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Louisiana

# Dairy Digest

*Your Herd Management Resource*

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## July - August 2005

### Dairy Market News

**Bill Herndon, Dept of Ag. Econ., Mississippi State University**

**Advanced Class I Plunges \$1.18 per cwt. for June but Gains \$0.27 for July**

Sharp increases in national milk production and weakening consumer demand are placing significant downward pressure on milk and dairy product prices. Favorable milk prices over the past 15 months encouraged dairy farmers to add more cows to their herds and to increase milk output per cow. Consumers also reacted to higher dairy product prices by decreasing consumption of dairy food items. Despite the deteriorating U.S. market, strong international demands for nonfat dry milk (NDM) have helped stabilize dairy product prices.

The USDA announced on May 20 that the June Advanced Class I "base" milk price would be \$13.62 per cwt. (for 3.5% butterfat milk). After adding the \$3.10 Class I price differential for the pricing zone which includes Atlanta, Ga., the Advanced Class I milk price for June 2005 was \$16.72 per cwt. The June Class III Advanced skim milk price was the Class I mover because it was greater than the corresponding Class IV price (\$8.58 vs. \$7.03). Thus, the June Advanced Class I price was \$16.72 per cwt. and represents a *decrease* of \$1.18 per cwt. (-6.6%) *below* the corresponding May price of \$17.90. This year's June Advanced Class I price is \$7.51 (-21.3%) *less* than the June 2004 Class I price of \$24.23 per cwt (the all-time record high Class I milk price).

The USDA announced on June 20 that the July Advanced Class I "base" milk price would be \$13.89 per cwt. (for 3.5% butterfat milk). After adding the \$3.10 Class I price differential for the pricing zone which includes Atlanta, Ga., the Advanced Class I milk price for July 2005 will be \$16.99. The July Class III Advanced skim milk price was the Class I mover because it was greater than the corresponding Class IV price (\$8.73 vs \$7.03). Thus, the July Advanced Class I price is \$16.99 and represents an *increase* of \$0.27 per cwt. (1.6%) *above* the corresponding June 2005 Class I price of \$16.72. The July 2005 Advanced Class I price is \$4.06 (-19.3%) *less* than the July 2004 Class I price of \$21.05 per cwt.

The June 2005 milk price will result in a 3.15-cent per cwt. Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) payment for June and this will be the first MILC payment to dairy producers since April 2004. The July 2005 milk price will again be above the minimum point for July milk to qualify for the MILC program.

<b>Advanced Class I Milk Price @ 3.5% bf</b>	<b>Price per Cwt. NC MS Zone</b>	<b>Price Change Current vs. Specified Month</b>	<b>Percent Change vs. Specified Month</b>
<b>July 2005</b>	<b>\$16.99</b>	—	—
<b>June 2005</b>	<b>\$16.72</b>	<b>↑\$0.27</b>	<b>↑1.6%</b>
<b>May 2005</b>	<b>\$17.90</b>	<b>↓\$0.91</b>	<b>↓5.1%</b>
<b>June 2004</b>	<b>\$24.23</b>	<b>↓\$7.24</b>	<b>↓29.88%</b>
<b>July 2004</b>	<b>\$21.05</b>	<b>↑\$4.06</b>	<b>↑19.28%</b>

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## Market Conditions.

Surprising strength is the best way to describe the current dairy market situation and outlook for milk and dairy product prices. Most market analysts are mildly surprised to see the continuing price strength for butter and cheese when two key economic factors are pointing toward a significant weakening in market prices. First, escalating milk production continues in response to record high milk prices experienced during 2004. Milk output increased in each of the past 10 months as both the number of dairy cows and milk output per cow has grown. Second, dairy product demand appears to be ebbing because of higher retail product prices. For example, the USDA recently reported that butter and fluid milk consumption fell 1.8% and 1.2%, respectively, while American cheese use grew only 0.7% and NDM disappearance rose 0.5% during the first quarter of 2005 compared to the same period last year. However, international demand for NDM has been the catalyst for boosting and sustaining prices on the U.S. and world dairy markets. Milk production is lagging in all three of the largest dairy product exporting regions (European Union, New Zealand and Australia). This has led to fewer milk components being processed into NDM worldwide. Persistent drought conditions in Oceania (New Zealand and Australia) caused a significant decline in milk output. In fact, New Zealand recently imported large amounts of U.S. milk powder to fill orders for their customers. The European Union (EU), the world's largest dairy exporter, recently expanded its membership from 15 to 25 nations. Consumption of NDM in these additional 10 countries has significantly reduced NDM exports from the EU.

Adding to this surprise is the fact that commercial inventories of cheese and butter in the U.S. continue to increase. The USDA's April 30 Cold Storage report shows total inventories of butter grew 23% between March and April and were 5% greater than April 2004. Commercial holdings of various types of natural cheeses on April 30 ranged between 6% less and 23% more than March 31 totals and were between 22% less and 4% more than April 30 inventories. However, government owned stocks of butter decreased sharply from 400,000 to 209,000 pounds from April 2004 to April 2005 while government cheese stocks were 81% less than April 2004. The spring flush period continues to produce a sea of raw milk and many handlers experienced great difficulties managing these volumes of milk over the Memorial Day weekend. Southeastern milk moved as far north as Minnesota and Wisconsin to find available processing capacity and these movements are expected to persist for several weeks. Florida milk handlers exported 232 tanker loads during the first week of June compared to 209 tankers during the previous week and 162 loads during the same week of 2004.

Clearly, the general price outlook is very cautious because of downward pressures due to mounting milk supplies versus the upside potential provided by international demand for NDM. Milk prices normally rise during the late summer and early fall because hot and humid weather curtails milk production and fluid milk demand goes up as schools reconvene after summer recess. So, Class I milk price should trend up and approach the \$17.75 per cwt. range for August and September in the Atlanta, Ga. pricing zone.

