

SPRING 2017

HEIFER NOTES

Growing Our Future™



DCHA

DAIRY CALF & HEIFER ASSOCIATION



DCHA Launches New Facebook Member Network

Become part of the conversation today

The Dairy Calf and Heifer Association (DCHA) is excited to announce a new member benefit: The Dairy Calf and Heifer Association Member Network. The Member Network is a discussion group on Facebook exclusive to DCHA members.

This private Facebook group was developed to ensure the valuable peer networking you experience at the DCHA conference is available year-round. This group provides a platform to connect with fellow DCHA members, ask questions and discuss calf and heifer raising topics.

This new communication tool will always be right at your fingertips. Discuss hot topics and challenges as they are happening, or simply look to your fellow peers for perspective and advice.

The conversations have already begun. Request to become part of the conversation today:

- Search "Dairy Calf and Heifer Association Member Network" on Facebook
- Use the direct link: www.facebook.com/groups/DCHAmembers



New Year, New Goals

Gold Standards help set sights on 2017 goals



You're well on your way into 2017. Have you taken the time to set new calf and heifer goals?

If you haven't started yet, it's not too late. The Gold Standards is a great resource to help you determine goals for the year. Even if you've already developed your focus for the year, look to include some of the benchmarks from

the Gold Standards to help you achieve your goals. "I have been able to use the Gold Standards to take my calf barn management to the next level," says DCHA member, Angela Larse of Durst-Larse Farms, LLC, located in Richland Center, Wis. "Everything can always use a good review and overhaul, it just takes some great guidelines to go by."

Larse has been a DCHA member for two years. In addition to being an owner in the family dairy farm, she is the calf barn and maternity barn manager and farm bookkeeper.

"We have enhanced our original SOPs and have added to our list using the Gold Standards. Weighing, recording, measuring, testing... it all adds up to better barn management and bigger, healthier calves," says Larse.

Larse has looked to the Gold Standards to decide how they can achieve their calf and heifer raising goals for the year.

"Some of our 2017 goals include: more employee training, better daily gains, lowering use of antibiotics and allowing our calves to be more social," she says.

Whether you're a calf and heifer raiser, veterinarian or consultant, you too can use the new Gold Standards to help set goals for success. Remember to keep your goals SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound.

The Gold Standards are available exclusively to DCHA members. Visit calfandheifer.org to request a copy or become a member today! An electronic version as well as separate infographic files are available through your DCHA member login on the website.

MEMBER BENEFITS

Being a DCHA member means more for you. In addition to being part of the only national association with a focus on dairy calves and heifers, DCHA offers benefits that will help your bottom line. DCHA receives discounts and incentives from these industry partners:

DCHA CONFERENCE

\$100 off your registration

DCHA

DAIRY CALF & HEIFER ASSOCIATION

FIRST PIONEER INSURANCE AGENCY

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OTHER DCHA BENEFITS

- Access to digital and electronic versions of DCHA Gold Standards
- DCHA Facebook Member Network

Learn more about DCHA member benefits at www.calfandheifer.org.

When breeding heifers, how big is big enough?



Waiting for heifers to reach height benchmarks can be a costly practice for dairies, leading to delayed first breeding, delayed entry into the milking herd and delayed milk production. The reality is that heifers are genetically predisposed to be different sizes at breeding age.

Genomic testing can more accurately reveal a heifer's growth potential early in life, allowing producers to accelerate genetic progress with confidence and enhance profitability, all while capitalizing on higher production and profit potential.

Herd evaluations from Zoetis show differences in heifer weight and height due to differences in their genetics as measured by genomic standardized transmitting abilities (STA) for strength and stature.

Zoetis evaluations report that at approximately 12 to 13 months of age:

- **Calculated weight varied by approximately 90 pounds** due to genetic size differences in genomic STA for strength between -2 and +1.5.¹
- **Height varied as much as 2 to 2.5 inches** in heifers that varied in differences in genomic STA for stature.² Another way to look at it is that heifer height ranged from 0.5 to 0.87 inches taller per change of +1 in STA for stature.^{1,2}

These herd evaluations demonstrate how genetics play a large part in heifer growth. Genomic information can give you an estimate of whether a heifer is

expected to be bigger or smaller than others at breeding age. Again, why wait for size alone to determine breeding age? Consider breeding heifers based on age to avoid losing income because they look smaller, when, genetically, heifers will vary in size and some heifers are supposed to be smaller than others. Of course, animals that are noticeably smaller due to previous health challenges are a different story, which is where good health records can help.

With the help of genomics, producers can eliminate the guesswork from these decisions.

Information provided by Dave Erf of Zoetis, DCHA sponsor. Visit CLARIFIDE.com to learn more.

¹ Data on file, Zoetis Internal Data, April 2014, n > 1600, Zoetis Inc.

² Data on file, Zoetis Internal Data, March 2014, n = 160, Zoetis Inc.

5 reasons to attend the DCHA conference

Annual conference April 11-13 in Madison, Wis.

Raising healthy calves and heifers takes skill. The best in the business wear several hats – from financial strategists and market forecasters to animal caregivers and employee managers.

Many of these industry leaders have worked together to plan the DCHA Conference set for April 11-13 in Madison, Wis. with the theme "Sky's the Limit."

Here are 5 reasons why you should attend this year's conference:

1. GET ANSWERS TO THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

The importance of sharing your story and talking with consumers continues to grow. In telling your story, you can be faced with some tough questions. Learn how to handle the challenging

questions by hearing from a panelist of dairy stakeholders and presentations highlighting animal welfare, with a specific focus on young calves.

2. FIND NEW WAYS TO MOTIVATE YOUR TEAM

Whether you're trying to improve performance or working with your team to follow proper protocols, being able to motivate your employees is an instrumental skillset. Gain insight on creating a positive work environment and develop teamwork.

3. LEARN FROM YOUR PEERS

We can all learn a lot from one another if we take the time to listen to each other. Through session questions, panel discussions, farm tours and the trade show, you'll have countless opportunities to learn from your peers.



4. REMEMBER THE MATURE HEIFERS

It can be easy for older heifers to fall off your radar. Do you take the time to sit back and evaluate your heifer program? Hear about new strategies to get heifers pregnant, keep them growing and start returning your investment sooner.



5. LOOK TO THE FUTURE

The future of your herd begins with getting newborn calves off to a healthy, growing start. Learn how nutrition and housing could be impacting the health of your calves.

A full schedule and session descriptions are available at calfandheifer.org.

MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND

Register for the 2017 DCHA Conference at calfandheifer.org under the "Conference" tab.

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SKY'S THE LIMIT

2017

DCHA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
APRIL 11-13 | MADISON, WI

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