

## Summary of the Western Canadian Dairy Seminar

Source: David Christensen, University of Saskatchewan

Another great week of information for dairy producers and all associated with the industry. The theme was "Achieving Dairy Excellence" and as usual there was great attendance with 889 registered.

The lead off presentation was by Gwyn Jones, Board Member of The UK Agricultural and Horticulture Development Board. He compared challenges to the British and Canadian dairy industries. These included satisfying consumer demands such as product quality, animal welfare and, responsible minimal use of antibiotics.

Harvey Anderson gave an insightful review and interpretation of the Canadian Food Guide. He was critical of the level of knowledge in the medical community of foods and health related to nutrition. He made the case that milk is not just a nutrient source, but is a functional food with benefits based on bioactive compounds that influence metabolism including appetite control and reduced blood sugar levels.

Managing dairy cows with less antibiotic use was a presentation that focused on prevention of infection rather than treatment. It was reported that animals are not the main source of antimicrobial resistance, and that best management practices improved productivity and also reduced antibiotic use. Prudent use of antimicrobials is important to human and animal health and is a component of the One Health initiative. One Health is a collaboration of all human and animal health professionals worldwide intended to improve the health of all.

The need to provide dairy worker training and to provide motivation was covered in several presentations. A major theme was the need for effective communication. Workers expect and appreciate training that is adapted their mindset.

Jan Hulsen (Netherlands) is recognized as an originator and promotor of the Cow Signals management system. He emphasized the need for facilities that allow cows to rest for at least 12 hours daily and that soft deep bedding is beneficial. He explained the value of new sensor (biosensor) technology to monitor individual cow health and metabolism. David Kelton (Guelph) expanded on the health status of Canadian dairy cows, the need for biosecurity and the need to improve milk quality.

Several presentations reviewed management and feeding of fresh cows and the role of fatty acid sources, amounts and ratios influencing dry matter intake, and NDF digestibility.

Lameness remains a significant problem in dairy herds with some estimates by hoof trimmers that 40 to 70% of cows are affected. Thin cows are more susceptible, perhaps due to less padding in the foot. Early detection, hoof trimming and appropriate treatment including use of blocks were recommended. The three member producer panel demonstrated the high level of management, cow health and production that can be achieved with herds ranging from 120 to 600 cows in different housing and milking systems. A common theme was comfortable housing, early detection and solutions to problems, and dedication to a daily routine of good consistent management.

Plan early to attend the next WCDS March 5-8, 2019 in Red Deer, Alberta.



### deadlines

#### quota transfers

May 17, at 4:30 p.m.

#### credit transfers

May 24, at 4:30 p.m.

### services

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