## 2004 Summary.

The USDA recently released its Milk Production, Disposition and Income Summary for 2004. Cash receipts derived from milk sales increased 29% in 2004 compared to 2003. In Mississippi, milk cash receipts increased 15% from \$55.2 million to \$63.3 million from 2003 to 2004. In Louisiana, milk cash receipts increased 17% from \$67.5 million to \$79.0 million from 2003 to 2004. The average price received for milk increased from \$13.10 to \$16.80 per cwt. between 2003 and 2004. This report confirms that record high milk prices in 2004 produced additional revenues for dairy farmers that were used to offset the previous two years when dismal milk prices caused financial stress and economic hardships.

## Milk Production.

National milk production increased for the 11<sup>th</sup> straight month in May with a +4.1% increase over May 2004 in the top 23 dairy producing states. Dairy farmers are continuing to respond to milk prices by adding cows to their herds and increasing their per cow production. Selected May 2005 milk production statistics listed in the table below clearly show milk output continuing to grow dramatically. Nineteen of the 23 major milk-producing states recorded increased milk output between May 2004 and May 2005. Increased milk output is primarily due to significant growth in milk output per cow; although increasing cow numbers in the major milk producing states is also contributing to the growth in milk output. In fact, there were 12,000 more cows being milked in May compared to April. Milk output increased by 614 million pounds (+4.1%) in May 2005 as compared to May 2004. There were also 49,000 (+0.6%) more cows in the U.S. herd and output per cow per month increased by 59 (+3.5%) pounds per cow comparing May 2004 to May 2005. The major western milk producing states continued to add cows to their dairy farms where California, Idaho and Arizona increased their dairy herds by a total of 78,000 head.

The milk-feed price ratio for June responded to falling milk prices and declined below the key barometer level of 3.0. The industry rule of thumb indicates that when this ratio exceeds 3.0, conditions tend to favor expansion of milk supplies. The June milk-feed price ratio was reported at 2.91 versus 2.95 in May, as compared to the 3.12 ratio reported for June 2004.

<b>Milk Production Statistics – May 2005 versus May 2004</b>	<b>Percent Change in Milk Production</b>	<b>Percent Change in Milk Output/Cow</b>	<b>Percent Change in Number of Cows</b>
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>↑4.1%</b>	<b>↑3.5%</b>	<b>↑0.6%</b>
<b>California</b>	<b>↑4.5%</b>	<b>↑2.5%</b>	<b>↑2.0%</b>
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>↑2.7%</b>	<b>↑3.5%</b>	<b>↓0.7%</b>
<b>Idaho</b>	<b>↑10.8%</b>	<b>↑3.8%</b>	<b>↑6.7%</b>
<b>New Mexico</b>	<b>↑2.5%</b>	<b>↑3.9%</b>	<b>↓1.2%</b>
<b>Indiana</b>	<b>↑4.1%</b>	<b>↑4.0%</b>	<b>No Change</b>
<b>Florida</b>	<b>↑2.8%</b>	<b>↓0.7%</b>	<b>↑3.6%</b>
<b>Kentucky</b>	<b>↓2.3%</b>	<b>↓2.7%</b>	<b>↑0.4%</b>
<b>Virginia</b>	<b>↑6.5%</b>	<b>No Change</b>	<b>↑6.5%</b>
<b>Texas</b>	<b>↑7.5%</b>	<b>↑6.4%</b>	<b>↑0.9%</b>

### Dairy Product Prices.

Dairy product prices continue to “bounce around” as traders and handlers react to various market news reports. International demand for U.S. NDM and butter is sustaining milk and product prices despite the increase in U.S. milk production during the past 12-18 months. Cheddar cheese and butter prices witnessed 10-15% price declines that quickly rebounded back to the \$1.50 to \$1.60 price range on four different occasions in 2005. Dairy traders are continuing to express concerns about availability of milk to fulfill their needs for the upcoming peak demand in the fall months. Milk production problems in the three major dairy product exporting nations along with a weak U.S. dollar have bolstered international demand for NDM. This continues to support world NDM prices and has bolstered cheese and butter prices. July cheddar cheese prices recently increased about 2% as compared to June prices. Grade AA butter prices recently increased by 23.25-cents per pound (16.2%) and Grade A NDM prices remained unchanged at 98.25-cents per pound. The table below shows CME cash dairy prices for selected products and dates.

<b>Chicago Mercantile Exchange Cash Dairy Product Prices</b>	<b>June 8 Prices in \$/lb</b>	<b>July 7 Prices in \$/lb</b>	<b>Price Changes in \$/lb</b>	<b>Percent Change in \$/lb</b>
<b>40# Block Cheese</b>	<b>\$1.5200</b>	<b>\$1.5500</b>	<b>↑\$0.0300</b>	<b>↑2.0%</b>
<b>500# Barrel Cheese</b>	<b>\$1.4800</b>	<b>\$1.5075</b>	<b>↑\$0.0275</b>	<b>↑1.9%</b>
<b>Grade AA Butter</b>	<b>\$1.4375</b>	<b>\$1.6700</b>	<b>↑\$0.2325</b>	<b>↑16.2%</b>
<b>Grade A Nonfat Dry Milk</b>	<b>\$0.9825</b>	<b>\$0.9825</b>	<b>No Change</b>	<b>No Change</b>

### Futures Prices and Near-term Market Outlook.

Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) futures contract prices for the upcoming three months find that traders are expecting dairy product prices to strengthen. Futures prices once again indicate dairy farmers should attempt to manage milk price risks through forward pricing, especially during the remaining months of 2005. Twenty-five year average Class III milk prices for the months of August, September and October were \$12.44, \$12.75 and \$12.54. Current August, September and October Class III futures contract prices are \$14.38, \$14.48 and \$13.85. The August and September futures prices have only been exceeded four times since 1980. This makes the current Class III futures contract prices almost 15% higher than the corresponding actual 25-year Class III averages. So, current Class III milk futures contract prices offer excellent opportunities to “lock-in” favorable prices and milk sales revenues. Dairy farmers should seriously consider taking advantage of these attractive futures prices to avoid the potential risks of sharp declines in milk prices during fall 2005. CME settlement prices for selected Class III milk futures contracts are found in the table below along with several butter futures contracts.

