Impact of the Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference (2013)

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The success of the Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference is demonstrated by attendance (Figure 1) and citation or reprinting of proceedings manuscripts in the scientific, international, and popular press literature. The Conference has resulted in major impacts to the feed industry and dairy producers, and influenced students seeking careers in animal nutrition and the direction of some research programs. The results from the 2013 survey distributed to attendees revealed the following (number in parentheses indicates number of responses; std = standard deviation):

1. Attended the Conference on average for 10.5 years (std = 7.7; *n = 52*)

2. What is the death rate of cows on farms for which you work? (n = 33)

   0- 0.0%, 2% - 12.12%, 4% - 30.30%, 6% - 30.30%, 8% - 24.24%, 10% - 3.03%, 12% - 0.0%

3. What percentage of the farms with which you work provide a calcium supplement (paste, drench, etc.) to all fresh cows as a standard protocol? (n = 37)

   0 - 16.22%, 10% - 32.43%, 20% - 18.92%, 30% - 8.11%, 40% - 5.41%, 50% - 8.11%, 60% - 2.70%, 70% - 0.0%, 80% - 2.70%, 90% - 2.70%, 100% - 2.70%

4. How many farms with which you work have experienced problems with aflatoxin (based on confirmed concentrations of aflatoxin in feed or milk) during the past 12 months?

   Farms: Total - 118 affected, Average Farms affected - 5.5 farms (std = 9.3, n = 23)

   Location: OH - 9.32%, IN - 5.93%, MI - 28.81%, TX and NM - 4.24%, Midwest (multiple states) - 51.69%

5. What is the typical stocking density on most of the farms with which you work? (n = 36)

   80% - 0.0%, 90% - 0.0%, 100% - 19.44%, 110% - 52.78%, 120% - 25.0%, 130% - 2.78%

6. Do you request starch and NDF digestibilities on feed samples submitted to commercial laboratories?

   Yes - 86.11%, No - 13.89% (n = 36)

   If you selected "YES", how do you use this information?

   - Add to nutrition model (digestions rates, predict milk yield) and for balancing rations (23)
   - Selecting (and ranking) feedstuffs (esp. forages) to use in lactation groups (5)

7. What mobile device technology do you presently use in working with dairy producers (open ended question so some respondents may not have thought to list common uses, e.g. email, texting, etc.)?

   (37 respondents with 55 uses; listed as % of use):

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Smartphone/I Phone – 29.09%, Texting – 10.91%, Tablet/ I Pad – 14.55%, Laptop/Computer – 12.73%, Apps – 5.45%, Blackberry/Pocket PC- 3.64%, Email – 3.64%, Urine pH meter – 1.82%, Camera – 1.82%, None – 16.36%

8. What strategies have you used in feeding dairy cows that you believe have resulted in the greatest increases in digestibilities of starch and NDF?

   Selection for forages planted (e.g. BMR, etc.) (8); managing level and rate of digestion of soluble carbohydrates (e.g. dry corn vs high moisture corn vs wheat; sugar addition) (6); better harvesting (e.g. maturity, moisture level) and storage (e.g. inoculants) practices for forages (5); fine grinding of corn (e.g. use of on-farm hammermills) (4); feed additives: enzymes (3), yeast (2), Rumensin, toxin binders; balancing for metabolizable protein and microbial protein yield (3); decrease stocking rate (2); selection of by-products (e.g. hominy) (2); processing corn silage (2); monitor forage particle size (and buffer use) (2); improving soil fertility; reduce feed sorting; monitoring Fe

9. a. In general, how frequently do you sample feeds on farms for which you work? (n = 36)

   Weekly - 2.78%, Biweekly - 13.89%, Monthly - 38.89%, 1 to 2 Months - 13.89%, Every 2 months - 11.11%, Every 3 months - 11.11%, Twice a year - 2.78%, When change occurs- 5.56%

   b. Do you always adjust rations with this newest information? (n = 35) Yes - 65.71%, No- 34.29%

   c. If not, under what conditions do you adjust rations?

