, forage utilization, and environmental impacts of dairy systems. We were able to renovate a tie-stall wing and conduct ammonia emission research (8 replicates) in

HERD STATISTICS

		Change from previous year
Herd Inventory		
Milking cows	294	+ 20
Dry cows	35	- 17
average cow age (months)	44	- 1
percent first lactation	46	+ 4
percent second lactation	25	- 4
percent third or greater lactation	29	0
Herd replacements	335	- 15
Total	664	- 12
(Rumen fistulated cows)	23	+ 5
Herd Performance		
Cows calved	369	- 11
Heifer calves born live	178	- 7
Heifer calves born dead	17	- 2
Bull calves born live	179	+ 11
Bull calves born dead	12	- 8
Heifer calves died < 1 year old	8 (4.4%)	0
Number of sets of twins	27	+ 7
DHIA rolling herd average		
lbs. milk	25,261	+ 377
lbs. protein	754	+ 15
lbs. fat	912	- 9
Milk sold in 2005 (lbs.)	7,427,164	- 481,346
Average mailbox milk price/cwt.	\$15.54	- \$0.41
Cattle Sales		
Heifer calves sold	10	+5
Bull calves sold	176	+8
Cows sold, culled for		
Reproduction problems	42	- 6
Poor production	16	+ 1
Poor feet and legs	19	- 6
Mastitis	29	- 11
Other	42	- 11
Cattle sales revenue	\$110,704	- \$22,747
Herd Reproduction		
Average days open	138	+ 8
Average calving interval (months)	13.6	- 0.2
Average services per conception	2.5	- 0.4
Average age at first calving (months)	24	0

chambers looking at the influence of diet and bedding materials on emissions.

The farm continues to increase involvement in state and multi-state functions hosting many national and international visitors, meetings, and veterinary, technical school, and undergraduate students throughout the year. The continued development of the intern programs is a priority for the next year. Other future targets and goals include the development of long-term farmstead plans for the center, improved milk production, reduction of involuntary culling, improved reproductive performance, and continued plans for updating the facilities for greater cow comfort and improved labor efficiencies.