<b>CME Dairy Futures Contract Prices</b>	<b>June 8 Settlement Prices</b>	<b>July 7 Settlement Prices</b>	<b>Percent Change June 8 to July 7</b>
<b>Class III Milk Futures</b>	<b>— \$/cwt —</b>	<b>— \$/cwt —</b>	
<b>August Contract</b>	<b>\$14.38</b>	<b>\$15.20</b>	<b>↑5.7%</b>
<b>September Contract</b>	<b>\$14.48</b>	<b>\$15.29</b>	<b>↑5.6%</b>
<b>October Contract</b>	<b>\$13.85</b>	<b>\$14.26</b>	<b>↑3.0%</b>
<b>Butter Futures</b>	<b>— \$/lb —</b>	<b>— \$/lb —</b>	
<b>September Contract</b>	<b>\$1.4650</b>	<b>\$1.6400</b>	<b>↑11.9%</b>
<b>October Contract</b>	<b>\$1.4725</b>	<b>\$1.6695</b>	<b>↑13.4%</b>

## **National Animal Identification Program**

Protecting American animal agriculture by safeguarding animal health is vital to the well-being of all U.S. citizens. Healthy and protected agriculture promotes human health; provides wholesome, reliable, and secure food resources; mitigates national economic threats; and enhances a sustainable environment. An efficient and effective animal identification program is essential to achieving this goal. As part of its ongoing efforts to safeguard animal health, the USDA initiated the implementation of a National Animal Identification System (NAIS) in 2004. The NAIS is the cooperative State-Federal-industry program administered by USDA's APHIS for the purpose of tracking all animal movements from birth to slaughter as part of the USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring and Surveillance Program. A main objective of the cooperative NAIS program is to develop and implement a comprehensive national animal tracking system which will enable State and Federal animal health officials to identify both domestic and foreign animal diseases on a real-time basis with the ability to track all exposed and infected animals within 48 hours of initial presumptive positive diagnosis. Another major purpose of the NAIS is to enable State and Federal animal health officials to promptly ascertain animal health status for the purpose of issuing both intrastate and interstate animal health movement certificates.

The NAIS is being developed for use with animals that will benefit from a system that facilitates rapid tracing in the event of a disease concern. Currently, working groups are developing plans for camelids (llamas and alpacas), cattle and bison, cervids (deer and elk), equine, goats, poultry, sheep, and swine. The ultimate goal of NAIS is to have the capability to identify all animals and premises that had direct contact with a foreign animal disease (FAD) or disease of concern within 48 hours after discovery.

The NAIS is now voluntary, so producers and other stakeholders can participate in the design, development, and testing of the system to ensure that practical solutions evolve. However, to achieve the goal of 48-hour trace-backs, all producers and affected industry segments would have to participate eventually, and there has been support from industry for making the system mandatory. The USDA currently envisions the system becoming mandatory by January 2009.

### **Premises Identification**

Identifying an animal's birthplace and all subsequent movements to different geographical locations are the first step toward implementing a NAIS. In order to initiate the NAIS, all locations (premises) that manage or hold animals (including dairy farms) will be issued a unique seven-character identification number called a premises identification number (PIN).

The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) is responsible for managing the NAIS and the Premises ID programs in Louisiana. The LDAF has established a website at: <http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/programs/premises.asp> with detailed information concerning the NAIS program; including signup sheets for acquiring unique PINs for individual farms and other geographical locations. The following two pages of this issue of the Louisiana Dairy Digest are copies of these signup sheets. The pages can be filled out and mailed to the LDAF to acquire a PIN for your farm. Or you can contact the LDAF for more information using the phone numbers found on the signup sheets.

## **UPCOMING DAIRY DATES**

September 27, Dairy Selection Show in Baton Rouge for Dairy Educational Awards trip

September 27 - October 2, Dairy Educational Awards Trip – Memphis, TN

October 3, National 4-H Dairy Cattle Judging Contest - Madison, WI

October 4 – 8, World Dairy Expo – Madison, WI

October 14, Mississippi State Fair Open Dairy Show - Jackson, MS

October 22, Washington Parish Fair Open Dairy Show - Franklinton, LA

November 5, Dixieland Holstein Show – Tylertown, MS

November 5, State Fair of Louisiana Open Dairy Show – Shreveport, LA

November 6, State Fair of Louisiana Junior Dairy Show – Shreveport, LA



**LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY**  
**BOB ODOM, COMMISSIONER**  
**OFFICE OF ANIMAL HEALTH SERVICES**  
**PO BOX 1951, BATON ROUGE, LA 70821-1951**  
**225-925-3980 OR 888-773-6489 FAX: 225-237-5555 PremisesID@ldaf.state.la.us**

**Business/Farm Account Information:**

Business/Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

*First Name Middle name Last name*

Secondary Contact\*: \_\_\_\_\_

*(\* optional) First Name Middle name Last name*

Business/Farm mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_ (  Business  Home  Cell  Fax  Pager)

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_ (  Business  Home  Cell  Fax  Pager)

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_ (  Business  Home  Cell  Fax  Pager)

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Business Type\*:  Individual  Partnership  Incorporated  Limited Liability Corporation

*(\* check one)*  Limited Liability Partnership  Non-profit Organization

Operation Type\*:  Producer Unit/Farm  Clinic  Exhibition  Laboratory  Market/collection point

*(\* check all)*  Non-producer Participant  Port of Entry  Quarantine Facility  Rendering

Slaughter plant  Tagging site

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**Business Account Login information:**

User Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (minimum of 8 characters)

Password: \_\_\_\_\_ (minimum of 8 characters)

E-mail address\*: \_\_\_\_\_

*(\*for confirmation purposes only )*

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**Producer/Contact Signature\*:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Contact information will not be sold or given out by National Animal Identification System (NAIS) without your prior written consent)

\* COMPLETE PREMISES INFORMATION ON BACK PAGE

**Premises Information:**

(Primary location where livestock resides, if more then one location and animals are managed separately, apply for multiple premises ID's)

Premises name/description: \_\_\_\_\_ (example "home place", "heifer place")

Premises Address: Check if same as business/farm account mailing address \_\_\_\_

