

U.S. DAIRY FORAGE RESEARCH CENTER
ANNUAL DAIRY OPERATIONS REPORT
JANUARY 2001 (for 2000)

LEN L. STROZINSKI-HERD MANAGER

HERD STATISTICS		CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
<i>Herd Inventory</i>		
Milking cows	320	+23
Dry cows	45	-7
average cow age	44 months	0
percent first lactation	42%	-4
percent second lactation	31%	+7
percent third lactation	14%	-1
percent greater than third	13%	-1
Herd replacements	324	-12
Total	689	+4
<i>Herd Performance</i>		
Cows calved	375	+13
Heifer calves born live	162	-2
Heifer calves born dead	20	+10
Bull calves born live	173	-12
Bull calves born dead	23	-5
Heifer calves died < 1 year old	2(1.2%)	+1
DHIA rolling herd average		
milk	22,783 lbs.	+236
protein	709 lbs.	-10
fat	829 lbs.	-6
Milk sold in 2001	7,496,467 lbs.	+80,835
Heifer calves sold	16	+2
Bull calves sold	173	+4
Cows Sold		
Cows culled for:		
Reproduction Problems	52	+27
Poor Production	16	+7
Poor Udder	10	-9
Poor Feet and Legs	7	-2
Mastitis	21	+8
Other	11	+4
Cattle Sales Revenue	85,234.85	+9,031.55
<i>Herd Reproduction</i>		
Average days open	124	+1
Average calving interval	13.02 months	+0.07
Average services per conception	3.0	+0.6
Average age at first calving	24 months	0

The herd statistics report shows little change in herd numbers and performance in 2000. Cattle numbers have stayed constant at full capacity. Much to my disappointment, milk production increased only slightly over last year's levels. The average price received for our milk in 2000 was \$11.33 per hundredweight. This represents a \$3.13 reduction from the 1999 price and a \$5.15 reduction from 1998 prices. Since the Forage Center relies heavily on farm income to offset expenses, these are difficult times that present interesting challenges for 2001.

Dealing with labor shortage and labor turnover has been a major challenge in 2000. Although the dairy crew has a superb core of long-term employees, eight different individuals have occupied several positions in the past year. It has been a year of constant searches and training. I have personally filled in for missing members of the labor force on numerous occasions during the year. Despite long intervals of full time vacancies and no summer student help, I am proud of the fact that operations have continued and no research was jeopardized.

Several facility improvements were made in the past year. New larger water fountains were installed in the free-stall barns. New water cups and plastic manger liners were installed in the tie stall barns. A new sanitizer application unit was installed in the milking operation. In the cattle housing areas a change is being made from rubber filled mattresses in the stalls back to stalls bedded with recycled composted manure solids.

Since 1994, the Forage Center has been managing and conducting research with intensely managed grazing systems. A research technician and his summer laborers had carried out management and maintenance of the pasture fences, plots and water system. In 2000, a change in research personnel and direction placed the entire pasture program under my management with no increase in labor support. I modified the grazing system to maximize animal performance with minimal labor input.

U.S. DAIRY FORAGE RESEARCH CENTER
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JANUARY 2002 (for 2001)

LEN L. STROZINSKI-HERD MANAGER

HERD STATISTICS		CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
<i>Herd Inventory</i>		
Milking cows	322	+2
Dry cows	47	+2
average cow age	44 months	0
percent first lactation	41%	-1
percent second lactation	28%	-3
percent third lactation	17%	+3
percent greater than third	12%	-1
Herd replacements	320	-4
Total	689	0
Rumen fistulated cows	30	
<i>Herd Performance</i>		
Cows calved	373	-2
Heifer calves born live	156	-6
Heifer calves born dead	20	0
Bull calves born live	170	-3
Bull calves born dead	38	+15
Heifer calves died < 1 year old	5(3.2%)	+3
DHIA rolling herd average		
milk	22,418 lbs.	-365
protein	673 lbs.	-36
fat	877 lbs.	+48
Milk sold in 2001	7,386,614 lbs.	-109,853
Average Mailbox Milk Price/cwt	\$15.18	+3.85
Heifer calves sold	19	+3
Bull calves sold	170	-3
Cows Sold		
Cows culled for:		
Reproduction Problems	51	- 1
Poor Production	8	+8
Poor Udder	13	+3
Poor Feet and Legs	8	+1
Mastitis	28	+7
Other	20	+9
Cattle Sales Revenue	88,974.35	+3,739.50
<i>Herd Reproduction</i>		
Average days open	130	+6
Average calving interval	13.18 months	+0.16
Average services per conception	2.9	- .1
Average age at first calving	24 months	0

The herd statistics summary shows that only minor changes took place in 2001. Our goal of attaining a 23,000 pound DHIA rolling herd average continues to be elusive and remains as one of our goals in the future. Although milk production was down somewhat in 2001, the increase in the price received for our milk was a welcome and needed change. Research use of the herd increased again in 2001. Since research is our number one product, I view the year as being very successful.

