



TAD News

March 2009

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TAD Board Meeting:
1 p.m., April 1
Austin, Texas

TAD taking farm focus to the Capitol dome

Dairy farm families across the Southwest are facing some of the most difficult times in recent memory from depressed milk prices and high operating costs on the farm, to a severe drought that has limited forage production.

When times are tough for our farmers as they are today, those who don't know your business or care about your business continue their attack against animal agriculture.

These times require us to strengthen our resolve, reach down to more firmly pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and maybe tighten our belts a little more. I know all of you reading this already have done so.

I want you to know that the Texas Association of Dairymen's Board is keenly aware of these tough times. TAD will continue to work on your behalf with local, state and federal agencies which, despite your tough times, don't work with the same budget you have. Consequently, we will confront onerous or bad legislation or proposed agency rule changes that burden you with additional regulations.

On the federal level, TAD is working with all Texas members of Congress and their staffs to educate them about what you face on a daily basis and ask them to vote against bills or prohibit regulations that would strangle the nation's dairy farm families.

With the Texas Legislature in full swing, TAD is working hard for you in Austin. In fact, the TAD Board will hold a legislative day in Austin on April 2. Board members will visit lawmakers, sit in on committee hearings and participate in a luncheon with other agriculture groups in order to bring attention to the importance of keeping dairy and other agriculture strong in Texas.

TAD also is working in Austin with other organizations to strengthen our front with legislators, such as a recent decision by the TAD Board to support the Texas Employers for Immigration Reform.

As we work on your behalf, we are striving to keep you informed through the "Capitol Report" feature in this and each monthly newsletter (see below). Please don't hesitate to contact TAD if there is an issue of particular interest to you. ▪

Manager's Update

John Cowan

Capitol Report

Lawmakers finally start hearings, will hear from TAD members April 2

By Shayne Woodard

After a slow start due to the election of a new House Speaker and the wait for committee assignments, bills are finally beginning to be heard in committee. Friday, March 13, was technically the deadline to file bills for the session, and the final count was predicted to top 4,000.

On the House side, the Agriculture & Livestock Committee has been listening to invited testimony from state agencies, who have been educating the committee on the mission and operations of each agency.

Much focus has centered on House Appropriations, which is crafting a state budget in tough economic times, and the Select Committee on Federal Economic Stabilization Funding, which is exploring how the state can best take advantage of federal stimulus funds.

Over on the Senate side, action ground to a halt – both on the floor and in committee – as the Senate met for 23 hours straight as a Committee of the Whole before passing 20-12, along party lines, the Voter ID bill. Now the Senate will vote again on it as the full Senate.

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State lawmakers will get an education on dairy issues and other agriculture topics on April 1-2, when the TAD Board holds its monthly meeting in Austin, attends committee hearings and visits Texas legislative offices.

TAD and other groups also will participate April 2 in the Taste Texas Agriculture Luncheon, held in tents on the Capitol grounds by the Texas Agricultural Council for lawmakers and their staffs every session. ▪

Mark your calendar for these events

A number of education and training events are scheduled in the coming weeks that might be of interest to dairy producers.

April 6-7 – Mid-South Ruminant Nutrition Conference, Arlington

The annual conference features a golf tournament and a number of educational sessions. For details, visit www.txanc.org or contact Ellen Jordan, AgriLife Extension Dairy Specialist, (972) 952-9212.

April 14 – Spring Dairy Outreach Program Area (DOPA) Training, Comanche County.

Contact: Whit Weems, AgriLife Extension County Agent, (325) 356-2539.

TAD Board Action

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

- Elected new Board officers and sat new Board members (see Board list on Page 1).
- Approved reducing TAD member fees from $\frac{3}{4}$ cents per hundredweight to $\frac{1}{2}$ cent per hundredweight, effective March 1. (The fee is paid monthly by each member cooperative based on Texas milk volume for that month)
- Approved paying \$5,000 to Easterling Environmental Consultants to support the filing of a Request For Proposal (RFP) with USDA/NRCS under the Agriculture Water Enhancement Program (AWEP). The RFP would request AWEP funds to assist dairy producers in the Lake Fork, Lake Bob Sandlin and Lake Arrowhead watershed areas with conservation practices allowed under the former EQIP guidelines.
- Heard an update regarding Federal EPA Region 6 farm inspections.

TAD's next Board meeting and legislative day will be April 1-2 in Austin. ▀



Left to right: Jim Dickrell, editor, Dairy Today; Margret and Harry DeWit,; and Connie Tipton, IDFA president and CEO.

DeWits receive national dairy award

Harry and Margaret DeWit, owners of High Plains Dairy in Friona, were named the 2009 Innovative Dairy Farmer of the Year by the International Dairy Foods Association's Dairy Forum 2009.

In its 11th year, the award recognizes U.S. dairy producers who apply creativity, excellence and forward thinking to achieve greater on-farm productivity and improved milk marketing.



Breaking Ground on the Future:

TAD – represented by Manager John Cowan (fourth from left) – participated in the February groundbreaking for the Southwest Regional Dairy Center at Tarleton State University. The center, designed to be a model dairy, is expected to be a premier learning and research dairy serving Texas and surrounding states.



Texas Association of Dairymen
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