**OR** (if not the same as business/farm mailing address)

Premises Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Premises Type\*: \_\_\_ Producer Unit/Farm \_\_\_ Clinic \_\_\_ Exhibition \_\_\_ Laboratory \_\_\_ Market/collection point  
(\* check all) \_\_\_ Non-producer Participant \_\_\_ Port of Entry \_\_\_ Quarantine Facility \_\_\_ Rendering  
\_\_\_ Slaughter plant \_\_\_ Tagging site

Species at Premises\*: \_\_\_ Cattle and Bison \_\_\_ Swine \_\_\_ Sheep \_\_\_ Goats \_\_\_ Horses \_\_\_ Poultry  
(\* check all) \_\_\_ Deer and Elk \_\_\_ Llama \_\_\_ Emu

Legal Land Description\*: \_\_\_\_\_  
(\* required if no address) Township Range Section

GEO Coordinates\*: Latitude: \_\_\_\_\_ Longitude: - \_\_\_\_\_  
(\* Optional)

**Additional Secondary Premises Information (optional):**

Premises name/description: \_\_\_\_\_

Premises Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Premises Type\*: \_\_\_ Producer Unit/Farm \_\_\_ Clinic \_\_\_ Exhibition \_\_\_ Laboratory \_\_\_ Market/collection point  
(\* check all) \_\_\_ Non-producer Participant \_\_\_ Port of Entry \_\_\_ Quarantine Facility \_\_\_ Rendering  
\_\_\_ Slaughter plant \_\_\_ Tagging site

Species at Premises\*: \_\_\_ Cattle and Bison \_\_\_ Swine \_\_\_ Sheep \_\_\_ Goats \_\_\_ Horses \_\_\_ Poultry  
(\* check all) \_\_\_ Deer and Elk \_\_\_ Llama \_\_\_ Emu

Legal Land Description\*: \_\_\_\_\_  
(\* required if no address) Township Range Section

GEO Coordinates\*: Latitude: \_\_\_\_\_ Longitude: - \_\_\_\_\_  
(\* Optional)

Return forms to: Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry, Office of Animal Health Services, Premises Registration,  
PO Box 1951, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-1951

For questions, contact our Premises Support Line during office hours: Phone: 888-773-6489, 225-925-3980

You may also fax us the form at: 225-237-5555

Email us at: PremisesID@ldaf.state.la.us

*If you have more than two premises (animal locations) please print additional sheets*

## Get Ready for Late Summer and Fall Calving

Dr. Gary M. Hay, Dr. Charles F. Hutchison and Dr. Cathy C. Williams

Department of Dairy Science, LSU AgCenter

July may not seem like the appropriate time to think about calving season on Louisiana dairies, but actually it is the ideal time. Much of your financial success as a Louisiana dairy farmer during the coming year will be determined by how well your cows perform during the first few weeks and months of their upcoming lactations. Much of your future success in the next 2-4 years will be determined by the crop of heifer calves hitting the ground this fall. Waiting until your cows start calving or your calves start hitting the ground means you won't have the opportunity to get your operation geared toward maximizing their potential success. So, July is the perfect time to start thinking about getting your dairy enterprise ready for the late summer and early fall calving season.

### DRY COW MANGEMENT

The dry cow program on most farms used to consist of drying cows off around 60 days before calving and putting them on the 'back forty' to fend for themselves until they calved. On some farms the cows were put in a pasture closer to the house about 20 to 30 days prior to calving so they could be watched a little closer and usually fed a little grain and given some hay. Today, we understand the dry cow program is actually the beginning of the next lactation. The way cows are handled and fed during the dry period has a tremendous impact on the upcoming lactation. Dry cow management is critical to the financial success of a dairy enterprise.

The dry cow period can be divided into two parts. The first part often called 'early dry' or 'far-off' dry cows refer to the cows from the time they are dried off until about 21 to 14 days prior to the expected due date. The last part often called 'close-up', 'maternity' or 'pre-fresh' cows refer to the cows from about 21 or 14 days until the expected due date. Some general recommendations concerning the dry cow program are:

- Cows should be dried off abruptly. Do not milk a cow every other milking or every other day for a few days prior to drying off. This places more stress on the mammary glands and can increase the chances of getting a new intramammary infection.
- Numerous research trials over the past thirty years have shown that each \$1 invested in dry cow treatment will yield anywhere from \$10 to \$20 in additional profits by lowering the level of both clinical and sub-clinical mastitis as well as somatic cell counts (SCC) in early lactation. Lower levels of early lactation mastitis and SCC translate directly into higher first lactation milk production and more net income.
- Every quarter of every cow should be treated with an approved dry cow therapy product and then each teat should be dipped with an approved teat dip. Dry treating all four quarters of all cows has been shown to be the most economically effective program for preventing new intramammary infections. Even though some of the quarters may not be infected at the time the cow is dried off, many quarters can be exposed to microorganisms during the dry period and result in new intramammary infections prior to calving.
- Recent studies have also shown that dry treating reduces early lactation intramammary infections and SCC in first calf heifers. Dry treating heifers is especially effective at reducing *Staphylococcus Aureus* infections present in heifers at the time of calving. Reducing the number and severity of early lactation *Staphylococcus Aureus* infections in heifers can reduce the number of blind quarters at calving and reduce the rate of culling in heifers due to either blind quarters or reduced first lactation production.
- Using proper procedures when dry treating cows or heifers is critically important for an effective dry treatment program. The first step is to clean any organic matter such as mud or manure off the teats. Second, disinfect the teat ends by scrubbing thoroughly with an alcohol pad or cotton balls soaked in alcohol. Third, carefully insert a single use dry treatment tube into each teat end using the partial insertion technique (no more than ¼ to ½ inch into the teat). Be careful not to touch the teat end or the treatment tube prior to inserting the tube into the teat in order to avoid contamination with bacteria and/or other microorganisms. After the medication has been inserted into the teat, dip the teat with a commercially available teat dip in order to reduce the number of organisms which may linger on the teat end.