2001 was a very trying year due to the economy and a set of circumstances that added to my already pressured labor situation of the previous year. It began with the resignation of one of my key Experimental Herd Assistants in December of 2000. Experimental Herd Assistants function as shift foremen in the dairy operation. After the usual announcement and recruitment delays, I was able to promote one of my laborers to that Herd Assistant position. After a short time of training, he requested a transfer to a vacant Herd Assistant position on campus. Recruitment started again and I hired a person who had good knowledge of dairy cattle but had an extremely difficult time learning and operating our computerized record system. After only one month, he resigned his position. The Herd Assistant who had transferred to campus decided to transfer back to Dairy Forage only to change his mind one more time in about a month and return to campus. While that whole episode was taking place, the wife of another key Herd Assistant in my operation was tragically killed in an automobile accident. His position was retained while he went on family leave for six months only to resign one month after returning. Recruitment action to fill that vacant position began in October. I am happy to report that after one year I have finally filled both vacant Herd Assistant positions. Both positions were filled from within my laborer pool leaving two laborer positions to fill. To date, one position remains to be filled. Both new Herd Assistants are making rapid progress in their new responsibilities. Much of my time in 2001 was spent dealing with the labor situation and personally filling in for herd assistants and laborers. Needless to say, this whole labor situation made it a very trying year and I am looking forward to the New Year working with the new leadership staff that has been put in place.

Once again, the main accomplishment that I am most proud of for this year is that I kept the ship afloat during the storm and was able to meet the needs of an increased research program.

In June of 2001 the Dairy Forage Research Center celebrated its 20th anniversary with an open house at the farm. It featured displays and discussions by our research staff as well as guest appearances by Ms. Sheri Hicken, Alice in Dairyland and Mr. Jim Harsdorf, Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture.

The farm continues to host many visitors throughout the year however international visitors in 2001 decreased dramatically due to the Foot and Mouth disease outbreak in England.

U.S. DAIRY FORAGE RESEARCH CENTER
ANNUAL FIELD OPERATIONS REPORT
JANUARY 2002

R.P. Walgenbach, Management Agronomist & Farm Manager

The 2001 crop year began with somewhat cool temperatures but relatively dry soil conditions in April which facilitated planting of all crops (Table 2). Early and large amounts of snow in late December helped provide good insulation for alfalfa that survived the winter with few problems. Spring seeding of alfalfa went very well and resulted in excellent stands of alfalfa. Harvesting of the first crop of alfalfa (Table 3) was a very trying experience due to frequent rain. With little exception most of first crop experienced a shower or two after cutting. The rains continued in June (Table 1) but mostly ceased in July. For the last few years, moisture has not significantly limited crop yields. There is no doubt that moisture limited 2001 crop yields. The lack of soil moisture seemed to have its greatest impact on soybean growth. The soybean aphid contributed to plant stress but aphids were not as severe as they were in the 2000 crop year. White mold, which has impacted soybean production in past years, was not a significant problem this season. A few cornfields showed significant symptoms of water stress and this caused a greater variability in corn grain and silage yields than I've seen in more recent crops (Table 4). Third crop alfalfa yields also were reduced by lack of moisture.

The greatest impact on the cropping operation this season was triggered by the horrible events of September 11th. The U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center's cropland is located in the Badger Army Ammunition Plant (BAAP). After September 11, military security nation wide was put on high alert that changed the access rules to all military installations including BAAP. For a few days no access was allowed to the BAAP. When access was allowed it was only on a limited basis and only through the main entrance (Gate 1 along Highway 12). This disrupted corn silage harvest as well as other cropping activities. A high level of security is still enforced at the BAAP that is required by Army Command. The local army representatives and Olin personnel who are in charge of security have been very cooperative in helping provide access to cropland inside of the BAAP.

