



Integrated Sustainable Dairy Program

2011 Annual Report

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Summary

In Progress Annual Report

Thus far, three modules have already taken place. There are an additional four modules scheduled for 2012 and one module scheduled for 2013. Each module was designed for dairy veterinary practitioners and Extension specialists. A total of 40 participants from the north central region (OH, WI, and IN) and other States (PA and NY) attended these three modules. The program provided a frame work to develop cutting edge applied skills in dairy production medicine and decision making. Educational materials were delivered through in-class lectures followed by case-based learning, group discussions, and participant presentations resulting from an out-of-class assignment. Veterinarians reported that the overall program, presentations, and discussions were useful. Attendees found the presented information relevant for their work and of great immediate use to them. Participants developed quantitative and personal skills that can be used to promote and expand their production medicine services. Importance of teamwork and communication styles, developing and improving messages, elements for effective management of meetings, and conflict management styles were listed as learned concepts that participants can apply in their practices. This program has important implications for dairy veterinarians because they are a vital source of information for dairy producers.

Objectives/Performance Targets

Module 1 - Building communication skills

Module #1 consisted of leadership and personal effectiveness. The program consisted of the following topics: insights of participants; communication styles; personality influences; group dynamics/effective teams; rationale and interpersonal skills in team problem solving; communication lab-survival; communication model; re-write messages; elements of effective listening; conflict management; critical thinking, decision making and priority setting; elements of effective management of meetings and facilitation; message mapping; and communication limitations. Educational materials were delivered through in-class lectures followed by case-based learning, group discussions, and participant presentations

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Module 2 - Developing grazing management skills

Module #2 consisted of grazing and reproductive management in dairy herds. The program consisted of the following topics: measurement of pasture growth; harvested forages (Quality, available tools to assess it, strategies to store hay or silage under grazing conditions); developing a forage chain for grazing-based dairies; forages to extend the grazing season; management of tall fescue and alfalfa; treatment strategies for uterine diseases in certified organic dairy herds; pregnancy losses in dairy cows; treatment strategies for anovular dairy cows; and assessment of reproductive records. Veterinarians reported that the overall program, presentations, and discussions were useful.

Module 3 - Developing best health management practices for certified organic dairy herds

Module #3 consisted of health management practices for certified organic dairy cattle. The program consisted of the following topics: understand holistic principles for health management of livestock; allowed drugs and pain management strategies; risk factors and treatment options for uterine disease in dairy cattle; risk factors and treatment options for scour in calves; and principles of udder health and dry-off strategy.

Accomplishments/Milestones

Accomplishments:

1) Delivery of three educational modules: ~40 hours of learning for 40 participants (some of them attended all three modules) serving an estimated of 186,000 dairy cows in 469 herds. 2) Development of an active network of practicing veterinarians and extension specialists.

2) Development of evaluation instruments to assess participants' satisfaction and knowledge gain: Several evaluation instruments (survey, case-study, tests of knowledge, and participant's satisfaction) were developed.

Impacts and Contributions/Outcomes

Outputs

- 1) Proceedings notebook (also distributed to other participants that did not attend specific module personally).
- 2) Evaluation instruments that have application for other programs.
- 3) One scientific publication (abstract).
- 4) Development of a case-study (uterine disease) for teaching professional students, practicing veterinarians, and dairy producers.

Outcomes

- 1) Short-term: Participants reported that the overall program, presentations, and discussions were useful. Also, they found the presented information relevant for their work and of great immediate use to them.
- 2) Intermediate-term: A) The presented materials and the implemented educational delivery methods substantially increased the knowledge level of the attendees. B) An active network of practicing veterinarians and Extension specialists was developed.

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