- One major objective of the dry cow program should be to maintain body condition. Score your cows at dry off and monitor condition score through out the dry period. Make dry cow ration adjustments as needed.
- Cows drying off with a condition score of 4 or greater should **NOT** be put on a diet during the dry period to reduce body condition. This will only increase the probability of the cow having calving problems and metabolic disorders after calving.
- Use two dry cow groups – a far-off and close-up group. Dry matter intake drops as the cow approaches calving. Therefore, the diet of the close-up dry cow has to be more nutrient dense in order to meet the cow’s requirements. Also, certain feed additives are recommended only for close-up diets, since feeding them during the entire dry period may not be economically feasible or the effects of the additive will not work if fed the entire dry period.
- Do not feed the milking cow grain mix to the dry cows. The mineral and vitamin levels are not adequate and there could be too much sodium and potassium in the grain mix if it contains sodium bicarbonate and heat stress packs that contain extra potassium. High sodium levels have been associated with increased udder edema. Also, the energy and protein levels in the grain mix could be too low or too high to meet the dry cow’s nutrient requirements.
- Make sure the dry cow grain mix complements the forage you are feeding. Just because the feed tag is labeled dry cow feed and recommends feeding 5-6 lb per head per day does not mean you are meeting the nutrient requirements of the dry cow. Get a forage sample analyzed and balance a ration for the dry cows.
- Corn silage can be fed successfully to dry cows. However, corn silage should only make up a maximum of 50% of the forage dry matter in the total ration dry matter. Corn silage works quite well in a balanced diet and is a high quality forage that has a fairly low potassium level.
- Avoid feeding high potassium feedstuffs in the dry cow diet, particularly the close-up diet. Diets with a high potassium level have been associated with a higher incidence of milk fever. The potassium level of the diet probably has more of an effect on causing milk fever than calcium and phosphorus levels and calcium to phosphorus ratio.
- All feedstuffs in the milking cow ration with the exception of minerals and additives that are high in sodium and potassium should be included in the close-up diet to allow the rumen and microorganisms to start adjusting to the lactating cow diet.
- Feeding anionic salts or commercial products with anionic type properties in the close-up diet will help prevent clinical cases of milk fever and will help alleviate sub clinical hypocalcemia. The addition of anionic salts in the diet will require you to raise the calcium level in the diet to a minimum of 150grams per head per day.
- Feeding a minimum of 1,000 IU of Vitamin E in the dry cow ration has been shown to help improve the immune status of the cow and in some cases has been associated with reducing the incidence of retained placentas and reducing SCC.

Following these general recommendations should result in cows calving with fewer metabolic problems such as dystocia, retained placentas, milk fever, ketosis, displaced abomasums and lower clinical and sub clinical mastitis (high somatic cell counts). The cows should also go on feed faster and have higher early lactation milk production. This should result in more milk production during the lactation, lower medication and vet bills and lower culling rates during early lactation. Extensive research over the past 20 years has shown that each 1 pound increase in early lactation peak milk yield (the highest daily milk production occurring during the first 60 days of lactation) adds around 200 pounds to the total lactation production. For example, an additional 5 pounds of peak milk yield will produce an additional 1,000 pounds of milk during the lactation. At \$15.00 per cwt, this is worth \$150 per cow or \$15,000 in extra income for a 100 cow dairy.

## **EARLY NEWBORN CALF CARE**

In addition to dry cow management, calf management during and shortly after calving contributes significantly to the health, survival rates and future growth rates of calves. With heifer calves worth \$300-\$500 and replacement heifers selling for \$1,800-\$2,200, losing 10-20% of young calves due to preventable disease problems can also cost you a lot of money very quickly.

Raising healthy calves begins at birth. In order for calves to get a good start in life, proper management of the cow and the calving environment is necessary. Stress should be minimized and exposure to infectious diseases limited. This can be achieved with good housing, sanitation, and controlling possible disease carriers such as people, animals, and equipment. The maternity area should be as clean and dry. If maternity pens are available, they should be well-bedded and draft free. The calf should be removed from its dam as soon as possible after birth. The longer a calf remains with the cow in the calving area, the greater the risk of exposure to infectious disease causing organisms. The calf's navel should be dipped after birth and again 12 hours later with strong tincture of iodine (at least 7%) to prevent bacteria from entering the open umbilical cord and to help seal and dry the cord. Once removed from the dam, the calf should be placed in a separate clean, dry, well-ventilated, and draft-free area such as a hutch or calf barn. Calves should not come in contact with cows or other calves. Avoid placing a wet newborn calf outside in cold weather (yes, even in Louisiana) until it dries completely and receives colostrum.

After the immediate care has been given at calving, colostrum must be fed to the calf. A sound colostrum management program is essential in raising healthy dairy calves. Colostrum is the first and most important feed given to a newborn calf. It is the primary source of nutrients for the calf and also provides essential and irreplaceable antibodies. True colostrum is obtained from the first milking only, while milk from later milkings is inferior to colostrum in nutritional and immunological value. Colostrum allows the calf to achieve immediate immune protection from diseases until its own immune system can produce antibodies at about 4 weeks of age. The three essential factors to consider in colostrum feeding and management are quality, quantity, and time. The colostrum should be fed as soon as possible after birth, preferably within 1 to 3 hours. If the calf won't drink, use an esophageal feeder to make sure the colostrum is consumed. Follow up with another feeding of colostrum about 12 hours later. The calf's ability to absorb the antibodies declines within hours after birth, and by 24 hours the intestine is closed to absorption. Colostrum should be fed at 12 to 15% of the calf's body weight. On average a calf should receive 3 to 4 quarts at the first feeding, and an equal amount should be provided for a total of 6 to 8 quarts in the first 25 hours of life. Fresh colostrum from the dam is best, provided it is of good quality. It is a good idea to keep some good quality colostrum in the freezer as "insurance". Quality can be checked with a colostrometer if available or by visual observation. Do not feed colostrum from cows that leaked prior to calving or colostrum that is thin, watery, or bloody. After adequate colostrum has been provided, calves can be fed transition milk or milk replacer beginning at the third or fourth feeding.

