

Dairy Feed Management

New Penn State blog focuses on ag and the environment

“Where Agriculture and the Environment Meet” is a new blog developed by Sarah Dinh, Ph.D. with Penn State Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, and a member of the Penn State Dairy alliance team.

The purpose of the blog is to bring together information related to the intersection of agriculture and the environment. This area has received a lot of attention in recent years, and with the renewed focus on environmental regulations from the new administration it is even more important that those from both the agriculture and environmental sides of the discussion have one place to go for information.

The content of the blog will include shortened versions of the “Dairy and Environment” column that is published monthly in “Lancaster Farming”, summaries of the “Manure Du Jour” webinar series hosted by the Agriculture and Environment Center of Penn State, articles from the “Feed Management Planners Newsletter” distributed by Virginia Ishler at Penn State University, and any other articles or information that are relevant.

The site also contains links to agriculture and environment related sites in addition to links to other blogs by local extension educators. This would be a great side to add to your RSS feeds. Hope you find it useful!

The link to the site is <http://agenvironment.blogspot.com>



A newsletter for certified feed management planners

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Major initiative

EPA puts Chesapeake Bay watershed on ‘pollution diet’

(Source: EPA fact sheet, September 2009)

EPA will establish and oversee achievement of a strict “pollution diet” known as a Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL, to remove excess pounds of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment harming the Chesapeake Bay and its network of waterways. A fact sheet is available at http://www.epa.gov/reg3wapd/pdf/pdf_chesbay/BayTMDLFactSheet8_6.pdf

Highlights of the plan include the following:

- **Each jurisdiction in the 64,000-square-mile watershed** – Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, West Virginia and the District of Columbia - will get shares of the pollution diet.
- **The Chesapeake Bay TMDL will be supported by detailed state action plans** and a series of accountability measures to ensure that commitments to achieving clean water standards are met.
- **Scheduled for completion in December 2010**, the Bay TMDL will be the largest ever developed, yet it will allow states to target cleanup actions to local areas and sources.
- **Actions under the TMDL will complement** significant and ongoing work by EPA and its partners to restore the Bay.



This map outlines the 64,000 square-mile Chesapeake Bay watershed and the states that will receive shares of the pollution diet.

This newsletter is brought to you by:



Workshops show how:

Encourage your producers to monitor income over feed cost monthly

Please encourage your producers to attend these workshops on developing a cash flow and monitoring IOFC. These skills will help producers stay in business and show them how to manage profit BOTH during the good and bad times. If our dairy industry is to survive, we need to empower our producers with these skills. - VAI

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. – When feed costs make up 40-60% of a dairy operation's expenses, knowing your income over feed cost (IOFC) can be valuable in determining if your herd is on track or not. Penn State dairy educators have developed the Penn State Income Over Feed Cost Tool and are using it to help dairy producers across the state monitor feed costs during this current economic downturn.

This tool is now available online, free of charge, and programs will be offered across Pennsylvania this fall to help producers and their advisers learn how to use this valuable resource. "We have been monitoring income over feed cost for the Penn State dairy herd for several years," reports Virginia Ishler, manager of the Penn State Dairy Research Complex. "Last summer IOFC averaged about \$10 per cow compared to only \$4.60 per cow this summer. Unfortunately, all other expenses have stayed the same or gone up. How is the dairy industry to survive when income is dramatically reduced?"

The question led Penn State Dairy Extension educators to create the IOFC tool to help producers get in the habit of calculating and monitoring this number over time. The results

have been favorable. "Some herds have been doing a terrific job of either controlling costs and/or improving milk production so that they are optimizing IOFC even during these difficult times," explains Ishler, adding: "Other herds have been struggling and their IOFC has been negative." But, she says, regardless of where that number falls, there are opportunities to make improvements on every dairy. "The key is knowing where your herd is currently in terms of income over feed cost and the impact that any management change you make can have on profitability."

