Producers “energized” by successful Dairy Calf and Heifer Association Conference

More than 500,000 cattle from 23 states and six countries represented

More than 350 dairy calf and heifer growers, industry representatives and allied associates met in Madison, Wis., for the Dairy Calf and Heifer Association (DCHA) 2015 Annual Conference held March 31-April 1. Producers in attendance represented more than 500,000 cattle from 23 states and six countries, showcasing the increased national and international reach of the association.

The agenda and impressive line-up of speakers for the 2015 conference was planned for and hosted by calf and heifer raisers. The team created the new two-day agenda with a focus on calf performance, employee empowerment and financial success.

“This year’s DCHA Conference was one of our most successful to date,” says Lane Sollenberger, DCHA President and owner of Dream Farms in Newburg, Pa. “Like the other conference attendees, I am energized by the new ideas that I can take back to my facility; gained through the seminars, farm tours and by networking with other calf and heifer raisers and industry leaders. The DCHA team is proud of our association’s growth and is excited to continue building on this momentum.”

The conference lineup included educational tracks for all involved in calf raising, with sessions for: farm owners and managers, employees and those interested in dairy beef.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

• Pre-conference tour: Attendees got a first-hand look at thoracic ultrasounding, taking pharyngeal swabs and scoring live calves during the event hosted by the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory and University of Wisconsin-School of Veterinary Medicine.

• Educational sessions: A variety of seminar-style sessions were offered to producers during the conference. An assortment of topics were covered pertaining to calf health, dairy beef, employee management and more.

• Industry tradeshow: More than 50 leading calf and heifer focused companies showcased their latest innovations. Winners of a trade show reception activity were Dr. Dewayne Weaver and Angela Larse.

• Keynote speaker: Brad Scott, Scott Brothers Dairy, San Jacinto, Ca., shared his farm’s experience building consumer relationships through the hit TV show Undercover Boss.

• Annual meeting: A bright future for the association was discussed, the new board was instated and the 2015 scholarship was awarded to Danielle Lindquist of Cary, N.C.

• Farm tours: Attendees toured Doerfer Bros. Farm, a 900-cow facility in Verona, Wis. who recently installed auto-feeders to streamline their calf feeding program; and Larson Acres in Evansville, Wis., where they saw four all-in, all-out nursery barns and a cross-ventilated barn with transition and maternity facilities.

• Social media giveaway: Attendees used #DCHA2015 throughout the conference to share their experiences on social media. Lauren LeFort, Christina Maher and Danielle Doerfer Bros. Farm, a 900-cow facility in Verona, Wis. who recently installed auto-feeders to streamline their calf feeding program; and Larson Acres in Evansville, Wis., where they saw four all-in, all-out nursery barns and a cross-ventilated barn with transition and maternity facilities.

AARON HARSTER of Evergreen Farms, Spruce Creek, Pa., raises 1,800 heifer calves each year. Aaron says when it comes to colostrum management – you need to do it right. “Keep it fresh, clean, get an ample amount (4 quarts) into them and then follow-up with 2 quarts after 8 hours,” he says.
Farm tours cap off a successful conference

A highlight of DCHA Conferences are the farm tours; hosted this year by Doerfer Bros., Verona, Wis., and Larson Acres, Evansville, Wis.

LARSON ACRES

Four all-in, all-out nursery barns and a calf facility for two to five month old calves provides a nourishing and safe environment for calves at Larson Acres. A portion of the new cross-ventilated barn is dedicated to dry cows, heifers two months from calving and transition animals. Cows calve in individual maternity pens to allow for better monitoring and a smooth, safe delivery. Larsons also have an on-site sand separator, which recycles sand for use as bedding while also reducing the amount of truck traffic. During their recent expansion, Larsons added an additional separator which saves more than 13,000 tons of sand and approximately 2,250 gallons of diesel fuel every year.

Lindquist receives $1,000 scholarship

“Every single day in every walk of life, ordinary people accomplish extraordinary things,” writes Lindquist in her thank you letter. “You all are extraordinary examples of what embodies this organization: dedication, passion and leadership. Thank you for allowing me to be a small part of it.”

“I have yet to meet another student as confident in their career choice and as dedicated to the pursuit of achieving their goals as Danielle Lindquist,” says Dr. Harrison Dudley, Clinical Professor at the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Upon her graduation, Lindquist plans to pursue a career in research, clinical medicine and dairy calf consulting.

“As a trained clinician in ruminant medicine with a research focus on the health and welfare of dairy calves, my goals include promoting and enhancing the dairy industry, specifically bridging the communication gaps and collaboration between the academics of medicine, producers, consumers and regulatory officials,” says Lindquist.

Lindquist’s outstanding application and qualifications are a testament to the bright future of the dairy industry.

“Doerfer Bros. team utilizes their previous calf facility for weaned heifers. The existing facility was transported to a new location on the farm to allow room for the new calf facility.

In order to maintain the optimal health and performance of their heifers, Doerfer Bros. team utilizes an all-in, all-out calf feeding strategy.

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