The calves are the future lactating cows on the farm, so ensuring their health and well-being is vital to the dairy operation. Following these simple procedures at the time of birth will help them get a healthy start in life.

We live in an ever changing world. This is especially true in the dairy industry. Ever increasing costs for feed, medications, fuel, fertilizer, insurance and other costs combined with relatively stagnant milk prices, make it critical for dairy farmers to adapt their business and management practices to stay profitable.

Adopting well-researched and well-documented management practices for managing dry cows, fresh cows and newborn calves can help your dairy enterprise stay profitable.

Unfortunately, sticking with traditional management practices simply because we are comfortable with them may not be conducive to the long term financial health of your dairy enterprise.

Are you ready for calving season? For more information on any of the management topics listed above, contact your county agent or the LSU Department of Dairy Science at 225-578-4411.

## **The 2004 Northeast Dairy Farm Survey**

Results of the annual profitability assessment of dairy enterprises in the Northeast Farm Credit system were recently published in the 2004 Northeast Dairy Farm Survey. The survey includes 5 years of data from 549 dairy enterprises in New York, New England and New Jersey. Table 1 contains the summary of the ranges of profitability in the survey. Analysts divided the 549 herds in quartiles based on their reported profits generated in 2004: 138 herds with an average of 137 cows were in the bottom 25% for profitability, and 137 herds with an average of 246 cows were in the top 25% .

**Table 1. Range of Profitability**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Bottom 25%</b>	<b>All Herd Average</b>	<b>Top 25%</b>
<b>Number of Herds</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Average Cows/Herd</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>246</b>
<b>Milk Sold</b>			
<b>Per Cow (lbs)</b>	<b>18,777</b>	<b>20,999</b>	<b>22,540</b>
<b>Per Worker (lbs)</b>	<b>643,125</b>	<b>965,960</b>	<b>1,108,960</b>
<b>Net Cost of Production/cwt</b>	<b>\$16.92</b>	<b>\$14.53</b>	<b>\$13.04</b>
<b>Net Earnings</b>			
<b>Per Farm</b>	<b>(\$959)</b>	<b>\$116,840</b>	<b>\$223,368</b>
<b>Per Cow</b>	<b>(\$7)</b>	<b>\$508</b>	<b>\$908</b>
<b>Per Cwt</b>	<b>(\$.04)</b>	<b>\$2.42</b>	<b>\$4.03</b>
<b>Return on Assets (%)</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>12.6</b>
<b>Return on Equity</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>16.7</b>

*ROA/ROE calculations do not include asset appreciation*

*Source: 2004 Northeast Dairy Farm Summary*

According to the survey, not every dairy enterprise was profitable last year, despite record high milk prices. Profitability ranged from -\$7.00 per cow for the bottom 25% of farms to \$908.00 per cow for the top 25% of farms: a difference of \$915 per cow. Farms in the bottom 25% averaged 18,777 lbs of milk sold per cow; 643,125 lbs of milk sold per worker and a net cost of production of **\$16.92** per cwt. These enterprises showed a net annual loss of \$959 per farm; \$7.00 per cow; and \$.04 per cwt.

In contrast, farms in the top 25% averaged 22,450 lbs of milk sold per cow; 1.11 million lbs of milk sold per worker; and a net cost of production of **\$13.04** per cwt. These enterprises also showed net annual earnings of \$223,368 per farm; \$908 per cow; and \$4.03 per cwt.

The difference in Return on Assets between the bottom 25% and the top 25% was 11.7%; while the difference in Return on Equity between the two groups was 16.8%.

The report's authors conclude there is no simple explanation to the wide variation in profitability. The disparity in profitability appears to be the interaction of many factors. Also, there does not appear to be a unique combination of factors shared by all the high profit dairies.

"High milk production per cow certainly influences profitability," the authors stated. "However, high production per cow alone does not guarantee superior profitability, as a significant number of high production dairies fall in the lower profit groups. **However, very few low production dairies fall in the top profit group.**"

"The importance of balancing production with total costs in achieving superior profitability is much more obvious," the report continues. "As net cost of production decreases, the possibility of higher profits increases."

The bottom line: there are no cookie-cutter molds for guaranteeing a dairy enterprise will be profitable. High milk prices alone may relieve some of the pressures of increasing input costs. However, average milk production per cow, herd size, cost controls, savvy purchasing, labor management, capital spending priorities and eliminating preventable losses all have a role in generating positive financial success for a dairy enterprise. The best ways to increase your chances of financial successes are:

1. Develop a strategic plan for your dairy enterprise that includes both short and long term goals and objectives that are both realistic and can be accomplished.
2. Get lots of realistic input from knowledgeable people such as your fellow dairy farmers, lenders, veterinarians, feed reps, extension agents, etc., and especially your spouse. The more information you have from a variety of sources, the more sound decisions you can make. Don't rely solely on one source; shop around for knowledge just like you would for a new truck.
3. Be flexible. Change is something that occurs every day in each of our lives; sometimes voluntarily, sometimes involuntarily. Being willing and able to adapt to changes is one of the basic keys to success in the dairy industry just as it is in all other businesses. Constantly surveying the horizon for changes in the dairy industry and being able to anticipate and act on those changes may be critical for the future financial stability of your dairy enterprise and your family.

## **EPA Announces New Deadline for Signing Animal Feeding Operations Air Quality Compliance Agreements**

The U.S. Environment Protection Agency (EPA) has delayed once more the deadline for producers interested in signing up for the Animal Feeding Operations (AFOs) Air Quality Compliance Agreement. *The new deadline is July 29, 2005.* The contract is another instrument which EPA has put forth to ensure that CAFOs/AFOs are in conformity with the legislation established in the Clean Air Act (CAA), the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA). Livestock and poultry wastes can emit considerable amounts of ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>). The EPCRA rules that any emission of extremely hazardous substances above a certain threshold must be immediately reported to the appropriate authorities. The threshold for NH<sub>3</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>S is 100 lb within any 24-h period. Ammonia in the urine and feces of dairy cattle begins to volatilize (convert to gaseous form) as soon as it is excreted. A number of factors such as over-feeding protein in the diet may contribute to the amount of ammonia volatilized from dairy cattle excretions. Spreading manure without incorporation in the soil could result in almost complete volatilization of ammonia. Outside factors such as air temperature and wind speed will also influence how ammonia is dispersed in the environment.