The Penn State IOFC Tool has proven to be a great benefit for Pennsylvania's Profit and Target Teams. More than 200 Profit and Target teams have been developed with training and support from Penn State Dairy Extension and the Center for Dairy Excellence. "Our Profit Team has been evaluating the valuable information the IOFC tool has to offer. It has provided us with a healthy discussion of where we are right now and areas we need to look at to improve our dairy business," notes Brandon Weary, a dairy producer from Newville, Pa.

Penn State Dairy Alliance is providing a series of educa-

tional programs this fall to show producers and their advisers how to use the Penn State IOFC tool and other resources to improve profitability. The focus will be on what producers should be evaluating in order to manage risk and avoid potential pitfalls.

Consultants who are working with Profit/Target Teams should attend "**Tools to Improve On-farm Profitability for Team Advisors**" offered September 29 at the Centre County Visitor Center, State College, Pa., and on October 1 at the Cumberland County Cooperative Extension Office in Carlisle, Pa. For more information: <http://www.das.psu.edu/dairy-alliance/education/cashflow>

Dairy producers should attend a two part-series that will help them plan a cash flow statement and use IOFC to manage profitability. For dates and sites, visit: <http://www.das.psu.edu/dairy-alliance/education/profitability>

Registration is under way for all programs. Call Penn State Dairy Alliance, toll-free, at 888-373-7232 or register online with your credit card. Dairy Alliance is a Penn State Cooperative Extension initiative.

Alliance, UT group to study climate change

(Source: *Forrest Laws, Farm Press Editorial Staff, Aug 4, 2009*)

With the debate over climate change seeming to heat up daily, the 25x'25 Alliance and a team of University of Tennessee economists have announced they will conduct an in-depth analysis of the impacts of global warming on U.S. agriculture and forestry.

The announcement was made by Nathan Rudgers, the chairman of the 25x'25 Alliance's Carbon Work Group during a presentation on Carbon Sequestration at the annual Ag Media Summit in Ft. Worth, Texas. The Alliance will partner with the University of Tennessee's Bio-Based Energy Analysis Group on the project.

Conceding that some farmers question the validity of global warming claims, Rudgers said those growers need to consider the consequences of allowing EPA to write the rules for dealing with the issue rather than the Congress. "The potential for an increase in input costs from the Waxman-Markey bill (the American

Clean Energy Security Act of 2009) — that's the big topic now," says Rudgers. "If the EPA is allowed to regulate the climate change issues rather than Congress, costs are going up, and there won't be anything in place to offset these."

"A growing consensus among scientists is that global warming is occurring and can at least be partially attributed to increased emissions of greenhouse gases," said Burton English, a professor of agricultural economics and a member of the University of Tennessee's Bio-Based Energy Analysis Group.

"Reducing greenhouse gas emissions should be a global environmental priority, so we will address how a reduction in GHG emissions can be achieved, and the economic and environmental impact a given climate policy will have on the agriculture and forestry sectors."

25x'25, a national coalition of nearly 90 agricultural, business,

environmental, energy and conservation organizations, will manage the study and coordinate the dissemination of its results.

"The primary target audience for this analysis is national agricultural and forest leaders who are attempting to understand and quantify how climate change legislation will impact their sectors," said Rudgers.

The study will build on "Solutions from the Land: The role of Agriculture and Forestry in a Reduced Carbon Economy," a discussion guide and recommendations compiled by the 25x'25 Carbon Work Group, on how the two sectors can deliver substantial emissions reductions, including sequestration, under national climate change policy.

The analysis will be released in three phases, starting with an agriculture component Sept. 15, followed by a livestock component Oct. 15 and a forestry component Nov. 15.



POET completes corn cob collection trials

(Source: Oil Price Information Service, Jul 28, 2009)

Ethanol producer [POET](#) has completed its first corn cob collection of the year, helping to provide the feedstock for its pilot cellulosic ethanol plant in South Dakota and further out for its commercial-scale plant, the company announced yesterday.

