



TAD News

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New TB requirements good for Texas dairies

Since the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) adopted new bovine tuberculosis (TB) rules in October, it has come to my attention that some of you are receiving comments and questions in opposition to the rule change. It is important to note that when any industry rule change is adopted, you need to be aware of the change and understand how it will impact your business.

Manager's Update
John Cowan

Over the past year, TAD has reported on the proposed rule changes with the intent to keep you informed that they were coming. With the adjacent states of New Mexico, Oklahoma and Colorado having active cases of bovine TB, Texas needed to take action to protect your dairy herds and the state's TB-free status.

If Texas loses that rating, it can affect your ability to freely move dairy cattle without additional constraints, which likely would be costly to you. True, the new TB rules require you to make two major changes – identify dairy cattle at a younger age before movement and test for TB at an earlier age.

These are radical changes; however, dairymen view these changes as ones that will protect our state's dairy herds from rogue outbreaks of bovine TB that may originate when young dairy animals are transported across state lines from birthplace to facilities where they are grown to production age.

Some livestock operators oppose the new rules because they now will have to keep additional records on dairy cattle movement. Also, one dairyman told me, "You have just added cost to that day-old bull calf by making me put a tag in its ear that I can't get back at the sale barn." TAHC has assured me that it is going to work with dairymen on animal identification over the coming months to assist you and work out your concerns. ■

TAD Board Action

The Texas Association of Dairymen Board of Directors took the following action during its October meeting in Grapevine:

- Approved a \$2,000 donation to the Farmers for Clean Air & Water Coalition.
- Reviewed, along with Dr. Pete Gibbs and Dr. Roland Smith with Texas A&M University and Texas Cooperative Extension, the current state dairy specialist vacancy. Filling the vacancy, and where that position should be located, were discussed, but no action was taken.
- Heard a proposal from a law firm to assist TAD and its dairymen members with statewide TCEQ permitting. No action was taken.
- Heard a report that the TAD/Texas Cooperative Education calendars for 2008 are progressing and will be distributed in mid December.

The next TAD board meeting will be Dec. 13-14 at the Hotel Doral Tesoro in North Fort Worth. ■

Perry appoints Shaw to TCEQ

Gov. Rick Perry on Nov. 1 appointed Dr. Bryan W. Shaw of Bryan to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for a term to expire Aug. 31, 2013. Shaw replaces Kathleen White, whose term expired. The commission establishes, oversees and implements clean air, clean water and other environmental policies for the State of Texas.

Shaw is an associate professor in the Biological and Agricultural Engineering Department of Texas A&M University with many of his courses focused on air pollution engineering. The majority of his research at A&M concentrates on air pollution, air pollution abatement, dispersion model development and emission factor development. Shaw is associate director of the Center for Agricultural Air Quality Engineering and Science, and formerly served as Acting Lead Scientist for Air Quality and Special Assistant to the Chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Shaw is a member of several committees for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Science Advisory Board. He also is a member of the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Agricultural Air Quality Task Force. ■

Facility opens in Central Texas to convert manure to usable energy

The Texas Association of Dairymen (TAD) joined Texas elected officials and others in Stephenville on Nov. 5 to celebrate the grand opening of Huckabay Ridge, a facility that will take the manure from thousands of Central Texas cows and convert it into energy for consumer use.

The facility, operated by Microgy, a subsidiary of Environmental Power Corp., will be North America's largest renewable natural gas facility. By processing the manure from up to 10,000 cows and blending it with other waste, such as restaurant grease, the facility will generate pipeline-grade methane to be sold and delivered via a natural gas pipeline. The Lower Colorado River Authority already has agreed to buy gas from the facility.

Ten local dairies already are moving their dairy manure to Huckabay Ridge's compost yard for use in the digester.

"The Texas Association of Dairymen strongly supports any technology or process which helps a dairy to utilize the dairy's byproduct in a beneficial way," said John Cowan, TAD's executive director. "We commend Environmental Power Corp. and other companies that are taking innovative steps to provide new sources of energy in an environmentally sustainable manner."

The Huckabay Ridge facility project is one of several high-tech facilities planned or underway in Central and West Texas designed to convert manure into energy.

"Experts predict our state could face an energy shortage in the not-so-distant future," Cowan said. "At the same time,



(From left) State Rep. Sid Miller (R-Stephenville), Texas Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples and Texas Comptroller Susan Combs help cut the ribbon on the company's Huckabay Ridge project near Stephenville

there are about 335,000 dairy cows in Texas that never stop producing manure along with milk. Dairy producers are always searching for new methods of manure management that do not harm the environment.

"We hope to work with other companies in the future to turn manure into usable energy." ■

Dairy specialist leaves Texas

By Dr. Tamilee Nennich

Although newsletter articles I write are usually an attempt to impart a few words of wisdom, I am afraid that this article is a farewell. I have accepted an Extension Dairy position at Purdue University in Indiana. The decision to move was a very difficult one, but I am excited about the opportunity to be closer to family.

Leaving the Texas dairy industry was one of the factors that made the decision to move the hardest. During my time in Texas, I had the opportunity to get to know some of the best dairymen in the country. No matter what the challenges are, whether there is a drought or flooding, heat stress, or environmental issues, Texas dairymen meet the challenges head on and work hard to care for their animals and the environment.

Being involved with the Texas dairy industry has been a wonderful experience. I have sincerely enjoyed working for Texas A&M University, and I will not forget the great experiences and knowledge I gained during my time here. I will miss all of my friends and colleagues in the Texas dairy industry, and I hope that our paths cross in the future. ■



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