



TAD News

August 2008

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Next TAD Board Meeting:
1 p.m., Aug. 28
Grapevine, Texas

Group studying future needs of industry

Several dairymen including TAD President Mark Long, John Paul Heavyside, Al Squires and Al Fiske along with myself attended an Aug. 14 meeting of the Southern Great Plains Dairy Consortium (SGPDC) in Lubbock to discuss key issues facing the dairy industry in the Southwest.

Manager's Update
John Cowan

About 40 other academic members of the SGPDC also attended the meeting, as did David Alhem from Hillmar Cheese, who represented the manufacturing side of the dairy industry. Academic institutions participating included Texas Tech University (which hosted the event), Texas A&M University, Tarleton State University, The University of Arizona, New Mexico State University, West Texas A&M University and Texas Agri Life Sciences.

The workshop's purpose was for the faculty and industry representatives to work as a team to: (a) develop specific action plans to directly address producer-identified priority issues within three years; (b) increase coordination among member institutions of research, extension or teaching programs/projects targeting dairy producers or processors; and (c) initiate plans for interdisciplinary research/extension/teaching grant proposals that will generate new funding and new knowledge aimed at identifiable producer benefits.

The workshop resulted in good discussion on many issues, with water the top rated topic.

Other topics discussed included environmental quality, regulatory agency staff training, human resource needs and development, economic issues, dairy production, energy resources and dairy products quality.

The Academic Management Committee will take the discussion topics and ideas generated from participants and further compile the notes of the meeting into a summary report for the working group. ▪

Bosque Permits

State judge hears testimony in long-term Hidden View permit saga

The long-running quest of the Willy DeJong family to gain an individual permit for its Dublin area Hidden View dairy reached a State hearing room in Austin for almost two days of testimony starting on Aug. 19.

The Texas Association of Dairymen, which has supported Hidden View and other dairies during their permit application processes at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), attended the hearing.

A judge with the State Office of Administrative Hearings will decide whether the dairy will get its permit; there is no timetable for a decision. Hidden View was granted its individual permit in 2001, but it was rescinded after the TCEQ failed to notify the City of Waco.

Although the 2006 settlement with the City of Waco barred the city from continuing to contest the permit, the objections were taken up by the Sierra Club.

In March, TCEQ commissioners – unable to agree whether the Sierra Club's "affected person" should have standing in the case – voted 2 to 1 to send the permit application back to the State Office of Administrative Hearings.

In addition to the Sierra Club and Hidden View dairy, the TCEQ's executive director (which recommended approval of the permit) and the TCEQ's Office of Public Interest Council also were represented.

DeJong's attorney Jim Bradbury told the judge that Hidden View not only meets current environmental regulations set out by the TCEQ, it exceeds them.

TAD continues to state publicly that continued objections and other delays in the Bosque permitting process is keeping Central Texas dairies from implementing the stronger environmental protections sought by the Sierra Club, the City of Waco and others. ▪

State to help ag producers conserve energy

Texas farmers and ranchers looking to cut back on energy costs and increase profits can get help from a state program that offers a free assessment of their resources.

The State Energy Conservation Office Texas, a division of the state comptroller's office, will examine utility costs and energy consumption in farm and business operations. Producers can also get help in finding loan and grant programs, the release states.

The energy office will hold workshops across Texas throughout August and September. For information, call EnSave at (800) 732-1399 or visit energy office online at www.seco.cpa.state.tx.us/agriculture ▪

TAD joins other ag groups to file comments on general CAFO permit

The Texas Association of Dairymen, along with other Texas agriculture livestock organizations, have filed comments with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) on the 2009 draft Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO).

TAD and other Texas livestock stakeholders have worked during the past year to review and provide input to the TCEQ staff on the proposed draft.

Because of our input, comments from stakeholders are believed to be more along the lines of tweaking the final documents rather than major reworking of the permit language.

Once the TCEQ staff evaluates stakeholder comments and incorporates revisions to the draft permit language, TCEQ will seek consensus with the permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

TAD, along with other environmental provisional consultants and the other livestock organizations, view the proposed draft general CAFO permit as something dairy producers can comply with and operate their farm under. ▪

APHIS considering TB rule change

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing an amendment to the regulations regarding the payment of indemnity for animals destroyed because of bovine tuberculosis.

The TAD Board at its August meeting will be considering formal comments to submit on the proposed rule. All comments must be submitted to the USDA by Sept. 22.

The rule change – which will impact dairy farmers across the country – will require that an approved herd plan be in place before the payment and indemnity. In addition, 10 percent of the gross indemnity payment would be withheld by APHIS until the conditions of an approved herd plan have been implemented. Also, payments of federal indemnity would be denied for a herd whose owner failed to follow the provisions of an approved herd plan, or has violated the conditions of an approved herd plan.

APHIS believes these proposed changes would further TB eradication efforts in the United States and protect livestock not affected with tuberculosis from the disease.

Since 1998, at least four of the 78 livestock herds with TB were on premises where herds previously had been affected with TB and had either been depopulated and the herd owners paid federal and state indemnity or undergone the approved quarantine, test and removal program.

The changes would place more responsibility on owners to adhere to prescribed mitigation measures and protect their herds from reinfection, APHIS says. ▪

TIAER gets new director

Dan Hunter has been named director of the Texas Institute of Applied Environmental Research (TIAER) based at Tarleton State University. Hunter, previously the department's assistant director since 2006, has taken over founding Executive Director Ron Jones' role in leading the multidisciplinary research center. ▪



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