According to POET, "[e]quipment for harvesting corn cobs was tested in fields near Harlingen, TX, from July 6 to 22. The trials were a precursor to larger harvesting efforts this fall. In all, the effort will see as many as 25,000 acres harvested in Texas, South Dakota and Iowa," the company explained.

Corn cobs are already being used by POET at its 20,000-gal./year pilot-scale cellulosic ethanol plant in Scotland, SD.

For more information: <http://cornandsoybeandigest.com/biofuels/news/0728-POET-corn-cob-trials/>

Renewable fuels and climate change inseparable

(Source: Ron Smith, Farm Press Editorial Staff, August 13, 2009)

Editor's note: Charlie Stenholm and Barry Flinchbaugh don't always agree on issues political and economic. The two squared off recently in a good-natured debate at the annual American Agricultural Editors' Association Ag Media Summit in Fort Worth, Texas. Following is one in a series of articles reflecting Stenholm's and Flinchbaugh's views on four issues they view as critical to U.S. agriculture. The two champions of American agriculture discussed renewable fuels and climate change, WTO and bi-lateral trade agreements, the future of farm programs and farm cultural wars emerging in U.S. agriculture.

The issues of renewable fuels and climate change cannot be separated, says Barry Flinchbaugh, professor of agricultural economics and farm policy at Kansas State University.

Flinchbaugh and Charlie Stenholm, former ranking member of the U.S. Representatives Agricultural Committee and now a policy advisor for the law firm Olsson, Frank and Weeda, debated pressing agricultural issues in Fort Worth, Texas, during the opening session of the recent Ag Media Summit, the annual conference of the American Agricultural Editors' Association.

"We need to enact climate legislation," Flinchbaugh said, "or EPA will carry it out through an edict given them by a conservative Supreme Court. Who should farmers prefer to craft legislation, EPA or Congress?" he asked.

He supports the 25 by 25 mandate: 25 percent of U.S. energy should come from renewable fuels by 2025. Stenholm is a bit more cautious and thinks that goal is more attainable by 2030. But he admits to a changing attitude on the 25 by 25 group.

"Nuclear waste seems to be a big obstacle, but we're talking about hundreds of pounds of waste versus thousands of tons of carbon."

Flinchbaugh said the debate over food or fuel from cropland is a senseless argument. "The 25 by 25 initiative is good for agriculture and is good for the climate," he said. "It will work. Corn yield is irrelevant. We have the capacity to get to 25 by 25 and feed the world without tearing down rain forests in Brazil."

He said agriculture accounts for 7 percent of the carbon released into the atmosphere. "We can mitigate that by 20 percent to 25 percent. And farmers should be paid for the difference." "We no longer have the debate over biofuels versus fossil fuels," Stenholm said. "Now it's food versus fuel production. With a decreasing amount of arable land should more go into fuel production?"

He said advancements such as biotechnology will allow farmers to produce more on every acre. But he said that if he were still in the U.S. Congress he would have "strongly opposed cap and trade legislation." The balance is off, he said. "With 44 percent of the carbon emissions oil and gas gets only 2 percent of the carbon credits. Also, anyone who uses fertilizer and diesel will have to pay." He said that to be effective, climate legislation also must involve other nations, such as China and India.

"Where can we find the elusive middle ground? If the United States does what it's been called on to do, we will see more expense and more loss of jobs."

Flinchbaugh says the issue should be renewable fuels and climate change, not food versus fuel. "Have a little faith in the scientific community. By 2012 or 2015 we will see 300-bushel-per-acre corn. That will happen."

He also said that 25 by 25 "is in the best interest of big oil. Stenholm said big oil supports the overall concept of expanding the energy supply and that the broad-based anti-ethanol bloc in the oil industry is diminishing. "We still see a little of it. Now we have to get renewable fuels and fossil fuels to sit down together and consider all options. At \$140 a barrel for oil, ethanol is profitable; at \$40 a barrel, ethanol plants are bankrupt. In the long run, if alternatives cost more they will be less competitive. Sooner or later (renewable fuels) must be market-oriented."

This publication available in alternative media on request.

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