Based on previous research, emissions can vary widely from farm to farm, but under certain circumstances, as few as 100 cows could result in non-compliance with EPCRA. Farmers who decide to sign the Compliance Agreement will have to pay a fine, contribute to a fund for a nationwide monitoring program and apply for air permits, among other requirements. The LSU Agcenter recommends any dairy farmer in Louisiana interested in signing the agreement first contact an attorney for appropriate legal advice.

For more information, contact Dr. Vinicius Moreira, Southeast Research Station, at (985) 839-2322; or go to the EPA website for the AFOs Air Quality Compliance Agreement at: <http://www.epa.gov>.

## **4-H University Dairy Cattle Judging Contest**

The dairy cattle judging contest at 4-H University (formerly 4-H Short Course) was held on Wednesday, June 22, 2005 at the LSU Teaching, Extension and Research farm on the campus in Baton Rouge. The winning team was from Lafourche Parish and the team members were Meagan Hebert, Jerry Martin and John Martin. The high individual in the contest was Jerry Martin from the first place team and the high individual not on the winning team was Jena Richard from Lafayette Parish. The team from Lafourche along with Jena Richard will compete in October at the National 4-H Dairy Cattle Judging Contest in Madison, Wisconsin. The following is a list of the top ten teams and individuals.

<b><u>Rank</u></b>	<b><u>Parish Team</u></b>	<b><u>Contestant</u></b>	<b><u>Parish Team</u></b>
1	Lafourche 1	Jerry Martin	Lafourche 1
2	Lafayette	Jena Richard	Lafayette
3	Livingston 2	Meagan Hebert	Lafourche 1
4	Jeff. Davis 1	Tyler Aucoin	Livingston 1
5	West Baton Rouge	Jake Hoover	Livingston 2
6	Assumption	Abby Schexnayder	Assumption
7	Jeff. Davis 2	Laremy Stilley	Livingston 2
8	Lafourche 2	Kayla Mouch	West Baton Rouge
9	Livingston 1	Jade Treme	Jeff. Davis 1
10	Washington 1	Derek Fontenot	Evangeline

## TOP HERDS BY ENERGY CORRECTED MILK (ALL COWS)

NAME	DATE	BR	COWS	DIM	ECM	MILK	FAT%	PRO%	RHA
LSU DAIRY	5/17	H	79	204	74.1	76.9	3.4	2.9	21451
SE LA EXP STATION	5/21	H	205	200	66.8	67.7	3.6	2.9	21618
LOUISIANA TECH DAIRY	5/9	H	48	204	61.0	66.1	3.1	2.8	18600
BILLY ANDREWS	5/20	H	98	212	60.4	58.0	3.9	3.2	18920
C JOHNSON & W LITWILLER	5/25	H	97	215	60.1	63.0	3.4	2.8	19571
J PAUL ALFORD	5/2	X	109	186	59.5	61.3	3.4	3.0	19474
GALEN NIGHTINGALE	5/25	H	74	235	58.5	63.5	3.2	2.7	20615
BROWN DAIRY FARM	5/12	H	189	189	57.4	59.1	3.4	3.0	17519
JOHN FAUNCE JR DAIRY	5/3	H	231	221	56.0	57.3	3.4	3.1	18128
PHILLIP ROBERTS	5/17	H	163	168	54.1	54.3	3.5	3.2	16022
FARMER'S DAIRY	5/11	H	46	235	53.9	56.4	3.3	2.9	18773
RAYMOND SCHMIDT	5/19	H	73	260	53.5	53.3	3.8	2.8	17350
HILL FARM RESEARCH STATION	5/19	J	65	125	53.4	54.4	3.2	3.5	15895
LOUISIANA TECH DAIRY	5/9	J	36	202	51.4	49.0	3.8	3.4	13378
DUSTY SCHILLING	5/2	H	107	181	50.2	53.3	3.3	2.8	17805
KARIE AND BRAD BLADES	5/16	H	179	291	49.3	51.0	3.4	3.1	17965
LANNY CONERLY	5/5	H	57	182	48.8	48.2	3.6	3.2	13437
CIRCLE G FARMS	5/13	H	159	205	48.7	50.5	3.4	2.9	17979
RUSSELL AND RUSTY CREEL	5/13	H	29	204	48.4	50.7	3.4	2.9	18225
MARVIN FLETCHER	5/12	H	163	248	48.3	50.0	3.5	2.8	18744

## TOP HERDS BY ENERGY CORRECTED MILK (ALL COWS)

NAME	DATE	BR	COWS	DIM	ECM	MILK	FAT%	PRO%	RHA
LSU DAIRY	6/15	H	79	211	63.5	64.5	3.6	2.9	21808
SE LA EXP STATION	6/16	H	204	218	60.3	60.5	3.6	3.0	21661
BILLY ANDREWS	6/28	H	96	239	58.0	59.8	3.5	2.9	19238
KIRBY VARNADO	6/21	H	103	192	56.3	59.1	3.4	2.8	18941
LADD BLADES	6/3	H	216	238	54.6	55.1	3.6	3.0	20019
HILL FARM RESEARCH STATION	6/15	J	59	142	51.5	51.6	3.4	3.5	16078
FARMER'S DAIRY	6/6	H	48	242	51.2	50.4	3.7	3.0	18686
J PAUL ALFORD	6/6	X	107	199	50.4	51.4	3.6	2.9	19207
DARON MILEY	6/21	H	110	219	50.4	49.8	3.7	3.0	16652
O B MITCHELL	5/30	X	51	244	49.9	53.0	3.2	3.0	17163
BROWN DAIRY FARM	6/22	H	184	224	49.8	51.8	3.4	2.9	17800
EUGENE ROBERTSON	6/13	H	188	242	47.3	49.7	3.2	3.1	18916
UDDER FRESH	6/14	H	99	230	46.8	47.8	3.4	3.2	17860
DUSTY SCHILLING	6/21	H	108	198	46.0	47.3	3.6	2.7	17503
MARK WASKOM	6/23	H	82	284	46.0	47.6	3.4	3.0	17130
PHILLIP ROBERTS	6/16	H	159	192	45.5	47.0	3.3	3.1	16114
RUSSELL AND RUSTY CREEL	6/9	H	29	207	44.8	47.2	3.3	2.9	18370
JOHN FAUNCE JR DAIRY	6/6	H	238	223	44.5	44.0	3.7	3.0	18063
LOUISIANA TECH DAIRY	6/2	H	47	216	44.2	47.1	3.3	2.7	18710
BOBBY GOINGS	6/3	H	108	204	43.6	43.2	3.7	3.0	16703

