The agenda is full of innovative topics and new speakers that will give attendees valuable information to take back to their operations during a challenging economic time,” said Tamilee Nennich, DCHA Annual Conference co-chair and secretary/treasurer.

“Joining Forces. Reaching Higher. The 2019 Dairy Calf and Heifer Association (DCHA) Annual Conference Program Committee chose this theme to highlight the importance of strong working relationships and continuous personal and business improvement.

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“This year’s conference is once again going to focus on bringing the best and most recent information for raising dairy calves and heifers,” added Nennich. “Additionally, it will be a great time to step back from the stress of the dairy industry today to focus on some enjoyable aspects of raising calves and heifers.”

The 2019 featured speaker – Keith Poulsen, Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory director – promises to deliver a presentation that may make you squirm in your seat but also challenge you to fine-tune your heifer-rearing management protocols and benchmarks. His “crystal ball” talk will help you reach higher.
To meet these goals, operations must ensure calves get a good start before they are challenged with stress. That takes attention to management practices and nutrition. The returns of supporting calf health include reduced treatment costs, lowered death loss and improved gain.

Reduce stress

To improve calf health, producers should tackle the main causes of calf illness, which are scours and digestive and respiratory disorders associated with stress. Reduce or eliminate the main causes of stress, such as:

- Abrupt feed changes
- Poor ventilation
- Overcrowding
- Exposure to sudden weather changes
- Excessive heat or cold

Producers should also carefully transport, vaccinate and handle pre-weaned calves to reduce the stress associated with these events.

Add an active yeast probiotic

Next, a healthy and balanced digestive system can support a calf’s overall immune system. One way to do this is to include an active dry yeast (ADY) probiotic to the milk replacer, raw milk or waste milk fed to neonatal calves. Producers should look for strains specific to the desired result and proven to produce that result in dairy calves. In addition, the efficacy of probiotics and prebiotics are directly linked to manufacturing and quality-assured production processes. These are live, active microbes and must be carefully handled to ensure the desired results.

ProTernative® Milk is a specialized formulation of the ADY probiotic, Saccharomyces cerevisiae boulardii CNCM I-1079, which has been shown to help reduce the negative impact of stress in cattle. S. c. boulardii CNCM I-1079 is a proven probiotic that positively activates the immune system of cattle during times of stress and can help cattle lower levels of morbidity, mortality and improve average daily gain (ADG).1,2,3,4

Protect the vulnerable

At birth, the digestive system of a calf is just beginning to develop. It’s one of the many ways calves are vulnerable. Probiotics can help alleviate stress that so often damages the lifetime productivity potential of the calf – and the dairy herd as a whole. Healthy calves provide a strong foundation for the health of a herd and profitability of an operation.

Visit lallemandanimalnutrition.com/products/proternative-milk to learn more.

Information provided by Lallemand Animal Nutrition Technical Services Manager Angel Aguilar.
As we recently have welcomed in a new year, I have been reflecting on some of the trials we have all overcome in the dairy industry over the past year. As I was reflecting, I came up with several questions we should all be asking ourselves this year. How can we become more efficient? Are our facility standards and protocols keeping up with the industry? As science and research continue to progress, is there more we can learn from academia, allied industry and peer producers? Are we thinking outside the box to improve for the future? The best and only organization and conference that focuses on answering these questions specifically pertaining to dairy calves and heifers is the Dairy Calf and Heifer Association.

I have attended DCHA’s conferences the past eight years. Every year, the conference grows and the quality – topics, speakers and attendees – is second to none. Here are my top five reasons for attending this year.

1. **GOLD STANDARDS**
   The Dairy Calf and Heifer Association’s Gold Standards are industry benchmarks and best management practices for raising dairy calves and heifers. Created by a committee consisting of academia, industry experts and producers, the 20-page booklet enables producers to evaluate how their facility’s standards and benchmarks compare with what is recommended. Topics throughout the conference will help producers reach the top percentile of performance in the industry. The Gold Standards are available to all DCHA members.

2. **NETWORKING**
   By far, networking is the best reason to attend the conference. Peers from all regions of the United States and various parts of the globe come together to collaborate and learn from each other. Eight years ago, before attending the conference for the first time, I only knew a few people in my region. Today, I have several people I now consider friends – from California to New York and everywhere in between.

3. **PRE- AND POST-CONFERENCE SEMINARS AND TOURS**
   The best way to get a different perspective and learn how others may be utilizing new technology or construction is by taking a tour of their facility. This also allows us to ask producers or allied industry first hand, how this has improved efficiencies and what they would do different if they had an opportunity to change something and build or design again.

4. **NEW INFORMATION AND RESEARCH**
   Academia and allied industry are always on the cutting edge of research, science and technology, which can enable producers to become more efficient and profitable. DCHA has a conference committee that is committed to bringing in top speakers and panelists to address new research and hot topics, including employee management, nutrition, reproduction and animal welfare.

5. **VALUE OF INVESTMENT**
   Considering this is the only conference that caters 100 percent to calf and heifer raisers, the value of all the topics, speakers, attendees, seminars and tours is priceless. DCHA’s conference has been one of the biggest bangs for my buck, as far as an investment in myself to learn from and meet some of the top people in our industry. I look forward to seeing each of you at the conference in Madison.

For more information, visit www.calfandheifer.org or the DCHA Facebook page: CalfandHeifer.