The K1 storage and sample drying building that was destroyed by fire was rebuilt. The facility also included plans for an automated soybean roasting operation. A 14,000-bushel soybean storage bin feeds an oil-heated roaster that operates 24 hours per day. This provides the farm a quality controlled roasted soybean for the dairy herd. In addition, the field crew built a mezzanine in this building and a new set of sample dryers were constructed and put on this mezzanine.

Harry Endres, one of the original hires at the Dairy Forage Research Center retired in May of 2000 after 20 years of excellent service to the Dairy Forage Research Center. Harry was a valued employee with many years of farming experience. Harry always had a positive attitude, was interested in research projects and was respected and well liked by fellow employees. We wish Harry the best in his retirement. Paul Weldon, our barn mechanic also retired in the winter of 2001. Paul joined the Dairy Forage Research Center in 1996 as our barn mechanic. Paul did not have an agriculture background but he was a conscientious employee who learned on the job. We also wish

Paul the best in his retirement. Scott Benson was hired in January 2001 as a farm equipment operator. Scott is originally from the Dane, Wisconsin area where his family operates a cash grain farm. Scott graduated from U.W. Platteville and had been working in Illinois for a large cash grain operator prior to joining the Dairy Forage Research Center. I am very pleased to have Scott as part of our field crew. Ori Eilertson was hired to fill the barn mechanic vacancy. Ori had been working as an independent electrician and also has had considerable experience in repairing farm equipment. I was very pleased that Ori has joined our staff. He comes with a great deal of knowledge and experience and you know he's around when you hear his happy whistle.

This past summer the Center celebrated its 20 Year anniversary with activities in Madison and the Research Farm. Jim Harsdorf, Wisconsin's Secretary of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection was a keynote speaker at the research farm. Sherri Hicken the 2001 Alice in Dairyland also interacted with our guests. Many people helped to put together the successful farm celebration and I again want to thank them all.

In spite of our best efforts the transfer of crop and pasture land to USDA custody from the Department of Defense has not been finalized. The reuse committee has completed its work and a reuse plan has been proposed and accepted by the Sauk County Board. The process is continuing with the developing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the USDA, BIA, Ho-Chunk Nation, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WIDNR), Sauk County, Townships of Sumpter and Merrimac. It is hoped that this MOU would be signed by all parties. As of this date this has not occurred but work continues toward meeting the goals of the reuse plan. We are proceeding with the transfer of Badger Army Ammunition Plant land to USDA simultaneously with other discussions concerning management of this unique parcel of land. We have reached agreement with the WIDNR on modifying our original land request to accommodate a request that they will make to GSA to acquire land via National Park Services for park land adjacent to the Wisconsin River. Needless to say a lot of meetings and discussions have occurred since my past report. Progress on the transfer is slow but it is going forward. We still have work to do on the transfer and hope to have the transfer completed within the next six months.

As always I appreciate all of the work that our field and barn staff have provided this past year.

Table 1. 2001 precipitation (ppt)

Jan*	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug**	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----ppt inches-----											
	2.26	0.77	2.56	4.01	4.14	1.85	8.33	5.57	1.48	2.22	1.26

*ppt not available ** 5.9 inches of rain fell on August 1

Table 2. 2001 planting and harvesting dates

Crop	Acres	<u>Planting</u>		<u>Harvesting</u>	
		Start	Finish	Start	Finish
Winter Wheat 01	82.0	-	-	7/16	7/27
Soybeans	284.4	5/8	5/15	10/11	10/29
Corn Grain	304.0	4/26	5/16		
Corn Silage	181.2	4/26	5/16	8/28	10/5
Alfalfa-Spring	128.0	4/18	4/28	-	-
Alfalfa-Summer	-	-	-	-	-
Winter Wheat 02	53.5	10/2	10/2	-	-

Table 3. 2001 forage cutting dates*

Crop	Acres	<u>Alfalfa-Established</u>		<u>Alfalfa-Spring Seeded</u>		
		Start	Finish	Acres	Start	Finish
First	301	5/27	6/11	128	7/1	7/10
Second	301	7/1	7/10	128	8/7	8/12
Third	301	8/1	8/7			

*15.5 acres of red clover were cut on 6/14 and 7/10

Table 4. 2001 crop yield data

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Total</u>
-----bushels per acre-----					
Winter Wheat	82.0	73.7	88.8	82.4	6,798
Soybeans	284.4	41.7	66.9	51.4	14,611