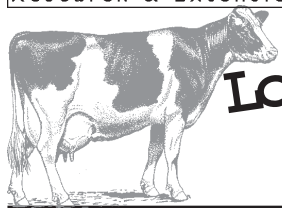
**TOP HERDS BY WEIGHTED AVERAGE TEST DAY SOMATIC CELL COUNT**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>BR</b>	<b>COWS</b>	<b>DIM</b>	<b>SCC</b>	<b>ECM</b>	<b>MILK</b>	<b>FAT%</b>	<b>PRO%</b>	<b>RHA</b>
HILL FARM RESEARCH STATION	5/19	J	65	125	130	53.4	54.4	3.2	3.5	15895
LSU DAIRY	5/17	H	79	204	132	74.1	76.9	3.4	2.9	21451
LANNY CONERLY	5/5	H	57	182	149	48.8	48.2	3.6	3.2	13437
M & B DAIRY FARM INC.	5/9	H	153	198	171	46.0	47.8	3.5	2.8	16542
PHILLIP ROBERTS	5/17	X	141	165	172	52.3	53.0	3.4	3.2	14913
NED SIMMONS	5/4	H	165	209	175	42.8	40.8	3.8	3.4	13793
JACKSON BRUMFIELD	5/15	H	67	162	177	.	34.7	.	.	12675
SE LA EXP STATION	5/21	H	205	200	202	66.8	67.7	3.6	2.9	21618
CIRCLE G FARMS	5/13	H	159	205	213	48.7	50.5	3.4	2.9	17979
MARVIN FLETCHER	5/12	H	163	248	233	48.3	50.0	3.5	2.8	18744
GEORGE HYDE	5/15	H	99	198	251	.	57.6	.	.	16545
LANNY CONERLY	5/5	H	194	181	279	48.1	48.3	3.5	3.1	14059
J PAUL ALFORD	5/2	X	109	186	286	59.5	61.3	3.4	3.0	19474
NOLAN D ALFORD	5/9	H	116	193	293	43.8	45.3	3.3	3.1	13184
DUSTY SCHILLING	5/2	H	107	181	303	50.2	53.3	3.3	2.8	17805
ROBERT POTTS	5/23	H	139	224	305	40.6	42.3	3.3	3.1	16138
CLINTON STEVENS	5/4	H	124	224	309	46.7	47.8	3.3	3.3	15364
MARLYNN FARMS	5/25	X	131	220	317	35.7	38.9	3.1	2.8	13912
TO-BEV FARMS	5/19	H	194	224	325	41.8	45.4	3.1	2.9	17346
JEFF & MARY ADDISON	5/18	J	65	177	326	40.6	38.5	3.8	3.4	11744

**TOP HERDS BY WEIGHTED AVERAGE TEST DAY SOMATIC CELL COUNT**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>BR</b>	<b>COWS</b>	<b>DIM</b>	<b>SCC</b>	<b>ECM</b>	<b>MILK</b>	<b>FAT%</b>	<b>PRO%</b>	<b>RHA</b>
PHILLIP ROBERTS	6/16	X	140	191	96	44.0	43.3	3.6	3.3	14992
HILL FARM RESEARCH STATION	6/15	J	59	142	173	51.5	51.6	3.4	3.5	16078
LSU DAIRY	6/15	H	79	211	193	63.5	64.5	3.6	2.9	21808
BANKSTONS UDDERWISE DAIRY	6/14	H	54	238	199	28.0	28.4	3.6	2.8	12913
CIRCLE G FARMS	6/17	H	159	222	234	42.5	43.4	3.6	2.7	17754
LANNY CONERLY	6/13	H	58	202	244	33.9	34.6	3.4	3.2	13790
PAT HENDRY	6/12	H	77	228	266	.	39.7	.	.	12388
SE LA EXP STATION	6/16	H	204	218	280	60.3	60.5	3.6	3.0	21661
TO-BEV FARMS	6/21	H	196	226	287	35.5	38.1	3.1	2.9	17238
MARLYNN FARMS	6/27	X	128	232	290	36.4	37.9	3.3	3.0	13809
ROYCE SALLEY	5/30	X	263	185	300	34.2	35.9	3.3	2.9	12961
RODNEY HOLDEN	5/30	H	81	240	310	41.9	42.2	3.5	3.2	15185
HILL FARM RESEARCH STATION	6/15	J	71	257	312	33.8	29.9	4.3	3.7	11877
J PAUL ALFORD	6/6	X	107	199	315	50.4	51.4	3.6	2.9	19207
BOBBY GOINGS	6/3	H	108	204	326	43.6	43.2	3.7	3.0	16703
LADD BLADES	6/3	H	216	238	348	54.6	55.1	3.6	3.0	20019
CLINTON STEVENS	6/1	H	125	242	354	40.3	40.5	3.6	3.1	15207
ROBERT HUTCHINSON, JR.	6/22	X	106	193	361	.	39.8	.	.	13871
LOUISIANA TECH DAIRY	6/2	H	47	216	362	44.2	47.1	3.3	2.7	18710
ROBERT POTTS	6/22	H	139	228	362	41.2	42.6	3.4	2.9	16104

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Dairy Science Building  
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Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803



Louisiana

# Dairy Digest

*Your Herd Management Resource*

Contact your county agent  
for more information on any  
dairy herd management topic.

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