   If the new analysis is significantly different (e.g. NDF > 4%) (8); if feed inventory changes (6); if the cows tell me a change is needed (DMI, manure, body condition, milk yield) (6); significant change to the model

10. What is the typical cull rate on farms with which you work? (n = 37)

    Below 10% - 2.70%, 10 to 20% - 8.11%, 20 to 30% - 37.84%, 30 to 40% - 48.65%, 40 to 50% - 2.70%

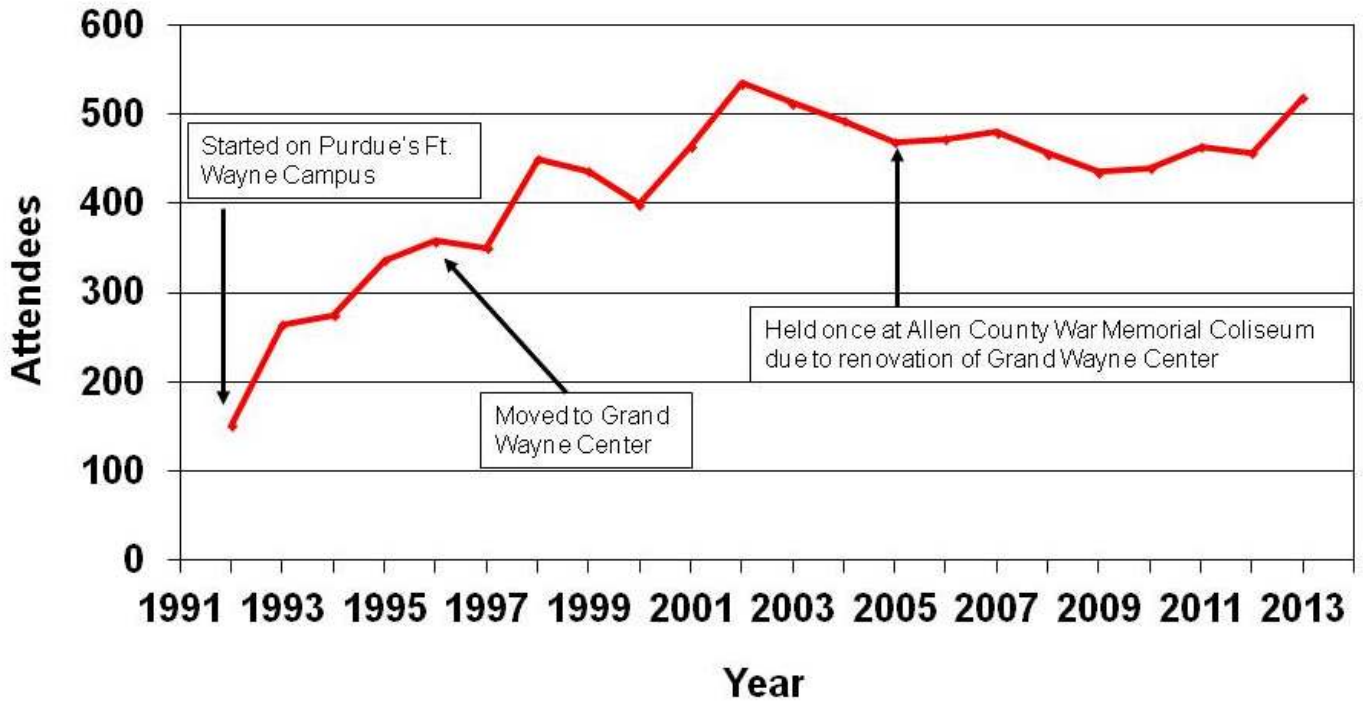

Figure 1. Attendance at the Tri-State Dairy Nutrition Conference.